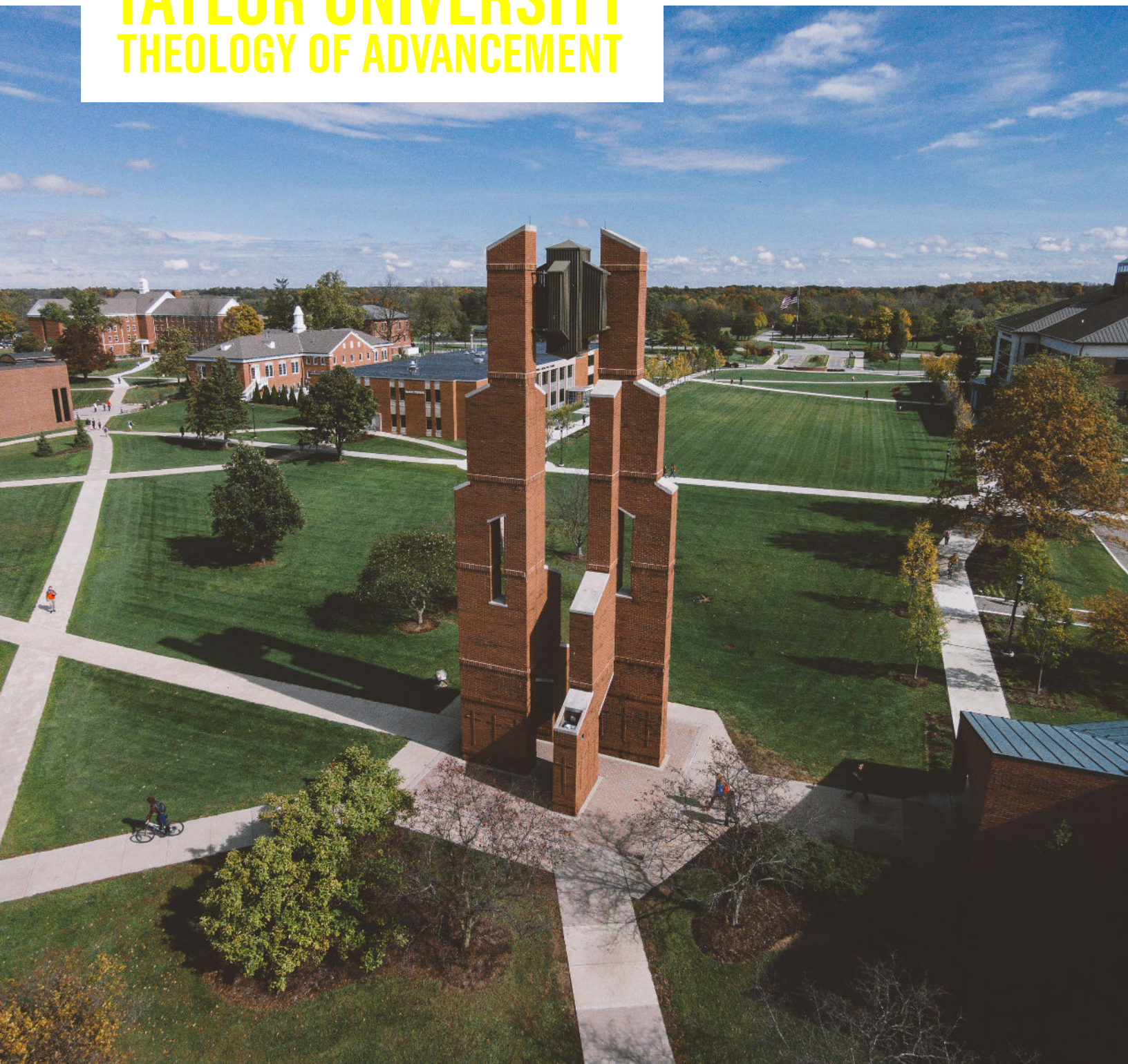




# TAYLOR UNIVERSITY

## THEOLOGY OF ADVANCEMENT



INTRODUCTION: As in almost every area of life, the world produces a cheap imitation of what is good and right in God's creation. We believe contemporary fundraising is no exception. Much of what is practiced today by nonprofit organizations (secular and religious) is not grounded in the Word of God or in spiritual truth, but is rather driven by whatever strategy or tactic produces the best financial outcome.

Consistent with who Taylor is, we seek to employ fundraising efforts that are built on a solid scriptural foundation. Therefore, we have identified four foundational biblical truths upon which we have built our development philosophy and practices.

When these four biblical truths are applied to fundraising, they lead to a very different approach. As would be expected, it is totally counter to the prevailing secular fundraising orthodoxy. However, it is this very collision between secular and biblical practices that we believe confirms the soundness of our theology and practice.

### *The Four Foundational Biblical Truths*

#### **Biblical Truth #1: God owns everything and needs nothing.**

##### **A. Supporting Scripture:**

###### **1. God's Ownership:**

- a. Psalm 24:1, *The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.*
- b. Job 41:11, *Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.*
- c. Romans 11:36 (NIV), *For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*
- d. Revelation 4:11 (NIV), *You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will [and for your pleasure] they were created and have their being.*
- e. Psalm 89:11, *The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all it contains, You have founded them.*

###### **2. God's Need:**

- a. Acts 17:24-25, *The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things...*
- b. Psalm 50:10-12, *For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains.*

- B. What this means:** God's Kingdom never has a "need." It may have "unfunded Kingdom opportunities." But neither God nor His work ever needs anything.

