

In *Business by Design*, Raymond Harris invites us to see the real-world brilliance of Jesus as it applies to the practical strategy, decision-making, people management, and deeper purpose of business and enterprise. For leaders seeking first-class excellence in both entrepreneurial endeavors and Christian integrity of life, Harris delivers a thoughtful meditation and testimony on what it looks like to apply the profound spiritual teachings of Jesus to the pragmatic, real-life challenges of business endeavors at the highest level.

—GARY HAUGEN, *founder and CEO of International Justice Mission*

Business by Design is a game changer, but not because it teaches a new business theory. Rather, it is built on the timeless truths of the Bible. It is wonderfully authentic because the author, Raymond Harris, has lived the principles he is communicating. I heartily recommend it!

—HOWARD DAYTON, *founder and CEO of Compass*

Business by Design captures the essence of doing business by God's design. Whether working, running a business, or serving in a ministry, Raymond articulates these business principles and shares his personal stories that apply to today's world. I recommend this to every working professional.

—JOSH MCDOWELL, *speaker and author*

Raymond Harris is a unique visionary who has found his most remarkable of professional opportunities with the church and its mission at the intersection of life and business, where he shares Christ as he does in the pages of *Business by Design*.

—KEITH & KRISTYN GETTY, *modern hymn writers, Getty Music*

My big-hearted friend Raymond Harris is a godly man who God trusted with little. Raymond was faithful, so God trusted Raymond with much, and he remained faithful. This book demonstrates

that principle so well and is instructive to those who need to learn to be trusted with little, so that God might trust them with much!

—BOB DOLL, *chief equity strategist for Nuveen Asset Management*

For anyone seeking true success in life and business, this book is bursting with biblical wisdom and practical advice! Read this book and learn from Raymond's experience of operating businesses as a way to love people and build God's kingdom.

—TODD HARPER, *president of Generous Giving*

Raymond Harris has written a warm and inviting reflection on his forty-year faith journey in the marketplace. This is a fantastic read!

—DR. MAC PIER, *author, founder and CEO of Movement.org*

Brimming with countercultural and actionable insights, *Business by Design* is a powerful and engaging read. This book is highly readable and relevant for every type of business or nonprofit context. You will love this book!

—PETER GREER, *president and CEO of HOPE International and coauthor of Rooting for Rivals*

Saturated in the Scriptures and filled with practical wisdom, *Business by Design* is a work of love that will bless your circle of influence. Raymond's keen insights and personal stories will appeal to both the head and the heart. If you are looking for next steps in how you might be a light in your world, look no further.

—ADAM C. WRIGHT, PHD,
president of Dallas Baptist University

Business by Design builds on Raymond Harris' lifetime of experience of building an architectural firm that's successful by any definition, and he lays out practical, biblical principles that anyone who wants to have a life that counts can depend on.

—KEVIN PALAU, *author, president and CEO of Luis Palau Association*

Business by Design is a useful tool that provides a guide to the reader on how to balance the cut-throat world of business practices with one's faith. This is a difficult road to travel, but Raymond gives us a roadmap. It is up to us to determine whether we choose to follow it.

—MIKE MONCREIF, *former mayor of Fort Worth, Texas*

In *Business by Design*, Raymond Harris masterfully explores the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, anchors business practices to core biblical principles, and reveals the purpose of business in a kingdom economy. This is a must-read for business leaders, young professionals, nonprofit executives, ministry leaders, and pastors.

—ALBERT L. REYES, PHD, *president and CEO of Buckner International*

Business by Design brings to life the teachings of Jesus as a practical guide to building businesses that expand His kingdom on earth. Using real-life stories from his own successful architectural firm, Raymond Harris reminds us that in God's hands, business is one of the most powerful instruments of economic, social, and spiritual transformation. It's a great read for faith-centered business leaders seeking to live a life of meaning.

—J. DALE DAWSON, *former investment banker, entrepreneur, founder and CEO of Bridge to Rwanda*

In a simple but profound manner, this book captures the very essence of leadership. Harris understands that success doesn't come from accumulating, emphasizing our accomplishments, or making a name for ourselves. Success comes from prayerfully and thoughtfully giving away our talents, our treasures, and our time—that's true success in God's economy.

—STEVE SHACKELFORD, *CEO of Redeemer City to City*

You can't spend five minutes with Raymond and not gain amazing nuggets of wisdom of God's heart towards money. I've learned so much about stewardship and transferring wealth to heavenly

treasures. You are in for a treat as you read *Business by Design*. Having walked with him over the years on multiple endeavors, I can attest that he practices what he is teaching here.

