



# KINGDOM GAINS

What Every Christian Should Know  
Before Investing, and How to use Socially  
and Biblically Responsible Investments  
(BRI) as a Steward of God's Money

**By Dwight L. Short**

## **Sample Chapter 1**

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# KINGDOM GAINS

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This work is dedicated to my wife and family who have endured the many years of my writing and have still encouraged me; to the advisors who have sacrificially worked to bring BRI to the world; and to each member of all my mission teams who has prayed for me and supported me in making *Kingdom Gains* a reality.

Dwight Short  
2010

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## FOREWORD BY RON BLUE

One of the greatest challenges that we face as Christians is how to integrate our faith into our financial decision-making. Some things are obvious to us such as tithing. What is less obvious is how to make our investment decisions faith-based. There are two aspects to this; one is the process that we use, and the second is the actual investment or investment vehicle that we use.

Over the last several years a discipline of evaluating investments and investment vehicles has been developed using what are called screens. This was first introduced by those who wanted to adopt certain social screens to their investments. They were concerned about environmental and other moral issues and did not want their investments to be used for purposes that they considered to be contrary to their value system.

For many years a Christian investor had no way of making investments reflecting their biblical worldview. This has changed dramatically in the last several years as techniques and tools have been developed to apply biblical worldview screens to the investment decision. For years many denominations and ministries have been able to make investments that were consistent with their moral values. The difficulty for the average investor has been that they did not have enough money to entice the money managers to individually screen their investments.

Today there are many mutual funds that employ moral and biblical screens to the investments they make. In addition there are many professional financial advisors such as Dwight Short who have been able to assist their clients in making investment decisions consistent with their biblical worldview. Dwight has not only been a very, very successful investment advisor, but he is a

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man of passionate faith. He has been able to practice the integration of faith-based decision-making and competent professional advice.

I believe that this book will become a treasured handbook for the persons or families that is serious about being a steward of the financial resources that God has entrusted to them. There is not only practical advice given in this book, but, more importantly, it is integrated with supernatural wisdom. This book has needed to be written for quite some time, and to have it written by such an experienced professional makes it all the more credible. I am delighted and pleased that Dwight has seen fit to put a message in print that God, first of all, imprinted on his heart.

*Ron Blue, President, Kingdom Advisors*

## PREFACE

My longing for a different system of investment probably took root many years ago, when I attended my first annual meeting as a shareholder. At that time I learned a disheartening lesson on how to conduct a meeting if you want to make sure that no new ideas emerge.

This sense of desire and dissatisfaction was then cultivated through 34+ years of working as a financial advisor, helping my clients navigate the pitfalls and possible rewards of Wall Street. More recently, I observed with great frustration, the annual reports and proxy statements of companies bringing resolutions and recommendations to shareholders that can only be described as grand larceny, as they related to upper management compensation.

Such a combination of greed and hunger for power has been on the rise since compensation, commonly in the form of cash packages, was exchanged for incentive programs tied to the price of the company's stock for top corporate executives. Should I have been surprised, therefore, when sales somehow were overstated at Bristol Myers a few years ago—while executive compensation was tied to sales? Or should any of us be amazed that earnings just happen to take off just as compensation packages tied to the price of the company stock are ripe for cashing? Why are we shocked when the rewards of building huge organizations by merging companies and doing spin-offs and acquisitions resulting in earnings increases, are restated years later as a follow-up to accounting procedures that made those earnings look better than they actually were?

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As I write this, we are entering one of the most frightening periods of time in our country's history as it relates to retiree benefits, Social Security and health care. In fact, if you are not a high-ranking political office holder or a top corporate executive who can retire with astonishingly lucrative benefits for both income and health care protection, it's downright scary. Isn't it ironic that some of these highly compensated executives who are living in comfort while their company workers struggle are the very same ones who signed off on taking money out of the pension plans in the mid '90s? As they boosted their companies' earnings per share targets, they also enhanced the likelihood that their stock options would likewise be boosted. For example, we now hear from the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation that, after taking money out of pension funds for this purpose, even more companies may declare bankruptcy on their retirement plans, dumping that additional burden of cleaning up their mess on taxpayers of the country.

Why have we allowed this to happen? Why have I allowed this to happen? Why has our government not intervened? Most of all, why have the shareholders of many of these companies not bothered to curb the excesses?

**As Christians who hold stocks, bonds and mutual funds in today's world, it is time for us to wake up and realize we have been negligent as owners and stewards of what God has entrusted to us for investments.** Not only have most Christians failed to confront the issue of whether their holdings bring some semblance of biblical influence to the marketplace, but also many have not yet awakened to the notion that they have any responsibility in this arena.

