

# Christian Nonprofit CFO Podcast

EPISODE #35 TRANSCRIPT

## Top Leadership Lessons from the Bible — Part 1

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### Intro:

*Welcome to another episode of the **Christian Nonprofit CFO Podcast**. This is the place to enhance your insight as a CFO in order to expand your influence and optimize your ministries impact. Content on this show is to inform, instruct and encourage your strategic development. It is not to render specific financial or legal advice for your organization. Now here's your host, David Beroth.*

### David Beroth:

Hello, my friends. Welcome to the October episode of **The Christian Nonprofit CFO Podcast**. Thank you for being part of this podcast community. As we have been considering how we can grow as financial leaders to serve where the Lord has us. I've been reflecting recently that we have now been at this endeavor for five years. The first episode of this podcast was released on September 3rd of 2015. So congratulations to you on our five year anniversary together. And thank you for joining me on this journey to enhance our insight as financial leaders in order to expand the impact of our ministries. I was recently informed that this podcast is now in the top 10 podcasts for CFOs, and I hope to continue this podcast, Lord willing and schedule permitting, in order to provide you free, practical and relevant input for financial leaders. As I am right there in the trenches with you as a practicing financial leader who desires to serve the Lord and to share thoughts with you, of lessons that he teaches to me as I've labored to provide this meaningful and free content for you.

I'm asking a request from you, my friend. If you have listened to three or more episodes, I'm asking you to take less than three minutes to do a quick rating and possibly write a brief review where you receive this podcast information. So if you would pause right now in this episode and do a quick rating, I would really appreciate it. It would just mean the world to me, and it would help to grow the podcast influence in order to serve financial leaders of other nonprofit organizations around the country. So if you pause right now, I'd really appreciate it.

Well, thank you. I trust you left a brief rating for me and a little review, and I'm grateful for that. So in this episode here today, we're going to do something unique. Last year, I read a book titled *The Top 10 Leadership Conversations in the Bible* by a gentlemen named Steve Moore.

I've enjoyed what Steve Moore has done over the years and I saw this book was available. So I picked it up and as I read it, I was so fascinated with the insights that the Lord had given to him as he studied through the Scriptures of leadership lessons, leadership insights, and leadership conversations that occurred in the Scriptures. His book was full of biblical nuggets on leadership. And as I read through book and I processed the 10 leadership lessons that he had in this book, I wanted to share some thoughts with you from my reading of this book. So I'm gonna lean heavily on what Steve Moore has written. And I'm going to take four of his gems and discuss them with you through the lens of financial leadership. I was hoping to do all four of these gems and one podcast episode. But as I was preparing my show notes, I realized it was going to be way too much information to put into one podcast episode.

So we're going to do two of his leadership gems and this episode. And then we will plan on doing two more gems in next month's episode. So once again, the core content of this episode will be from his book and I will be interweaving my examples about financial leadership into his content. And I would highly recommend his book. Once again, the title is *The Top 10 Leadership Conversations in the Bible*. Highly recommend it. If you'd like to dive deeper into his leadership insights from the Scriptures, Steve and this book, did an extensive research project from his own personal study of the Scriptures, in which he assessed, number one, leaders that were noted throughout the Scriptures. Number two, he examined who the followers were that were participating under the leadership of those leaders. And then number three, he looked at the unique situations in which the leaders and the followers found themselves.

Steve noted 10 leadership conversations from his own personal study— this extensive list. He observed 10 key lessons from this leadership engagement that I believe is relevant for you and me, as they were from the leaders of old. So by defining leaders, Stephen intentionally looked at individuals who had influence over others. Since leadership at its core is not a title, it's not a position, it's truly about influence. He looked for those who had influence over those who are around them. And they looked at the interaction with the followers in their own specific situation.

So the way that I'm going to process these gems with you through these two podcast episodes is one I'd like to read for you Steve's executive summary about the gem we'll be discussing. Two, I will summarize the main content along with the biblical illustrations that he brought forth in his book. Then three, I like to pose a relevant question for your consideration, both from Steve's input, as well as, as I've processed it for financial leaders. And then fourth and finally we will apply these particular biblical lessons in the realm of financial leadership.

