

RAISING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUR MISSION TRIP

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Take some time to work through the following questions, studying the Scripture passages and reading carefully the material provided. Wrestle through any points that are more of a concern for you, pray about them letting God's Spirit enlighten your heart and bring up any questions to the FOCUS Staff responsible to help you prepare for the Mission. The first 11 questions have been compiled for our mission trips, but are very applicable to our Mission as well.

1. I don't want to beg for money. It seems like asking people for a handout, and I won't do that.

Who are you representing?

Read John 15: 16. How did you get the job of representing Christ as His ambassador?

You are giving people an opportunity to participate in fulfilling God's promise and plan for the world; that isn't begging. You will probably be meeting people who have had this type of opportunity before and will be greatly encouraged by being able to share in your mission.

2. People get so many requests for money. They're tired of giving.

Let's look at some examples found in the Bible to see how people respond to God's missions.

Read 1 Chronicles 28 and 29. What does David want to do (28: 1, 2)?

David had a great task before him. However he did not attempt to complete it alone.

What was David's 1st and strongest encouragement to his son, Solomon? How did the people help (28: 19-21, 29:6-9)?

As the people were giving of their time, talents and treasure, what do you see of their attitude and motivation?

In 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 we see part of the reason for their response. In your own words, describe their perspective of ownership and riches.

Read 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. What was the New Testament Church's attitude toward giving money to further the gospel (2 Corinthians 8:1-4)?

3. I could never ask a non-Christian for money.

Read Nehemiah 1: 1-11. What was Nehemiah's burden?

To whom did he turn for help (2:1-8)? What response did he get?

In this situation God's sovereignty and lordship over the entire world is illustrated as even the resources of a pagan king are used to bring God glory.

4. I don't feel comfortable asking for money.

Read Matthew 6:19-21. How does Jesus describe the relationship between a person's heart and their wealth?

Money is important to people and so it will tend to be an uncomfortable subject of discussion. Expect this! We talk with people about uncomfortable issues all the time as we present the gospel. Just as there is often conflict then, we can expect conflict when we challenge people to give to the cause of Christ. What are some reasons for this? *Read Ephesians 6: 1--12.*

Be prepared for spiritual battle as you seek those God has already chosen for your support team. As you begin to gather financial resources to further the cause of Christ, you will enter into the arena of supernatural battle, a struggle between the forces of God and Satan. There is a battle for men's hearts and for the stewardship of their treasure. (*Matthew 6:21*).

The last thing Satan wants is God's people using their financial resources to more effectively reach out to the world with the hope and forgiveness of the Gospel. Satan doesn't want us to ask those uncomfortable questions. He would take great delight if you kept silent about your financial needs. Expect the battle to be the most intense when your challenge is the most direct.

The Apostle Paul, in defining our role as an "ambassador for Christ" said, "God has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (*2 Corinthians 5:20*). To the extent that proclaiming God's Word requires money, our role as ambassadors may even include raising funds. A soldier would not expect comfort in battle. So as you ask individuals to give to the cause of Christ don't become discouraged when you encounter resistance. Realize you are on the very cutting edge of spiritual battle. It's the strategic nature of what you're doing (raising funds to spread the Gospel) that makes the battle so intense.

5. Don't the scriptures say that God helps those who help themselves?

No. Somebody said that, but it isn't in the Bible! Throughout the Bible, God chose to give man the privilege of participating in his promise and plan for the ages. He wants to use you to win others to Christ.

Review again 1 Chronicles 29 and you'll notice that King David was instrumental in channeling the resources of God's people toward the goal of building a physical testimony - a temple to the Lord. How does asking individuals to become a FOCUS Mission Partner compare with what David did?

6. Isn't it enough to simply ask God to supply my finances and then wait patiently for his provision?

Yes and no.

Yes - Read *Habakkuk 2:4*. What contrast is made in this passage?

Above all it is our first responsibility to trust in the Lord. He delights in us as we exercise child-like faith.

No – In *Exodus 14: 15* the Bible (paraphrased) illustrates that in addition to praying and trusting the Lord we must also respond by taking personal initiative. As the Egyptian army chased the people of Israel they found themselves caught between the advancing troops and the Red Sea. In this context note God's instructions to Moses:

Then the Lord said to Moses 'quit praying and get the people moving! Forward March! Use your rod - hold it out over the water and the sea will open up a path before you and all the people of Israel shall walk through on dry ground! I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians and they will go in after you and you will see the honor I will get in defeating Pharaoh and all his armies chariots and horsemen. And all Egypt shall know that I am Jehovah.