—ANDREW ERWIN, *president
of Erwin Brothers Entertainment*

If you have a love for business or are considering going into business but have a concern about how to set it up within the values and standards of God, so that you fulfill your mission as a business leader and do not find yourself getting choked out by the cares of the world, wealth, and pride of life, this is a book you should read.

—MORGAN JACKSON, *senior vice president
of Faith Comes By Hearing*

I know of no other book that more powerfully and practically prepares business leaders to be successful in their earthly pursuits while becoming agents of transformation in their culture. I pray God will use this resource to change the future of business and mightily advance the kingdom of Christ.

—BYRON PAULUS, *president and CEO
of Life Action Ministries*

This is a tremendously warm and practical book filled with encouraging, achievable examples from every area of business life. As I read it, I couldn't stop thinking of friends, relatives, and others in the business and professional world to whom I would recommend it. More than that, this is a book rooted in the Bible and prayer, and it is built on a strong Christian foundation.

—RAM GIDOMAL, *commander of the most excellent order of the
British Empire, former chairman of the Lausanne Movement Inter-
national Board, chairman of South Asian Concern*

Christians need to understand how to apply their faith in the business arena because they live in the tension that exists between the world's economy and God's economy. This book shares both personal stories and key biblical principles that will help you integrate your faith with your work. Learn from a man who is a

practicing architect, executive movie producer, and venture capitalist in God's kingdom.

—KERBY ANDERSON, *president of Probe Ministries,
host of radio talk show Point of View*

More than any other book, *Business by Design* is a practical, “how-to” manual from someone who wants to see those coming after him go beyond him, which to me is the mark of godly, servant leadership. Raymond Harris is a business leader whose entire life is ministry. I think we need more voices like that, and I pray this book can equip you to be one.

—NICK HALL, *founder of PULSE*

Behind every great design, there is purpose, function, and beauty. This book practically shows us how our hearts and minds can be rewired. Every reader will benefit from the wonderful stories of success and failure from a master architect who reveals the purpose of our Designer in our everyday lives.

—JACK ALEXANDER, *chairman of the Reimagine Group and onQ, author of The God Impulse and The God Guarantee*

God's ways are higher than ours, but Raymond's use of God's Word will bless you and benefit your business. In *Business by Design*, Raymond Harris makes timeless biblical principles come alive in today's hypercompetitive business world. Raymond's personal stories give you concrete, next steps to make His kingdom come in your workplace. He doesn't forsake excellence in the pursuit of faithfulness, and you shouldn't hesitate to read this phenomenal work.

—NICK PITTS, PHD, *blogger, executive director
of the Institute for Global Engagement*

Every young man and woman entering the business world should read *Business by Design!* You will discover your work really does matter in God's economy. Prepare to be motivated and gain insight on how to bring your best every day!

—REED LIVESAY, *CEO of Pine Cove Camps*

Raymond has an excellent understanding of doing business using God's principles as boundaries and guidelines. It is rare to find a book written by a successful businessperson who is capable of giving business advice as well as direction on godly living. I wish he had written this for me many years ago, so I could have read it instead of the many books espousing principles that lead me down wrong paths.

—PHIL SMITH, *former CEO and chairman of Sermon.net, coauthor of The Poor Will Be Glad and A Billion Bootstraps*

Raymond Harris gives us biblical principles lived out in real-life circumstances. This book is helpful reading for the young business leader and those who hope to become business leaders.

—D.G. ELMORE, *chairman of Elmore Companies and The Navigators*

Raymond Harris has created a step-by-step guide on how to become a true steward in God's kingdom. He distinguishes between the world's economy and God's economy and how to be kingdom-minded in your approach to business.

—DARYL JOHNSTON, *television commentator, former football player for the NFL's Dallas Cowboys*

The revelation and insight that Raymond Harris has unearthed through the parables in the gospel are keys to true success. I would highly recommend *Business by Design* to everyone and anyone who is serious about unlocking the doors to wisdom, integrity, and fulfillment.

—REV. ADAM DURSO, DD,
executive director of LEAD.NYC

Many books on business are written by leaders who have been mildly successful in their work, but Raymond Harris has been wildly successful, and he'd be the first to tell you it's been God all the way. The humble, honest, raw perspective shared in these pages are rich with Scripture and full of practical insight for

anyone looking to lead a biblical life in a difficult world. Raymond has been integral to my growth as a leader, and I'm confident he'll be the same for you.