So let's jump right in lesson number one is what Steve Moore calls favor. So I like to read for you the executive summary when he looked at the critical nature and the incredible value that's necessary. If we want to be effective leaders to obtain the favor of God. And here's what Steve said, "The favor principle asserts that giftedness and training are not enough to be effective as leaders. We will need the favor of God. There is a difference between the favor of God and the

power of God. The power of God moves in and through us to impact others to advance God's kingdom.

The favor of God moves in and through others to open doors for us to advance God's kingdom. Joseph's life shows how God's favor took him from being sold into slavery to second in command of Egypt." Let me just read those middle two sentences one more time. Steve says "The power of God moves in and through us to impact others to advance God's kingdom. The favor of God moves in and through others to open doors for us to advance God's kingdom." That is a nugget that you could spend a lot of time processing and meditating upon because if you want to serve as an effective leader before the Lord in the realm of finances, we need the favor of God. So the main principles this once again, giftedness and training are not enough to be effective as leaders. We must have the favor of God.

So let's look at a couple of examples briefly here. Steve points out the example of Joseph and you imagine Joseph, here's a man sold into slavery, struggling with where he fits in this world, missing his family, what is God going to do in his life. And yet he endeavored to serve the Lord faithfully in some very difficult circumstances. He was put in the midst of temptation and he surrenders the Lord, "I'm going to follow you. Even when I faced the struggles and the temptation which are around me." What's interesting then, he gets, of course, tossed into prison. He's struggling. I can only imagine how he was struggling, "God, I've tried to serve you, here I am in prison." But he continued to faithfully serve the Lord there in prison. And it says there in Genesis chapter 41, verse 21, that as Joseph was serving there, it says that God was "granting him favor in the eyes of the prison warden" and "God looked down upon Joseph and granted him favor." And Joseph then was used by others and under the influence of others to be placed in a position of great authority and responsibility, because God's favor was upon him. And how about you and me? We think about the life of Joseph. We reflect upon that of God: Do I serve you faithfully through the thick and through the thin, through the good times and the bad times— am I going to be like Joseph? What's another example? Well, we see, as Joseph there, serves in Egypt, Israelites grow as a country there. And of course we know the, the great persecution they had under the hand of Pharaoh, but we see in Exodus chapter 12 verse 36, that as God was working to bring the Israelites out of Egypt and said, God made the Egyptians "favorably disposed toward the people. And they gave them whatever they asked for." God, once again, looked upon the Israelites at that time and said, I'm going to grant them my favor and accomplish through the Egyptians things that would astound the Israelites.

And as God granted them favor, he accomplished his purposes. Then through the Israelites, another example is Ruth finding favor. Before Boaz, we see that as Ruth was serving before the Lord faithfully, she went and she served and said, God, what would you have for me? That God granted her favor through the eyes of Boaz and accomplished great things through Ruth. God wants to grant his favor upon our lives when we position ourselves to say, God, I want to obey you and I went to walk in your ways.

Another testimony that Steve shared his book—which was interesting because I do serve at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association—but Steve used the example of what God did through Billy Graham’s life in 1949. In 1949, Billy Graham had been an evangelist for a season, but he had set up a time there to do an evangelistic crusade in Los Angeles. He was laboring as he’d been doing for quite some time. And God was blessing him, but God was about to propel him onto a platform that he had never known before. So as he was serving there in Los Angeles, in his crusade, it says “Several weeks, then the media mogul and the publisher by the name of William Randolph Hearst sent a two word directive by telegram to the editors of his newspapers.” And here was his tour directive “Puff Graham.” In newspaper jargon, the director told them to feature stories about Billy Graham. And his event coverage about Billy Graham and his tent meetings received priority throughout William Hearst’s media empire. Soon after, newspapers began to follow suit, and Billy Graham and the gospel message, which he was proclaiming, gained momentum on a national stage. It’s interesting that Billy Graham wrote about this experience in his book *Just As I Am*. And he said, “Hearst and I did not meet, talk by phone, or correspond as long as he lived.” So God chose to grant favor to Billy Graham by working through the media publisher mogul William Randolph Hearst in order to propel Billy Graham onto a platform that he had never been before, because God’s favor was upon him. So the question for you and me is this, How can I position myself for God’s favor? Is this favor simply arbitrary? Does he grant favor, just simply as he would desire or is there a way that we can say, Lord I want to be a vessel which you can and use and grant your favor upon in order to make a greater impact through my life for your glory and honor? I believe the answer is yes. And Steve puts forth three answers to that very specific question.