The challenge for Christians who wish to make their portfolios fall into line with God's will isn't limited to corporate governance. The problems we face today in dealing with pornography, gaming, tobacco, alcohol, marriage and the family, abortion, political per-

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secution of Christians and wholesome entertainment are enough to make a Christian investor's head spin. Add to that concerns for the environment, taking care of the poor who must rely on wealthy benevolent people for help and communicating biblical truth to the world of investing, and you will start to get a picture of the enormity of it all. I'm not saying it's going to be easy—but it is time to take up the fight and get serious about winning our portfolios and our companies to Christ!

It is my hope that as you read this book that some ideas will take shape and move into action plans for how you will take this issue seriously and draw your own line in the sand when it comes to investing. It may require some proactive response on your part to write some letters (you can use the sample letters in this book) or contact 401(k) and retirement plan sponsors and do some homework about your investments. As you discover how to screen for companies that you do not want to invest in, you also will discover that there are often differences of opinion about where to draw the line. My hope is that after reading and praying about what the Lord would have you do, that you will indeed draw the line somewhere!

Reasonable Christians have much room to disagree about various ideas when it comes to applying our faith and especially when it comes to identifying which stocks should make it into our portfolios or which mutual funds a Christian should own. But I hope you consider more than just performance, and I want you to ask yourself this question—and then answer it: Would Jesus approve of how I have structured my portfolio?

It also may be time for you to rethink your priorities regarding how important your investment portfolio is and whether you are relying on its value each day, month and year. In other words, is your confidence in the value of your nest egg or the Master's hands?

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I have made every attempt to contact and interview a wide range of people in my desire to present this issue fairly. I especially salute the heroes of this industry who have stepped out in faith to build organizations and firms which provide services that will allow investors to hire competent money managers who are screening their holdings with an eternal purpose. Although this book does not endorse any single provider cited, I confess at the outset that I have used and will continue to expand my use of many of these investment professionals to handle portions of the funds that the Lord has entrusted to me. It is important for you to know, however, that I have tried to interview each as an objective third party, and you should conduct your own research before deciding on any investment or money manager. This book is intended to be a guide as to how to do the research, and is not in any way an attempt to market or advertise for any manager.

When I rededicated my life to Christ as a teenager, I adopted Matthew 6:33 as my life philosophy: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” I trust that this book will be another extension of that idea. If it offends you, pray about it. If it challenges you, pray about it. If you don’t want to even think about this because it seems too much to grasp, I will pray for you!

## INTRODUCTION

Dennis Kozlowski of Tyco, Joe Nacchio, CEO of Quest International, and Bernie Ebbers of WorldCom all received hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation and have since been convicted of fraudulent activities. Michael Eisner of the Walt Disney Company, Robert Nardelli of Home Depot and countless other corporate chieftains also have been paid hundreds of millions of dollars, even though through legal means. Did you know that you may have approved all of their payouts? Through stock ownership or investments in mutual funds, the shareholder approvals for outrageous compensation for these and other companies top executives have been a part of the corporate excesses for many years.

It is estimated that one million babies were aborted last year, and the profits from such procedures as well as other related industries are in the billions. Did you benefit from that by investing in companies who perform those services and offer those products?

How about pornography and child pornography? Did you invest in companies that benefited from this dramatic growth industry? Does it matter that your capital is being used for advancing this type of company, in the mutual funds you own?

If you are one of the millions of Christians who reads and acknowledges the Bible to be the central way God communicates with man about all sorts of things, including money, then this book will give you some valuable insights—and the answer to a question you may not otherwise have thought to ask: What is Biblically Responsible Investing, and why should I adopt it?

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Biblically Responsible Investing, or BRI, as it is often referred to, is the act of seeking the Lord's will and honoring God in all aspects of our investment experiences.

In the U.S., from 2000 to 2020 as the wealthiest generation in the history of the world in terms of assets, the baby boomers will begin transferring their wealth to the next generation. The estimated value of this generational shift—trillions of dollars—is staggering, especially when one considers whether these vast sums of money are being used or will be used for the glory of God. Could the Great Commission be funded and realized in this generation if just 10 percent of this vast sum were to be given to Kingdom causes?