What initiative did God ask Moses to take?

What did God do?

What were the results?

7. I feel that for me to ask others for support would be the equivalent of “working in the power of the flesh.”

Asking others to become partners with you in your mission in no way negates the fact that God is our ultimate provider. However, it does clarify our responsibility as Christ's ambassadors in asking others to help fund the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

As the Israelites wandered between Egypt and the Promised Land, God chose to miraculously provide manna (bread) from heaven to sustain them. Then upon entering the land He expected them to plant and harvest in order to feed themselves. A portion of their crops was given to support the priests who served God full-time. Had Israel continued to expect manna in Canaan it would have been an affront to God since His new means of provisions was through the land He had given them.

It is certainly possible that God could choose to miraculously meet your financial needs through unusual circumstances. However, don't expect money to fall from heaven like manna. Rather, expect God to provide your funds as you observe the laws of sowing and reaping in the area of human relations. Just as the Israelites had to plant in order to reap a harvest, in order to raise financial support, you must ask others to give.

8. My parents are uneasy about me asking for money. They don't want me coming across like one of those cult members who sell flowers in the airport.

Neither do we, unfortunately, the bad image of such cults have made it difficult for those with worthy causes to develop funds.

9. I don't want others to see me raising money. No one I know would be caught doing something like this.

Hmmm. You better think about that one again. A lot of groups are involved in raising funds. Look at the following list. A wide variety of groups raise funds to help meet their needs. Compare your mission with the following:

GROUP	METHOD	CAUSE
Christian Schools	Magazine sales	School budget
Youth groups	Car washes	Field trips
Athletic teams	Cash gifts	Equipment
Bands	Cash gifts	Uniforms
Choirs	Cash gifts	Concert tours
Politicians	Cash gifts	Campaigns

You see, as you raise financial support you are not doing anything different than what millions of Americans do all the time for their favorite group or charity. In fact, I bet you have raised money for at least one of the organizations listed above.

And here's one very big difference. Their causes are often detached from the infinite worth of the message of the Gospel.

Why is it then that many of us would wholeheartedly work for these but would shy away from raising funds for the cause of Christ and His Church?

10. Given the economic uncertainty of our time, people won't be able to give.

During the great depression of the 1930's giving was still strong, down only 13 percent! Statistics show that during the 1981-82 recessions giving was up 12 percent from the previous year- an increase of \$7.3 billion in 1982 to a total of \$60.4 billion. In 1983 Americans gave away \$65 billion.

People do have money to give and they will give whether we ask or not. Americans spent \$12.5 billion on

video games in 2006. So, as you challenge individuals to become a FOCUS Mission Partner, you will play a significant role in channeling the wealth God has entrusted with others toward fulfilling the Great Commission.

11. People are bombarded with requests for money and, frankly, won't be interested... they're too "burned out" to respond.

Students who have developed financial support for missions and conferences before you have often found up to 75% of people respond to their invitation to give.

That does mean that some will say no. Expect that. Don't become discouraged because not everyone is interested, capable, or even called to give to us. Like the early Apostles and Saints, we have to learn to accept and even welcome all that God allows us to experience with a spirit of Christian joy. Not becoming distressed at difficulty, but rather confiding our trust in God to provide for us, can be a wonderful witness to the world of our hope in Christ.

12. Mom and Dad think if I need something I should earn it myself. They don't want others to think I'm trying to get a free ride.

You are raising money so that you can grow in your faith and help share it with others. Every disciple needs to be fed to feed others. On the trip you are being fed in order to feed others. You will be roughing it all year, dealing with physical, emotional and spiritual challenges. People are really giving to you so that you can then reinvest their generosity with the students on campus (or others) that are spiritually starving for a clear witness to the Gospel.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

You may have other questions or concerns that have not been addressed in this study. If you do, keep thinking . . . Search the scriptures and pray to discover God's perspective and bring up any questions to your FOCUS Staff leaders.

There are two important things you can do to apply the things you've learned:

- **What is the biggest hurdle for which you have to trust God?**
- **What does God say about it?**

Claim a passage regarding God's perspective in this area. Memorize the passage. Share this area with a friend, roommate or FOCUS Staff member. Believe in God together and be confident in God's providence.

- **What is one thing you can begin doing today to help you raise funds in the best possible service to Christ?**

Share this with a friend, roommate or FOCUS staff member so they can encourage you as you begin stepping out in faith believing God will provide for you.

Ever watch a child take that first step? In raising your support the most important step, the most difficult one, is the first one!

Attempt great things for God, but expect great things from God! If He has called you to this Mission, He will provide.