—GRANT SKELDON, *founder of Initiative Network*

For twenty years I've watched Raymond Harris design buildings and create goodwill with uncommon and godly decision-making. *Business By Design* is all about serving Jesus in the real world—with story after surprising story! Young business leaders will love reading *Business by Design* and asking themselves, "What would I do if I was in Raymond's shoes?"

—DAVE RINER, *executive director of Student Mobilization*

In *Business by Design*, Raymond takes the reader on a journey of discovery that's rooted deeply in the Scriptures. It quickly becomes clear that business and discipleship are joyfully and seamlessly interwoven. The personal nature of the stories in this book, the vulnerability of the writer, and the practical lessons all make this reading an enjoyable, soul-searching, and helpful experience.

—MUTUA MAHIAINI, *international president of The Navigators*

Business by Design is a tool for mentoring emerging, young, Christian professionals toward true success. Raymond Harris lays out the best practices for integrating faith with business, so that one can live a life of purpose and develop a heart of righteous character that leads to righteous actions toward the less fortunate and the marginalized. This is a must-read for anyone seeking to live a life of meaning with eternal dividends.

—CÉLESTIN MUSEKURA, *PhD, president and CEO of African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries, Inc. (ALARM)*

As someone committed to preparing this next generation of leaders, I recommend this book to you. *Business by Design* is a compelling, visionary, and practical example of what it looks like to make a difference in this world for Jesus. You will be

challenged to live for His glory as you live out your faith in the marketplace.

—MARK GAUTHIER, *vice president of Cru,
executive director of Cru's US Campus Ministry*

Business by Design is a tremendous resource for young business professionals who may be unsure of how their budding careers intersect with kingdom work. Harris' book is filled with both practical and inspiring biblical principles to help them succeed in finding that intersection. What's more, these principles prevail cultural boundaries and can be applied globally in any context. I highly recommend this book to those wanting to make their professional careers have a lasting and eternal impact on the world!

—DOUG SHAW, *president and CEO
of International Students, Inc.*

Business by Design is a practical, thoughtful understanding of God's work for the businessperson wanting to steward their career or company in a God-honoring manner. Raymond Harris provides personal examples, biblical insights, and encouraging models for the reader who desires to glorify God in their workplace. I encourage you to not only read the book, but also the take time to reflect upon the treasure of principles found within these pages!

—TRAE VACEK, *national director
of Bridges International*

I felt like I was sitting at the feet of a mentor because Raymond Harris reveals how he extends God's love to others through the day-to-day realities of engaging in business. If you care at all about influencing your organization's culture, you must read *Business by Design*.

—BILL HENDRICKS, *executive director for Christian Leadership,
The Hendricks Center at Dallas Theological Seminary, coauthor of
Your Work Matters to God, author of The Person Called YOU:
Why You're Here, Why You Matter & What You
Should Do With Your Life*

BUSINESS BY DESIGN

Applying God's Wisdom for True Success

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FOREWORD

Our business partnership with Raymond over the past twenty years is a remarkable story. We can attest to the genuine, purposeful commitment Raymond made as a young man to live and work by faith. For Raymond, there is no distinction between faith and business: his business is the evidence of his faith.

Raymond's insightful study of the Gospels shines a light on business principles woven into the teachings of Jesus and gleaned from his interpersonal relationships. The anecdotal stories from Raymond's personal journey provide relatable accounts for all who desire to live out their faith in the workplace.

Just as we have been blessed in our relationship with Raymond, we pray that you will be blessed by the simple truths he shares in the following chapters.

—Shade O'Quinn and Larry Craighead
Partners in Raymond Harris & Associates Architects,
one of the most prolific large architectural firms in the US

PREFACE

I am an architect.

I've been trained to design buildings and to build things. It is safe to say that everyone I've met in America has been in a building that my firm has either designed or remodeled. Not many architects can boast such a claim, but I realize it is a result of God's faithful blessing upon us. In reality, I know our success is a gift.

I enjoy leading people to build our company—now one of the most prolific architectural firms in the country and serving some of the world's largest clients. And I realize this would have been impossible without seeking God's wisdom through the application of his business principles found in the Gospel parables. In this book I have attempted to share what I have learned over the past thirty-five years.