Much has already been written about legacy planning and how to avoid spoiling and corrupting heirs with this wealth; this book does not delve into that subject. Instead, the focus of this book is on what God has entrusted to you. *Kingdom Gains* is based on some simple but rock-solid truths:

- The Bible is God's Holy Word.
- The possessions you have are a blessing from God.
- Possessions carry with them the responsibility to handle them in a way that pleases God.
- Generosity and giving are models God has given us in abundant examples.
- How we pass our wealth to the next generation could determine the timing of the fulfillment of the Great Commission.
- God owns it all.
- If you can't argue with these statements, let me challenge you to connect the dots by considering these questions: What would Jesus want you to do with your possessions and blessings? If stocks are included in those holdings, what stocks, if any, would He purchase? How would He handle the proxy that arrives in the mail or over the Internet to approve stock options? What would Jesus do if He finds out the company

## INTRODUCTION

in which He's a shareholder helps fund abortions or pornography or engages in actions in direct conflict with His teachings?

Confronted with these dizzying scenarios, doing a good job managing God's money, especially in the area of investments, suddenly may seem much more complicated. Yet the answers to these and other questions fall into the realm of the Christian who seeks to glorify the Lord in all he does, including his investment activities. A Christian investor also might consider the entreaty offered by Pope Benedict XVI when he urged companies to look at their employees as people participating in a process rather than commodities and mere instruments of production.

Even if you subscribe to the theory that Jesus would not bother investing in any stock because He would give all worldly wealth to the poor, you must acknowledge that God chooses wealth as a means to bless some—Solomon is an Old Testament example—for the very purpose of using it for His Kingdom. Moreover, in the New Testament parable of the talents taught by Jesus (Matt 25:14-30), pursuit of wealth was an expectation. Therefore, it would be short-sighted and wasteful to ignore the potential for *Kingdom Gains* by refusing to consider any investment activity. The pertinent question for us as believers then becomes: How can I invest my money responsibly in accordance with biblical standards?

An oft-used, shorter version of the definition of BRI comes from an affinity group of Kingdom Advisors and is based on 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Investing that seeks to glorify God as an act of worship."

I invite you to thoroughly explore BRI with me through the pages of this book and determine if changes are merited in your investment habits. I fully expect that after reading this book, you will analyze every potential new investment as well as review all the holdings you currently have, against, not just the bottom line,

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but a more important measuring stick: whether they please your Savior.

My wife refers to this process in a different way. She challenges people to think about investments first from the standpoint of your heart. Is what you are placing God's money in helping people, or is it possible that you will be causing harm to them? Believe me, she wants to make money just as much as you do, but she would rather not make money if it causes people to fall into all kinds of sin and grief.

It is my prayer that as you read *Kingdom Gains*, you will think as much about the potential for investing in ways that would please God as you think about your legitimate desire to achieve capital gains.

# 1

## DOES GOD CARE HOW I MAKE MY MONEY?

*In economic terms, high-intensity religion demands a high price.* David Neff, *Christianity Today*

A few years ago I completed my fifth straight year of bringing in more than \$1 million of gross commissions as a financial consultant and had already set a goal of achieving \$2 million. As I leafed through the latest edition of Pensions and Investment Age magazine, however, I noticed a new organization, the Timothy Plan mutual fund group, which invested according to biblical precepts. What a great idea! I had never tapped into the Christian market, and this might be a great way to do it!

After reviewing the organization's materials I had to admit that my own screening techniques left a lot to be desired, particularly from God's point of view. I had been a Christian for many

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years, but I simply had not considered filtering investments as this group did. In addition, the Timothy Plan highlighted sinful activities conducted by companies on issues I had never contemplated.

It was interesting stuff, but as my company had no selling agreement with this organization, I couldn't really show it to my clients. I set it aside.

The people at Timothy Plan kept my contact information, however, and soon invited me to a conference with other Christian advisors. By this time my wife and I had purchased our second home in Florida, and I really loved hiding out there a few weeks every year. My initial response was to decline, claiming I would be too busy. When I discovered, however, that the conference was being conducted within a 20-minute drive from where I lived in Florida, I signed up.

My life as a financial consultant has never been the same! I quickly discovered that people attending this conference were much more serious about integrating their faith into their practice than I had been. They hammered home the idea that God owns everything, and, although I had thought that sounded good in principle, I realized I had never fully embraced this concept. After all, surely that couldn't have been God prompting me to pick up the phone to make cold calls and prospect for clients for my first 10 years in the business? I wanted to take credit for the growth in my clients' assets and success of being a million-dollar producer. While I tried to be humble about all the blessings that came my way, the country and western song rang true for me: "Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble, when you're perfect in every way!" Obviously, I needed a lot of help!