#### **Biblical Truth #2: We own nothing and need everything.**

##### **A. Supporting Scripture:**

1. John 3:27 (NIV), *A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.*



2. Ecclesiastes 5:15, *As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand.*
3. I Timothy 6:7, *For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.*
4. I Corinthians 4:7, *For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*

**B. What this means:**

1. We are helpless to contribute to the work that God is doing without Him providing us with something to contribute—life, health, time, abilities, resources, etc. Everything we are and everything we have is a gift from God.
2. We can only return back to the Lord what has flowed from Him in the first place.

**Biblical Truth #3: God is the sole provider of all resources (tangible and spiritual) to sustain His people and advance His Kingdom.**

**A. Supporting Scripture:**

1. II Peter 1:3, *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness.*
2. I Timothy 6:17b, *God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.*
3. Philippians 4:19 (NLT), *And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.*
4. John 15:7, *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

**B. What this means:**

1. In order to fully access God's resources, Taylor leadership's first priority and responsibility is to earnestly seek godly wisdom and wise counsel to be as certain as possible that our vision is indeed God's vision.
2. What God orders, He pays for. God would not give His people a vision and then fail to provide them the funding to realize it.

**Biblical Truth #4: God uses stewards who manage His resources well and deploy them to sustain and advance His Kingdom.**

**A. Supporting Scripture:**

1. I Corinthians 4:2, *It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.*
2. Luke 17:10, *So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'*
3. Ex. 35:4-36:7, *The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the Lord commanded us to perform.*
4. I Chronicles 29:1-9, *...the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the Lord with a whole heart.*
5. II Corinthians 8:1-5 (ESV), *We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord,*

*begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.*

6. II Corinthians 9:8 (NLT), *And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.*

7. II Corinthians 9:11 (NIV), *You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

**B. What this means:**

1. Since there is no shortage of Kingdom resources, God's people already have possession of all that is necessary to accomplish His vision.
2. Because we are all stewards of God's resources, charged to manage and deploy them according to His directives, the question we need to ask is not, "What do I want to do with all that I own?" Rather, it should be, "God, what do You want me to do with all You have entrusted to me?"
3. Learning how to recognize and receive His directions is critically important to how well we steward what He has entrusted to us.
4. God's stewards often fail to *want* to and/or *know* how to strategically deploy His resources. The lack of desire is a *spiritual* issue. The lack of knowledge is a *logical* one.

### *Practical Applications for How We Do Development*

If we accept the four biblical truths, then...

**Application #1: Our primary objective must be to help stewards more fully connect to the mind and the heart of God, the Owner of all we possess.**

**A. Preparing Our *Ministry Partners*:**

1. We believe the more closely attuned to the mind and the heart of God His stewards become, the more successful they will be in effectively and obediently managing and deploying the resources that God has entrusted to them according to His wishes.
2. Our goal for our ministry partners is to *enhance their stewardship* of all their possessions, not just to *raise funds*. We are committed to putting *ministry over money* – focusing on helping them more fully...
  - a. catch a bigger vision for themselves and for God's Kingdom.
  - b. surrender themselves to the Lord.
  - c. attune their hearts to the voice of the Holy Spirit.
  - d. experience the joy of giving.
3. We want to be long-term sowers, not just short-term *harvesters*, in our development efforts with our ministry partners.
4. How we serve our ministry partners reflects what we want *for* them, not what we want *from* them.

5. We want our ministry partners to experience a *spiritual transformation*, not just participate in a *financial transaction*, when they engage with us. We want to *be* a blessing and *bring* a blessing to our ministry partners in every interaction we have with them.
  6. We believe, if we are faithful in serving and equipping our current and potential ministry partners, the required funding to sustain and advance Taylor will always come.
  7. We recognize that any increased Kingdom funding should be the *by-product* of our stewardship ministry efforts and not the only *reason* for it.
- B. Preparing **Ourselves** to serve our Ministry Partners (*for the work of ministry...Eph. 4:12*):
1. We are committed to living our personal lives in such a way that exemplifies the grace and truth of Jesus and demonstrates spiritual awareness and maturity to our ministry partners as we attempt to honor the Lord in every area of our lives.
  2. We are committed to being consummate Christian, advancement professionals who serve our ministry partners, with both skill and knowledge, to help them effectively steward and deploy what the Lord has entrusted to them.

Application #2: The Holy Spirit must be our Chief Advancement Officer.

- A. Prayer must become our primary development activity since we believe that the Holy Spirit can most effectively move the minds and hearts of His people to align them more closely to the mind and the heart of our Father.
- B. We are committed to bathing our development ministry efforts in prayer. We will earnestly pray for our team as well as those we are seeking to serve and disciple.
- C. The “ask” will always be directed to the Owner and His *steward*, engaging them in a spiritual conversation: Asking God, the Owner, for clarity and direction.

Application #3: We will openly share our vision with people.

- A. We believe the Holy Spirit will move the hearts of the stewards He is calling to engage with us in achieving our vision.
- B. We will invite stewards to personally join our vision, not merely ask them to help financially fund it. We are looking for ministry partners, not just financial funders.
- C. We will never employ any techniques that are designed to maneuver, manipulate, or pressure current or potential ministry partners for the purpose of acquiring funding from them. In our development efforts, the *end* will never justify the *means*.
- D. We also understand that not all stewards with whom we share our vision will be called by God to deploy the resources they manage for this particular vision; therefore, we are comfortable with “No” as an answer.

CONCLUSION: As you can see, this theology of advancement sets an incredibly high standard for service and work; a standard that can only be reached through total commitment, humble surrender, and absolute obedience to the Lord. It is our desire to live and to engage in such a way that God will be glorified in not only what we achieve, but also in how we have achieved it. We believe that if we do our work God's way, the outcomes will always end well. After all our labors are done, we want to hear, *Well done, good and faithful servant...*