In order to apply these biblical business principles, I had to reprogram my heart and rewire my thinking about how I approach business and the people I lead. I hope this book may help you reprogram your thinking as you work or build your business.

Since the master Architect has clearly laid out a plan for us to follow, my goal is to demonstrate faithful obedience in what I understand that design to be.

Over thirty-five years ago, I had breakfast with J. Oswald Sanders, a well-known Christian author. Mr. Sanders, a lawyer

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and ministry leader, was well up in years and respected for the wisdom he shared through his published writings. I asked him to write a book for young professionals that would show us how to be effective in the workplace. Without hesitation, he said, “Why don’t you write that book? You are the one who seems to need it.”

That statement has haunted me and now convicted me to write this very book.

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I was usually comfortable on the open road behind the wheel of my 1983 Honda Accord—especially with Marydel sitting next to me. But on one particular day, not so much. I suppose some of it was fear of being late for the most important meeting I had ever had in my young architectural business. Some of it was probably the gnawing sense in my stomach that I didn't belong in this meeting—who was I to deserve an audience with one of the nation's largest retail companies?

I kept trying to talk myself out of the recurring nightmare that played in my mind: wise, experienced businessmen on the other side of an enormous table who were unable to stop laughing at the audacity of a twenty-eight-year-old architect with a skinny portfolio taking up their valuable time. As if I could deliver something they needed. The nightmare, of course, played into my fears of unworthiness and inexperience. Marydel, bless her heart, was my biggest cheerleader and helped me drive on with determination.

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The stoplight-studded old highway to Bentonville, Arkansas, from our Fayetteville hotel offered all kinds of opportunities to delay us on that cool, rainy morning. Even though I was excitedly nervous, I definitely did not want the tense driving conditions to make us late. Pressing hard on the wheel, I prayed that we would make it on time. The bright side of me was ecstatic about the rare prospect of meeting with the powerhouses behind this company's meteoric rise to retail dominance. I kept trying to reassure myself: *At least I won't walk away from this meeting with less than I had when I walked in.*

I also kept telling myself that this was not exactly an awkward cold call. In fact, this potential client had invited me to come based on a small project I had done indirectly for them just a year earlier. I had just left my employer—on good terms—to start my own business. A contractor offered them a small job that they deemed unworthy of their time and reputation. “We don't do this kind of work,” they said. “But we can recommend a hungry young architect who would be glad to work with you on it.”

When the contractor called, I said, “Absolutely!”

At that point, I didn't have the experience to back up my hope, but somehow I believed that small didn't always mean insignificant. I believed that if I gave it my best, it might open the door to something greater. I had heard of the principle, “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much” (Luke 16:10 NIV). This Scripture was instrumental in helping me start and build a company that would one day serve wonderful clients.

It just so happened that this contractor's small project was for a client named Walmart, the retail giant. And at some point,

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they had taken notice of the project and my part in it and decided that I might be open to doing more work for them.

Marydel and I finally arrived at our destination. My nightmare immediately vanished as I saw the humble warehouse. I parked the car in the gravel parking lot and walked through unassuming storefront doors into a small waiting area with inexpensive folding chairs. After a few minutes, a gracious Mike Webb sat down with me to discuss possible work for our firm.

What an exhilarating surprise it was. I had thought I was coming to introduce myself with the possible hope of a future project that could blossom into more. Instead, I left the building with nineteen small projects waiting for me to start. Thank God I hadn't let fear talk me into a U-turn.

The Tension between Two Economies

Can you see the two realms and their conflicting economies? The world's economy operates only in the physical world into which you were born; you naturally believe it to be the most real. God's economy operates in the spiritual world that is unseen by your eyes; it calls you into a greater and more enduring reality—a reality that the physical can never provide.

Following God's direction wholeheartedly means choosing his world, his economy, his kingdom over the pull of this fallen world and its values. It means taking a long-term view that doesn't get sucked in by shortcuts. It means believing that if you put God first and value others as you value yourself, then you will come out ahead; not ahead of others necessarily, because this is not a competition, but ahead of where you can ever get by putting yourself first.

Which economy will you give priority to? Which one defines your identity and gives you purpose?

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Although you presently live in both economies, only one can take priority. No matter which one you choose to put first, the choice relies on faith, because no one can prove God's existence or nonexistence. And regardless of which economy you put first, you will always feel the tension between the two. Your choice has to be continually reaffirmed and proven through your actions. Furthermore, your choice continues to define your identity and your purpose in an ongoing way. Which economy do you choose to serve? Which identity and purpose will drive your personal and business development?