The first item that Steve mentions is this whole element of purity. Steve points out that the intensity of temptation for leaders increases in direct proportion to their platform for influence. The higher you go in leadership, the greater intensity of temptation. You can start believing in your position of leadership that you have the power to cover up any indiscretions. Well, if you’re a financial leader, if you are a finance director, if you’re a CFO, you know that you have a great amount of influence in your organization, and we need to be careful to say, “God. I want to yield myself to you, that I can be a pure and a holy vessel for you to accomplish your purposes through me in my leadership position.”

As I was reflecting on this and considering Billy Graham in particular, it’s interesting that in 1948, the year before God granted Billy Graham, this magnificent favor, Billy Graham and his associates were praying and seeking the Lord and they put together what has come to be known as the Modesto manifesto. And it’s a very public recognition between Billy Graham and those that were part of his organization at that time is that if we want to be used by God longterm, what are the elements in which we need to really seek to have purity before the Lord? So they drafted a document and they said, We want to be pure. We want to be pure around the morals that we maintain before our wives and before others that observe us. They said, We want to maintain purity regarding the finances and how we, how we regard and handle the finances for the organization. They said, We want to maintain purity around the publicity, how we handle sharing what God does in and through our ministry efforts for his glory. We want to be careful how we handle that publicity information. I believe that God

blessed their efforts to be pure in these areas and granted that team marvelous and magnificent ministry opportunities. He granted to Billy Graham and his team great favor for many decades. And I still think it's just remarkable that for the many decades that Billy Graham served the Lord, there were never any significant public scandals that occurred. He sought to be pure. And God said, That is a vessel that I can use to accomplish my purposes. And he then granted Billy Graham and the team favor in a way that only God do. So you and I, we also have a desire to be a servant for the Lord. We'll never have the platform that Billy Graham did, which is fine, but we can say, God, I want to follow you wholeheartedly because I want to be used in my role with, with whatever influence you want to entrust to me, I want to be that pure, holy vessel bought, through which you can accomplish your purposes.

I was reflecting on this example as well, thinking of the film with which the Kendrick brothers did last year called *Overcomer*. If you've seen it, you would remember the matter that they were drawing to our attention, where the coach, first of all, at the beginning of the film saw himself primarily as a coach. And after he started to rattle off some of his identity, he was like, Oh yeah. And I'm a Christian. Then there was that dear older blind man who challenged him directly. He said, do you really see yourself first and foremost as a coach? Or do you see yourself first and foremost as a follower of Christ? And that was so piercing to the heart of that coach when he realized his identity was not truly who he was in Christ, but it was, it was what he was trying to accomplish.

So I would challenge you as I've had to challenge myself, am I first and foremost, a follower of Christ? And then in and through that, as I'm walking with the Lord, he can accomplish his purposes through me as a financial leader to minister to those in and through my organization. Purity.

Number two, if we want to position ourself for the favor of God, Steve points out, we need to have capacity. Steve Moore writes, "Those who fail to steward the gifts and the talents God has given should not expect him to release favor as a means of compensating for chronic underachievement." I like that phrase. God is not going to compensate for "chronic underachievement." Daniel, we see in scripture, was the testimony of one who had purity and who had capacity. God then placed his hand upon Daniel to grant him great influence to accomplish God's purposes across multiple kings and kingdoms. Daniel was a man who had both capacity and the purity before the Lord. The challenge that you and I have, however, is that, the preparation for capacity precedes opportunity.

