

Book Review: The Treasure Principle: Unlocking the Secret of Joyful Giving

By Carrie Cavanaugh



For Randy Alcorn, The Treasure Principle is more than just a book, it is a philosophy that he lives, it is a sacrifice of faith. The fact that Randy and his wife decided to live off of minimum wage and her salary as a receptionist, bring a level of integrity to this book that most books lack. In an age when the health and wealth gospel is tickling the ears of a generation hungry for something to fill the void, this is a refreshing glimpse of how to worship He who alone will truly satisfy.

I originally picked this book up thinking it might be helpful for the leaders of Christian organizations to inspire their donors to continue to give even during a more challenging economy. I do think it offers much to bless those who support your ministry, but I am now convinced that it must start with you and can only then extend to others. God wants each of His children to know the blessing of giving as an act of faith. And once you have experienced it for yourself, you won't be able to keep the secret from others.

At the heart of Randy Alcorn's book are six "Treasure Principles":

- 1) God owns everything. I'm His money manager.
- 2) My heart always goes where I put God's money.

Before you endeavor to seek support from donors, be sure to know the joy of giving for yourself.

- 3) Heaven, not earth, is my home.
- 4) I should live not for the dot [the present] but for the line [eternity].
- 5) Giving is the only antidote to materialism.
- 6) God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving.

When we really internalize these six principles we are freed to give with a cheerful heart. Even though the focus of these principles is specifically geared toward giving, I appreciated just how biblical and heaven-focused they were. Giving is an important part of our faith that is often neglected, but it's just one aspect of how we live out what we

believe. So, these principles of faith will change who we are at an even deeper level as we acknowledge God's Lordship over all and His exquisite provision for us.

The book ends with 31 questions. You might expect these to be questions to ask yourself in order to honestly evaluate your faith and your level of generosity. However, it is actually a list of "31 Radical, Liberating Questions to Ask God about Your Giving". This moves the book beyond a self-help book, which would essentially be promoting a gospel of works, to a book that encourages a relationship with our Savior, the true gospel. The questions, rather than operating on guilt, are designed to inspire faith and include such queries as,

Father, could it be that You have raise me up—with the financial assets You've entrusted to me—for just such a time as this? Is it more than a coincidence that You have entrusted me with such resources just at that point in history when an unparalleled number of people have such great needs and there are unprecedented means and opportunities to help them?

This question, like the others, includes Bible references, in this

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case to Esther 4:14, Acts 17:26 and Ephesians 2:10.

Randy Alcorn is founder and director of Eternal Perspectives Ministers, a non profit aimed at helping Christians become aware of the needs of the poor and how they can help as well as the biblical basis for doing so. Before beginning this ministry, Randy co-pastored a church near Gresham, OR, served overseas providing Christian education and taught as part-time faculty on a number of schools of Christian higher education.

This is a small book with a big challenge—to give in faith. Before you endeavor to seek support from donors, be sure to know the joy of giving for yourself.