I hope you'll stick with me through this journey, because it's not easy to unseat the assumptions that form your perspective on this choice. Look carefully at the success characteristics I introduce as opposed to the world's approach that appears to work but then either blows up or leads to unquenchable thirst.

Purposes for Business

There are numerous purposes for business presented in the parables and teachings of Jesus. But the emphasis on certain principles suggests primary purposes for building a business to further God's kingdom on earth. The primary purposes I have gleaned are:

- To love and honor God.
- To love others and do what is best for them.
- To seek God's kingdom and his righteousness.
- To develop and transfer treasures to heaven.

These purposes are accomplished by bearing the fruit of righteousness. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is given to those who are producing its fruit. How do we know if we are

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accomplishing these purposes and bearing fruit that lasts for eternity? We need to understand our broader purpose on earth so that we may determine our particular purpose in work and business.

What Is My Purpose on Earth?

Many of us wonder, but few of us take the time to think deeply through our purpose on earth. Two basic questions come to mind when I think about my purpose on earth:

1. Who am I to become?
2. What am I to do?

From my study of Jesus' parables, the answers seem to be that I am to be a person of righteous character who is rich in good deeds, and I am to do the work of Christ on this earth by being his hands and feet.

When God saves our souls, he transforms our purpose from glorifying ourselves to glorifying him. As such, we are to be good workers who are unashamed of the gospel as we build up the body of Christ. We are to be fierce soldiers who fight injustice and protect the weak. Finally, we are to work out our salvation with a healthy fear of God that is expressed through our righteous actions; we are to work hard, knowing that we will one day stand before the Lord to give an account of our lives. This healthy fear of God is really a respect and love for him as our Creator and Master.

Loving and Honoring God

As I have contemplated why God gave me the ability to establish and maintain a large architectural firm, I have become

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convinced that it was to glorify him by being a faithful steward of my business opportunities while serving those around me. Part of my stewardship is to generate profit in my business, just like the faithful stewards in the parables. But I am also to pursue constant fellowship with God and intimately abide in him so that the fruit born through me will show my love and devotion to him.

Loving Others While Working

While studying the Gospels, I was constantly reminded of the importance of loving others through the application of the Golden Rule in all things business. Knowing that the souls of people last for eternity, I consider it an imperative to love people in such a way that they see the kingdom of God in all that I do. In addition to telling them about God's love, showing love through my actions is the most effective witness. There is no greater way to express love in the daily work environment than by doing what is in the best interest of employees, clients, and all business associates.

There is no division between the sacred and secular when it comes to working in business. Everything we do at work should be done to the glory of God. All business is important, and everything should be done to advance the kingdom of God. There is nothing more holy than performing excellent work while employing people and sharing the gospel through how you run a business. We positively affect a lot of people when we handle our business in accordance with God's principles.

In a construction shack years ago, a job superintendent said something that floored me. "I notice something different about you," he said. "You haven't said it, but the way you act makes me wonder if you're a Christian."

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“Yes, I am,” I answered.

“I knew because of the way you treat me and others on this job,” he told me. “I also notice it in how you handle problems.”

That conversation has stuck with me for over twenty years.

Throughout the years, several other building contractors have told me that they sensed there was something different in how I handle business. It was affirming to know that as I sought to show love to others, I was expressing my deep faith in God. As an interesting side note, the relationship between a contractor and an architect is notoriously tense and filled with opportunities to blame each other. I have always taken the position that the contractor is an ally, and we must work effectively together to take good care of the client. With this attitude in mind, I have always developed a friendship with our contractors.

I do not want to wear my faith on my sleeve by only talking about it rather than showing it through my actions. Obviously, actions speak louder than words, and we should never be ashamed of our faith in Jesus. Humbly demonstrating our faith through our righteous actions is an effective way to share the love of God.

The Use of Profit

In my opinion, there are several priorities for the use of profit. First, we should take care of our immediate family. Second, we have an obligation to take care of our employee family, ensuring that employees can support their families and benefit by sharing in the company’s profits. A generous work environment supports financially healthy employees who help sustain the business.

Profit should also be used to build and expand an economic engine so the company can remain vibrant and sustainable. If

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all profit is spent on excessive overhead and compensation, then nothing is available to fuel and maintain the engine generating those profits. Appropriate and prudent reinvestment in a company is critical for the healthy continuance of the economic business engine.