Will you, will I, labor to be faithful and to thrive wherever he has us and with whatever he entrusts to us right now, in order to expand the capacities and the opportunities he might have for us in the future? Or you might be able to say, preparation generally precedes opportunity. So will you prepare today to be ready for tomorrow's opportunities? Steve pointed out a quote that Abraham Lincoln had, which I really liked. Abraham Lincoln said, "I will prepare. And someday my chance will come." We need to be about the business of increasing our capacity to serve in whatever way that God entrusts to us. I was thinking of my own life of an example.

Back in 2010, I really enjoyed the ministry I was serving with. I felt that some of the processes were really in place and things were humming along quite well. And the Lord was just stirring in my heart, a consideration of serving if he wanted in a way that would have a broader, a deeper impact than even what I was currently doing.

At the time I came into contact with a gentleman who had previously been serving in a leadership role with the Ravi Zacharias International Ministry, RZIM. So he and I were talking and he brought to my attention that back then in 2010, they were looking for a new CFO. So I had some discussion with him. I put together my resume, I submitted it to the gentlemen. He was going to turn it into the folks that were looking for the next financial leader for RZIM. And he came back to me said, well, there's a qualification that if you want to serve as a CFO for RZIM, you have to manage the budget of \$15 million or more. Well at the time, our annual budget was about \$3 million. And I thought to myself, how in the world am I going to get from \$3 million to \$15 million? You know, that's a five X type quantum leap. How am I going to get there? It appears that God's not going to have other opportunities in store for me.

But I continued to try to grow. I took in a lot of information, read books, attended conferences, just cause I had a desire to grow my own capacity to serve the Lord. Well, then in 2011, one year later, I ended up having the opportunity transitioning to Dallas, Texas to work with Seed Company, which was ironically at a budget of around \$30 million. And then over the next five years, the budget grew from around \$30 million to about \$45 million or so, and then ended up transitioning to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in 2016. And that you could see in our website, our audited financial statements where we have annual revenue exceeding \$100 million. So I went from \$3 million. I thought, how in the world am I going to make up \$15 million? But then I ended up jumping from 30 million to 45 million to now in excess of a hundred million dollars. So I just marveled what God did not because I couldn't have served faithfully right there with that ministry. That would have been wonderful as well. I could have served there faithfully and tried to just thrive right where God had me. He chose to move me to these other opportunities. And I've been grateful for what he's allowed me where he's allowed me to serve.

So the funny thing was Ravi Zacharias came and spoke at an event that BGEA was a sponsoring a few years ago. And I had the responsibility to do a couple financial matters and, one of them was pertaining to Ravi. And so I ended up handling the one financial transaction with him. And we talked just briefly. And I said, Yeah, I was interested in becoming your financial leader back in 2010, but your team said that I didn't qualify because I wasn't managing a big enough budget. And here I was now working at BGEA. So he chuckled and I so appreciated it. And I do appreciate RZIM and what God was doing, has been doing for that ministry. But I just share that with you as a personal example of what God was doing in my life, and regardless of what God does in and through your life, where he has you serve, always strive to grow in your capacity to serve.

Back to Steve Moore. He says in his book, "Favor is never a shortcut. It is never a reward for mediocre service." So may you strive for excellence in financial leadership, wherever the Lord's planted you, because you can thrive to see God glorified through the impact that your ministry is making. But my challenge to you in this area is, Have a desire. Say, God helped me to be this lifelong learner and prepare me today for whatever you have for me tomorrow, whatever challenges we're going to face in our organization, that I can come along and provide excellent financial leadership to accomplish your purposes that can come through books, it can come through listening to podcast. Even recently, I had the joy of being in Boise, Idaho, and I took a tour of Mission Aviation Fellowship and Joe Barraclough, my friend, is the CFO there. So we spent some time just connecting and talking. And I just gleaned insights from him of what he was doing there as a CFO of MAF. And I found myself just enjoying the interaction and capturing good insights from him on notes because he's another wise CFO. And I wanted to learn from him, because I want to glean from others so I can serve well wherever God has me. So capacity is the second component that Steve Moore pointed out.

