

5 Reasons I'm Grateful I Raise Support by Richard Malm, Ore Publishing, Kerrville, TX (2018) (27 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols).

1. Keeping in Touch with Supporters.

I was standing at the sink washing dishes when I noticed a postcard on the window sill in front of me. They were thanking us for our financial partnership with their ministry.

Though we raise support ourselves we also support many other missionaries. In fact, most missionaries I know, support other missionaries.

Rather mindlessly I thought, "I'm so glad they raise support because otherwise we would have lost touch with them." [page 3]

2. Levites Set Apart to God.

In the Old Testament, there are actually thirteen tribes of Israel but the Levites were never counted among the people. God said they were set apart and belonged to Him.

Like you, the Levites were granted the special privilege of being totally dependent upon the Lord and His people for support. They were given no land to work but were to fully serve in the Lord's work and He promised to care for them.

Modern support raisers follow in the tradition of the Levites – fully given to the Lord's work and fully dependent upon Him to provide for them, their families and the ministry needs. [pages 5-6]

3. The Missionary Millionaire

Financially, I have almost nothing to show for my forty-four years of labor on behalf of the Indians.

We own an automobile
that you folks gave us two years ago,
a home in the jungles of Peru,
five hundred dollars in savings
for the education of children
and that's all.

In the wealth of friendship, however,
we are millionaires. – William Cameron Townsend, Founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators [page 7]

4. The Trusting God Process.

I don't know where we get this idea that we either pray and trust God or we share our needs with others. As missionaries, making our needs known to others doesn't replace praying and trusting God. It's part of the "trusting God" process.

We pray, trust God and invite others to share in the joy of seeing God provide and accomplish His will through our living and giving. [pages 11-12]

5. Sharing One's Needs.

I've been at this over 25 years and I have seen a not so surprising trend. Those who pray, trust God and share their needs with others are usually happier, better funded and able to be more effective than those who just pray and trust God. Probably every ministry you know of regularly makes their needs known. [page 13]

6. Supporters of Jesus.

Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means – Luke 8:3.

Think about that. Jesus could feed thousands with a little bread and fish – and have more left over than when he started! To pay His taxes He sent Peter fishing. (Matthew 14:17) He certainly didn't need their charity. In fact, I would think that if someone had offered to support Him He would have suggested they give it the poor.

But He took their money!

Perhaps even more amazing, their partnership was so meaningful that the Holy Spirit not only told us about it, He deliberately recorded their names. God noted, and memorialized for all eternity, donors to His ministry. Isn't that remarkable? He gave these women an opportunity to do what they could do, to be a part of His mission here on earth. [page 14]

7. Apostle Paul Asked for Support.

Did Paul, the "tentmaker missionary," who made it clear he didn't want to be a burden to others, ask people to support his ministry? In his letter to the Christians in Rome he tells them about his travel plans.

I am planning to go to Spain, and when I do, I will stop off in Rome. And after I have enjoyed your fellowship for a little while, you can provide for my journey.
Romans 15:24

You can provide for my journey?!

That's bold! No hints. No veiled suggestions. He didn't even ask. He was totally confident they would want to do this. He wrote like he was extending them a privilege of being part of his ministry by funding the next leg of his trip. [pages 15-16]

8. God Challenges the Faith of the Support Raiser.

Consider this: We know God uses support raising to challenge and stretch the faith of the support raiser. But it's easy to forget that He's also at work in the life of the donor. Supporting God's ministers is a way He challenges donors to trust Him in bigger and more profound ways. [page 16]

9. Asking for Funds.

*I have tried raised money by asking for it,
and by not asking for it.*

I always got more by asking for it. – Millard Fuller, Founder of Habitat for Humanity
[page 19]

10. Trusting God Alone.

And while I do think we need to make all our communication as interesting and informative as possible, I need to constantly check my heart to make sure I am depending on God – not my imagined amazing presentation – to touch the hearts of those that He wants to be part of our ministry.

God wants our trust to be squarely on Him and Him alone. If I begin to look to another source – my own efforts or other people – He has a way of quickly shutting that down. He has a way of revealing my wrong motives and re-focusing my trust on Him. [page 23]

11. We Trust God by Our Actions.

David demonstrated he trusted God by finding five smooth stones. River stones couldn't defeat a giant but they became a tool God used to bring victory. Nehemiah built a wall because he trusted God to deliver and restore His people.

“Trusting God” doesn't mean we do nothing. Rather, we demonstrate we trust God by our actions.

Ministry reports can be a desperate attempt on the part of support raisers to pluck the heart strings of donors or they can be a way to demonstrate we believe God will provide all the resources necessary to complete His work. Like David's smooth stones, a newsletter is simply a tool, an earthly tool God uses to accomplish a heavenly goal. [page 25]

12. Ministry Reports Provide Accountability.

Ministry reports provide accountability for the support raiser – a way to let donors know the funds they are investing are being used to advance God's kingdom. [page 25]

13. Checking Heart Attitudes.

I'm grateful I raise support because it forces me to regularly check my heart attitudes toward God, money and others. [page 27]

14. Dependent on God for Daily Bread.

In the same way, support raising keeps me regularly looking to God. I'm dependent on Him for my “daily bread.” [page 31]

15. Need of God's Guidance.

When running on a tight budget we are much more aware of our need for God's guidance. We have less margin for error. That means I not only have to hear from God but I also know important it is to listen to the wisdom of others. [page 32]

16. Constant Dependence on the Lord.

Because I raise support, I am constantly aware of my dependence upon the Lord. If God doesn't touch people's hearts and if those people don't obey, I could have no income, no paycheck, no way to pay bills or provide for my family.