Once profits have been allocated to these three uses, where else should they be deployed? Should business owners use the remaining profit for their own exclusive consumption? Is there a greater purpose? As stewards in God's kingdom, business owners know that the entirety of their profits are not for personal consumption or hoarding. This is graphically depicted by the foolish rich farmer in Luke 12:18–21 (NIV):

Then [the farmer] said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"

This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.

I think there is a higher purpose for our profits.

Deploying Profits for the Future

The disciple Timothy was to give instruction to the wealthy on how to deploy earthly profits and lay up treasure in heaven (1 Timothy 6:17–19). We are exhorted to be rich in good deeds and to be generous, willing to share with others. But we destroy the

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ability to share with others if we are totally geared toward consumption. Our earthly treasures are never to be hoarded but are to be distributed humbly. We are not to set our hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but set our hope on God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Always be on the alert for deployment opportunities, ready for action, and quick to respond.

When I ask my friends what they want to hear when they stand before the Lord, I always hear the same thing. They want to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” That assumes they were servants of God and faithful stewards of what had been entrusted to them.

Everyone wants affirmation and to hear the words “well done.” But to hear these words, we must heed Jesus’ instructions in the Gospels on how to be good stewards. He told the rich young ruler, “Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven” (Mark 10:21). This promise from God assures that if we take care of the poor, then we will store up treasures in heaven. Taking care of the poor and the vulnerable is mentioned many times in Psalms and Proverbs. For example, Proverbs 19:17 tells us that we are actually loaning to God when we give to the poor and that he will repay us.

My Pledge to You

My life in business, with its rewarding successes and painful failures, has taught me a lot over the years. But my growing knowledge of God’s Word has taught me even more. I could easily lay out a formula for success and promise you that following it would give you everything you ever wanted. But it would be neither honest nor true. It’s not quite that simple—in part because we live in two economies.

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It is my desire that this book be practical rather than philosophical. The biblical principles described in this book are extremely practical. They will help you in your pursuit of success in earthly business. I really believe that. But I don't guarantee success, because I have no idea how you define success. And I don't know God's path for you in his plan for your success.

Here's the best promise I can make to unlock business success: If you wholeheartedly follow God's direction, he *may* refine your concept of success, and he *will* give you the desires of your heart. If instead, you trust your eyes and the convincing deceptions of this temporary world, no success will *ever* satisfy your deepest longings.

FAITHFULNESS

WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING

Over ten years ago, I was struggling with a project to design a children's village for the orphaned and vulnerable in Zambia. I solicited the help of numerous young interns in our office to design the facility as a pro bono project. Since most work was done after hours, none of them made the extra effort to stay late and work on it. They did not understand what was necessary or engage with the project as I had expected.

One Friday evening, I shared with my partner, Shade O'Quinn, that I was disappointed in the effort given by these young, talented architects. I thought this was a great opportunity for them, but they did not embrace it at the level I had hoped. I left frustrated. But when I arrived on Monday morning, sitting on an easel in my office was a beautifully designed auditorium building. Without my asking, Shade spent the weekend designing the most efficient and effective project for these vulnerable children in this poverty-stricken country. It was a beautiful

design that was eventually built. Literally tens of thousands of orphans have benefited from this wonderful building. The fact that my partner came in after hours to design this building, when no one else was looking, was a wonderful testimony of faithfulness.

My partners have been faithful to me. They go way beyond the norm, making special efforts to ensure our firm's success.

Jesus Was Always Faithful

He who is faithful in little will be faithful in much. Jesus taught this principle unambiguously. We are not going to be faithful with the big things unless we can show our faithfulness in the little things. God's upside-down economy is like that, contrary to people's natural inclinations.

Jesus was faithful in the smallest of details, as exemplified by his returning the donkey to its rightful owner after he rode it into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Mark 11:2-3). Throughout his life, it is undisputable that Jesus was faithful in all that he did. He not only taught about faithfulness but also demonstrated faithfulness to his disciples, his most intimate friends. They could not stay awake and keep watch for him on his last night in the garden of Gethsemane, yet he remained faithful to them. Even when his closest companions abandoned him, he faithfully fulfilled his mission by going to the cross, rising from the dead, and encouraging his friends to follow him for the rest of their lives.