The third one, the third point, if you want to have favor before the Lord, is humility. Steve says, "The more we develop capacity as leaders, the more tempted we are to take credit for results. Pride is a special danger for every leader. Yet humility positions us for the favor of God because it reveals our dependency on him." Do you have that posture? God, let me be humble. I want to grow. I want to be excellent in what I do. Yet, I know, dear God, yes, that you are the one that allows me to serve in whatever capacity you have for me. We are completely and utterly dependent upon the Lord. And may that be our testimony that we are serving in humility. I think of what Paul says in the Romans chapter 12 verse one, where Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." That should be our perspective: Lord, this is simply my reasonable service. Whatever you have for me is my reasonable service, out of gratitude for who you are and what you've done in my life. So the first key lesson that I would share with you from this excellent book is, may you pursue, and may you position yourself to know the favor of God in your own life?

Lesson number two is perspective. Let me read for you here the executive summary, which Steve Moore wrote about perspective. Steve said "Perspective is a leadership differentiator. Leaders see what followers don't. The most effective leaders see what other leaders don't. Perspective as to life is what a scale is to a map. It helps us see clearly where we are in relation to where we've been and where we want to go. As leaders, we grow in effectiveness as we learn to interpret life more and more from God's vantage point. The leadership conversation between Moses and the 12 spies helps us understand the need for better perspective on ourselves, our situation, our strategy, and our success." Don' you love that? Leaders truly see what followers don't, and the most effective leaders see what other leaders don't see. Steve makes a quote by a gentleman named Bobby Clinton where he says, "The difference between leaders and followers is perspective." So how about you? Are you saying God, give me the perspective of a leader. Help me to see what you want me to see, to give guidance to those that I had the opportunity to influence to accomplish your purposes.

So let's look at the example of Joshua and Caleb. Those were the two individuals when God sent in 12 spies to spy out the land of Canaan. Joshua and Caleb went in. The 10 spies came back and had a bad report. Joshua and Caleb said, no, no, no. I think God wants to accomplish his purposes. Even though the giants are huge and we don't know exactly how this is all going to work, we should trust in the Lord and believe that God wants to do marvelous things even through our own meager means. So we see here, as we think about Joshua and Caleb, that everyone was operating from the same data. Joshua and Caleb saw the same items, the same information, saw the same landscape as the other 10 spies. But Joshua and Caleb had a different perspective than the other 10 spies. Those two went on to be leaders to accomplish God's purposes in providing leadership to the children of Israel.

Let me read for you Numbers, chapter 14, verses seven to nine. This is what Joshua and Caleb said, "and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: 'The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, "a land which flows with milk and honey.'" Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them.'" Don't you love that perspective. They said, if God is with us, we don't need to be afraid. We can accomplish his purposes. We can have his perspective and go after what he has for us.

Steve Moore writes, "Everyone was operating from the same data. The land was good. The people were powerful, but, but there were different perspectives." Steve goes on to write later, "We grow in leadership effectiveness the more we learn to interpret life from God's vantage point." I think that is so key. If we want to serve well, longterm as financial leaders, we needed to say, Lord, help me to interpret what I am going through in my life. Help me to interpret what our ministry is going through. The challenges, the blessings, the struggles that our organization is facing, help me to interpret that from your vantage point.

Steve goes on to write about Joshua, how God was positioning Joshua to succeed Moses as the leader of Israel. And it says here, I'll just quote this paragraph. Steve writes "After Joshua succeeded, Moses as the leader of Israel, the Israelites began to prepare for another opportunity to enter the land of Canaan. Joshua secretly sent two spies to explore. Perhaps he had learned a lesson from Moses and therefore sent a smaller group, without the public fanfare, to minimize the possible impact of a negative report. Rahab hid the two spies and protected them from the King of Jericho. Before the spies returned for the night on Rahab's rooftop, she gave them an amazing report." Listen to what it says here, Joshua, chapter two, verses eight through 11. Rahab said this: "I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt... When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below." Steve Moore then writes, "Let this sink in for a moment. Rahab explained how the



miracles God performed before the first group of spies explored the land, including parting the Red Sea, had already caused the Canaanites hearts to melt in their courage to fail. 40 years later, the people of Canaan still remembered the miracles that God had done on behalf of Israel and were convinced that the Lord is God in heaven above and on earth below. The minority opinion of Joshua and Caleb had been right all along.”