That much direct and constant dependence upon the Lord can be challenging. I've talked with support risers who are considering jettisoning their call and getting "a real job" just to have financial security. But, in reality, the guy who receives a pay check every week is just as dependent upon the Lord's faithfulness as the support raiser.
[page 33]

17. Keeping Focus on the True Provider.

This constant awareness of my dependence upon the Lord is both a blessing and a bane – a blessing to my spiritual life but a bane to my carnal nature.

It can be tempting to look for something more steady, more predictable, more secure. But when I'm anxious about my income I know I have shifted my focus off my true Provider.

I recently read a story about Katherine von Bora – the wife of the reformer Martin Luther. Normally Martin was a cheerful fellow but at times the stress became overwhelming.

During one of those difficult periods Katherine put on a black mourning dress and met Martin at the door.

"Who died?" Martin asked. Katherine explained that God had died.

Of course Martin rebuked her for her foolishness asking where she got such a silly idea. She replied, "God must be dead or Doctor Luther would not be so sorrowful." Her rebuke hit home and Luther snapped out of his depression.

What a lesson to support raisers. Unless God's dead I don't need to worry. The Boss is well, the family business is booming and my position in the company is as secure as His promises.

I'm grateful I raise support because it keeps me aware of my constant dependence on God. [pages 34-35]

18. Sharing in God's Exciting Work.

If God has called you to an effective and exciting work, why wouldn't you invite others to participate and share with you in it? [page 41]

19. Connecting with Those Who Share in One's Ministry.

I'm grateful I raise support because it enables me to connect with many wonderful people and regularly stay in touch with them as more than friends, but as members of the family and partners in our mutual ministry.

Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. Philippians 1:3-5 NLT [pages 42-43]

20. Sowing Seed into the Harvest of Nations.

One of our financial partners is a widow and former missionary herself. For years she has faithfully sown \$2.00 a month into our ministry. As a former missionary, she knows that it's not the size of the seed that matters. Even the tiniest of seeds can produce a harvest – but only if it's planted.

And that is one of the most glorious things about raising support – it provides a way for everyone to be involved in the global harvest.

No one is too poor to sow seed into the harvest of the nations. Because it's not the size of the seed that matters but that you are doing what you are able to do. [page 52]

21. Going to Every Tribe Is Costly.

Salvation is free but delivering it to “every nation, every tribe and every tongue” is costly. Thank God for those who can invest large amounts in missions. They are essential members of the world harvest team. [page 53]

22. Store Up Treasure in Heaven.

The best financial advice ever given came from Jesus Himself. He didn't suggest pouring cash into real estate or stocks, bonds or treasury notes. He said, “Store up treasure in heaven.” (Matthew 6:20)

Investing in missions is one way we store up treasure in heaven where it is safe from theft, economic downturn or loss. It's guaranteed safe investment that's good for eternity. What other investment can make that promise? [page 54]

23. Personally Involved in Missions.

I'm grateful I raise support because this ministry allows everyone, regardless of their financial status, to become personally involved in missions and tap into the harvest God promises to those who sow into the kingdom.

If you receive a prophet as one who speaks for God, you will be given the same reward as a prophet. And if you receive righteous people because of their righteousness, you will be given a reward like theirs. And if you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded.” Matthew 10:41-42 NLT [page 59]

24. Funds to Be Effective.

How much should a missionary raise? Enough to be effective. [page 63]

25. Heart Issues Cause Relational Issues.

Another missionary from Africa writes, “My experience has been that it’s not the standard of living that causes relational issues. Rather, it is a matter of a humble or a proud heart. I’ve seen people who make twenty times the local wage who connect deeply with the poor because they do not see themselves as better than those they serve. And, I’ve seen those who have just a little bit more than the average who lord it over those they work with.

“I’ve never heard anyone claim a middle-class North American shouldn’t even try to minister to the poor because it would be futile. I don’t know why we think economic disparity raises an insurmountable wall as soon as we leave the US or Canada.” [page 66]

26. Giving.

Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back. Luke 6:38 NLT [page 69]

27. Giving to Others.

If you’re a support raiser, I hope you are also a support giver. As you give to others, the Lord has promised to give to you.

I’ve observed that an attitude of openhandedness on my part promotes an open handedness on God’s part toward me. If I am tightfisted, the Lord responds similarly toward me.

Be fearless in your giving. Don’t limit it to what you can do comfortably. As long as we operate within our own comfort boundaries there is no faith involved.

God wants us to learn total dependence on Him. Only there do we discover the joy and thrill of giving.

Step out. Trust Him. Let Him use you in ever increasing measure – giving more, serving more, loving more. Be fearless in your faith. [pages 69-70]