When No One Else Is Looking

As Jesus was talking to a crowd, he told the story of a faithful and wise servant. This servant was doing all the things he was supposed to do, even when no one was looking. Though his master

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had gone away, leaving him unaccountable, the servant faithfully executed his duties. When the master returned unannounced to find his servant faithfully serving him, he entrusted the servant with much more (Luke 12:42–44).

I find that to be true with my employees too. I have numerous employees who do just enough to get by when no one else is looking. I also have faithful employees who, when no one is looking, will “stay late to make up for coming in early.” They are faithful regardless, because intrinsically they want to serve and do an excellent job. They exemplify what Jesus was talking about with the faithful servant.

Lisa, my personal secretary, does many things for me when I am out, everything from making sure that calls are properly handled to responding to important correspondence. If I am traveling, she works in the evenings if necessary to ensure that I get home safely. Many early mornings she has checked me in on flights to ensure that I have a reserved seat. I appreciate how Lisa takes care of me, because her faithfulness exceeds that of her job description. Her faithfulness is shown in doing what is necessary to help me become successful, even when I am not looking.

Examples of Faithful Stewards

In the parable of the ten minas, there were faithful and unfaithful stewards (Luke 19:11–27). Jesus used this story of stewardship to communicate the importance of faithfulness. A nobleman gave ten servants a mina each, which was equivalent to fifty shekels or 1.25 pounds, probably of silver, instructing them to put the mina to work during his absence. Upon his return, the master required each servant to give an accounting of how he handled his mina. The first servant brought not

only his mina but ten additional minas. The second brought five more. The master commended both servants, saying, “Well done. Because you have been faithful in a very small matter, take charge of much more.”

A similar parable has the same application (Matthew 25:14–30). In this story, the master gave three servants talents to manage. A talent was approximately seventy-five pounds, a large measure of probably gold or silver. He gave one steward five, another two, and the last he gave one talent. Two of the stewards were faithful as they doubled what had been entrusted to them. The last servant was lazy, bringing back the solitary talent to his master without having done anything with it. The master called him *unfaithful* because he took the talent and buried it. Why did Jesus call the first two men *faithful*? It was because they knew what was required by the master and worked diligently to meet his expectations. The lazy servant hid his talent out of fear, believing his master to be hard, and he was not faithful to invest it as the others had.

In the same way, we are entrusted with our clients’ projects. Our clients have expectations and many times are hard on us. But when we provide services that meet their needs and exceed their expectations, we are like the stewards who doubled their talents. Once our clients find us faithful in what they have entrusted to us, they reward us with more work, just as the master rewarded his servants. The greatest reward for our faithfulness is our clients’ affirmation when they find out that we have diligently worked extra hard for them.

One time a senior vice president of Walmart decided to audit our travel expenses, taking our invoices and carefully examining them. Travel expenses are the smallest portion of the costs we

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pass on to Walmart, and we have hundreds of projects each year that require travel. Travel could be done in a careless way and expenses submitted that might benefit the traveler, but our firm's culture is to treat Walmart the way we want to be treated. So we spend as little as possible for the benefit of Walmart.

That is what the senior vice president of Walmart told us after doing a thorough examination. He said, "I thought that RHA was faithful, but looking at the small expenses of travel, I know that they are because I did not find any expenses that were out of line or exceeding the allowance." We were found faithful when no one was supposedly looking, yet they were looking. In fact, they were looking carefully at what we were doing.

This helped our reputation at Walmart, and, as a result, we were rewarded with more work in subsequent years. I do not attribute our workload just to this one instance, but it certainly convinced the client that we were faithful when no one else was looking.

If we are not faithful in what is entrusted to us, then who will entrust us with true riches? If we are unfaithful with other people's money, who will give us our own? This is an additional motivation to diligently take care of our clients.

No one may ever find out what we do, but if we are caught doing good things and not bragging about them, our faithfulness will serve our best interest in the future. I also know that if we do the wrong things, then it could result in the opposite—it could ruin our reputation and sever a relationship.

Faithfulness with Others

Faithfulness with people is more important and harder than faithfulness in our actions. I deeply regret the times I have been

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unfaithful to people in my life. Sometimes the damage can be irreparable. Hopefully those relationships can be redeemed over time, but it drives home the importance of faithfulness.

Faithfulness to our families is most critical. It has been my experience that most people find it difficult to be faithful all the time in all they do. When no one will find out or when no one is looking, there is a temptation to be unfaithful. If faithfulness is not the highest priority in our personal relationships, then tragic consequences result.