Joshua and Caleb had a godly perspective that could be used in true, genuine leadership where God said, you’re going to see things from my point of view, even when the, the mountain seemed so tall, when the people seem that they cannot be conquered. If Joshua and Caleb could truly say, this is what God wants for us, as big as they seem and as small as we are, if God wants to accomplish his purposes, let’s go for it. They had God’s perspective. So the question for you and me is this, what is God doing? And what does he want from us in this situation of our ministry? Because there’ll be times where things seem to go, well, there’ll be times when they’re great challenges. And my challenge for you is when the difficulties arise in particular, don’t get lost in this endless pursuit of asking God, why this, why that, what are we going to do? But no, say God, let me seek and know and understand your perspective and what you want to accomplish in the midst of the current situation, in which we find ourselves, please go after and embrace God’s perspective.

So what does this mean for financial leaders? When going through different seasons in your ministry, simply seek the Lord’s perspective. I realize it’s easier said than done, but followers will simply say, God, we’re, we’re overwhelmed, we don’t know what to do. And they will just flounder the process. Leaders will say, God, you have placed us here in this particular circumstance, help us to know what you want to accomplish and what you want us to do in this circumstance. So as financial leaders there’ll be seasons in your organization, whether it be great financial challenges—and perhaps right now is one of them, trying to struggle through the season of a COVID-19 and the economic challenges that we’ve faced this year. When you have those challenges, look at your organization, consider your finances and give input to those in your ministry around areas like, well, what does God want us for us in resource allocation? How do we align the finances and trusted to us with the most strategic areas of ministry? What are opportunities for savings that we can embrace during the season of challenge? God, help us to discern what you want us to do and to respond appropriately. Then you might go through seasons of plenty. There might be seasons where God is providing bountifully for your organization. Well, in those seasons as well, say, Lord, what do you want to accomplish? Give me your perspective during the season when there are the resources available. What input could I provide around responsibility? How about stewardship? How about once again focusing the resources for the greatest ministry impact and not squandering the resources entrusted your organization. Seek to know God’s perspective in your ministry, and you will provide great value to those in your organization, because you are seeking to be a godly leader who can help give guidance in your ministry.

I’m reflecting again, back a number of years ago, I was at Seed Company. And when I started there, one of the first biggest challenges I had to face was when we were looking at the

situation where there was a significant growth in our direct field support, but it was growing out of proportion to the administrative support needed to sustain that growth. So we had to do some real difficult evaluation, and I had to kind of lead the charge to do the financial analysis, to say what adjustments might need to be made to allow for the financial stability and the sustainability to allow this organization to grow and to thrive long term as we wrestled through this. And the Lord did provide the wisdom, and our organization did make some adjustments in order to allow us to thrive longer term. But God had to work in and through me and in and through the other leaders to wrestle through that situation in order to allow the ministry to be placed on a good path for stability and sustainability needed.

So I would encourage you as well then. Please be mindful. God, give me your perspective. Help me to thrive as a financial leader in order to meet the needs of this ministry. So my friends, those are two of the gems of this book. Once again, the book is called *The Top 10 Leadership Conversations in the Bible*—highly recommend it to you. Those are two of the gems, and I appreciate you joining me today. Once again, for this episode of **the Christian Nonprofit CFO Podcast**, we've considered together these two gems, these two lessons of leadership from the Scriptures. And if you haven't already done it done it. I'd ask you once again, please make sure and leave a quick rating wherever you listen to this podcast. I would greatly appreciate it. And I look forward to connecting with you again next month, Lord-willing to explore together two more essential leadership lessons from the Scriptures.

I'd like to close today, as I was reading through the scripture mindful of this element of favor, I came across Psalm 44, verse three, and I'll close with this verse today. The Psalmist says this, "For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, Because You favored them." So my friends, may you yourself to know the favor of God and to embrace his perspective in order to enhance your own insight and expand your ministry's impact.

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