I have been unfaithful in some of my business relationships in the past. It caused pain and disappointment to them—and to me. Faithfulness builds a business relationship while unfaithfulness destroys it quicker than anything else. It is far worse to be unfaithful than to be incompetent. I have seen the damage it can do, and I endeavor not to let it happen again.

We all know the feeling of being betrayed. So faithfulness with my partners is an important attitude and resulting action. I do not want to lose their confidence in me because I am unfaithful to them, even when they are not looking. When it comes to expenses within the firm, I pursue faithfulness, not spending more than necessary and certainly not spending the firm's money on personal items. I strive to spend money in such a way that my partners would be proud of me as a faithful partner to them.

We should always be faithful to those underneath us. We should take up their cause and try to look for opportunities to serve them. I think subordinates sense faithfulness from their superiors. When we are faithful to them, they feel secure and desire to work hard.

My partners and I have sought to be faithful to our employees

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in their compensation. When our firm makes profits, we share a sizeable percentage of those profits with them. They have faithfully served us by taking care of the client, so we should faithfully take care of them by compensating them. It seems unconscionable to me to keep all the profits. I certainly would not want to be treated that way.

When I think of faithfulness, I think of my beloved springer spaniel, Norman. When I am home, Norman waits at the back door or looks through the windows because he wants to come in and be with me. He is a faithful friend, always happy to see me and forgiving me if I am short or impatient with him. He willingly sits at my feet while I read or watch TV. Norman has taught me a lot about being faithful despite how he is sometimes treated. He is a good reminder to be faithful with people regardless of their attitude toward or treatment of me.

The Amount Is Not Important

The poor widow slowly walked to the offering box and dropped in two small coins, about one sixty-fourth of a day's wages. She did not notice if anyone was looking; she certainly did not do it for show. She just dropped the coins—all she had to live on—to express her faithfulness and love for the Lord. Jesus watched from a distance and said, "This poor widow has put in more than all of them" (Luke 21:3). She was faithful with the little and has been immortalized as one of the most faithful stewards in God's kingdom.

All of Scripture reveals God's faithfulness to us, even though we do not deserve it. That has taught me that I am to be faithful regardless of others' responses to me.

For Further Study

- ◆ Matthew 24:45–46: Faithful and wise servant.
- ◆ Matthew 25:14–30: Parable of the talents.
- ◆ Matthew 25:21, 23: He who is faithful in a few things.
- ◆ Luke 12:42–48: Being faithful during the master’s absence.
- ◆ Luke 16:10–12: Faithful with little and with another’s property.
- ◆ Luke 19:11–27: Parable of the ten minas.
- ◆ Luke 21:1–4: Story of the poor widow.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Raymond H. Harris is a practicing architect, executive movie producer, and venture capitalist in God's kingdom. He is founder and chairman of RHA Architects, which has become one of the largest architectural firms specializing in corporate architecture.

Raymond graduated first in his class from the University of Oklahoma and was selected as the outstanding senior in the College of Architecture. He was selected as the outstanding alumni in 2013–2014.

He cofounded the Christian Economic Forum, is a founding partner of the Global Cities Movement Day efforts in NYC, and is extensively involved in international sustainable community development projects in Africa and Asia. He serves on numerous corporate and not-for-profit boards.

Raymond has authored *The Anatomy of a Successful Firm* and *The Heart of Business*. He is also an executive producer for numerous movies distributed by Sony Pictures and Lions Gate Entertainment. Raymond has hiked all of the continental US National Parks and served as a Boy Scout scoutmaster.

Raymond and his wife, Marydel, are blessed by their four adult children, their spouses, and six grandchildren.

ABOUT RAYMOND'S COMPANY

Raymond Harris & Associates Architects (RHA) is one of the most prolific large architectural firms in the United States. Professional services have been provided for projects in almost every municipality in the United States, having worked in all fifty states and in most jurisdictions. It is safe to say that everyone has been in a project that RHA has designed in the past thirty-five years.

RHA has consistently been in the top ten largest firms in the Dallas Metropolitan Area and the state of Texas. At one point, they were one of the top thirty largest firms in the United States. Selected five times as a top five firm in their industry, RHA was selected by McGraw-Hill Publishing as the number two corporate retail design firm for three years.

The firm has provided employment for over 350 employees, most of whom are professionals, and has been a training ground for young architects for decades. By providing excellent service, the firm relies on repeat and referral work.