At the conference we received books about how Christians are called to deal with money and wealth. Reading Randy Alcorn's *The Treasure Principle and Money Possessions and Eternity* was an epiphany for me. Prior to this, my success had been measured by worldly standards.

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Little did I know then, that God soon would reinforce the lesson that this world's standards are temporary and fragile. Any hubris built up in my persona from the bull market in stocks from 1981 to 2000 evaporated in the years from 2001 to 2002, when stocks fell sharply. I was even further humbled by market setbacks during the 2008 debacle when the credit crunch hit real estate, stocks and almost every financial asset other than bonds. The biblical teachings outlined in this conference rang true. God does own it all! And He can give it and take it away in a heartbeat. I was learning to look beyond the temporal earthly value of every asset to discover its eternal dividends.

I realized anew that my successes as a financial consultant had not been due to my ability but God's timing and blessing. More important, the conviction grew that it was vital that I manage money in a way that adhered to biblical values as worship to God—and lead others to do it as well. From that conference the National Association of Christian Financial Consultants, better known as the NACFC, was born. I enlisted and became a card-carrying member.

### **GOD CARES HOW YOU INVEST YOUR MONEY!**

If you live in America and are invested in a mutual fund—even if you never buy stocks as an individual—you, too, are a stakeholder in the investment arena. You must learn to think of yourself this way.

But if you're reading this book because you are a Christian investor, your responsibility is much bigger; indeed, yours is a sacred duty. Even if your participation up until now has been limited to biannual glimpses of your portfolio, you're not off the hook. Investing biblically is your responsibility. As an investor/owner of publicly traded companies, it's up to you to know whether the company in which you are a shareholder measures up to God's standards. Let's think about what this entails:

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If a company promotes the homosexual lifestyle, sells pornography, profits from gambling, produces alcohol, tobacco or abortion tools or uses abusive tactics in its employment practices, do you think God cares if you own stock in it?

I decided to take a poll among professional investment managers whose job it is to make investments utilizing screens to filter out undesirable companies that operate outside of biblical values. The companies to which we applied these screens are the same ones listed daily in the New York Times, compiled by the Associated Press and called “The Favorites.” This means they are among the most widely held stocks of clients who have their securities at Merrill Lynch/Bank of America.

This exercise was not intended to indicate in any way whether these stocks should be bought, sold or exchanged and any discussion in this book about specific stocks is not any type of buy-or-sell recommendation. You should always consult a financial advisor before making changes to your holdings. With that noted, let’s take a look at The Favorites:

- Alcatel Lucent
- Bank of America
- Apple
- AT & T, Inc
- Chevron
- Citigroup
- Cisco
- Comcast
- Disney
- ExxonMobil
- Home Depot (replaced by Idearc in 2007)
- General Electric
- IBM
- Intel
- Johnson and Johnson
- JP Morgan Chase
- Microsoft
- Pfizer
- Procter & Gamble
- Time Warner
- Verizon Communications

## DOES GOD CARE HOW I MAKE MY MONEY?

<b>Table 1-A</b> <b>BRI Company investments in “The Favorites”</b>						
Company	Stewardship Partners		Timothy Plan		Ave Maria	
Investment Status	OWN	Violations	OWN	Violations	OWN	Violations
Apple Computer	NO	4	NO	NA	NO	YES
AT&T Corporation	NO	8	NO	9	NO	YES
Bank of America	NO	3	NO	8	NO	YES
Chevron	NO	3	NO	8	NO	NO
Cisco	YES	0	NO	9	NO	YES
Citigroup	NO	3	NO	8	NO	YES
Comcast	NO	4	NO	5	NO	YES
Walt Disney Corp	NO	3	NO	11	NO	YES
ExxonMobil	NO	0	YES	0	YES	NO
General Electric	NO	4	NO	10	NO	YES
Home Depot	NO	2	NO	5	NO	YES
Idearc	NO	NA	NO	NA	NO	NA
Intel	NO	2	NO	7	NO	YES
IBM	NO	2	NO	7	NO	YES
JP MorganChase	NO	3	NO	9	NO	YES
Johnson & Johnson	NO	4	NO	11	NO	YES
Lucent	NO	2	NO	7	NO	YES
Microsoft	NO	4	NO	9	NO	YES
Pfizer	NO	4	NO	11	NO	YES
Procter & Gamble	NO	4	NO	9	NO	YES
Time Warner	NO	4	NO	11	NO	YES
Verizon	NO	3	NO	8	NO	YES

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Table 1-B BRI Company investments in “The Favorites”				
Company	CAMCO Investors		American Values Investments	
Investment Status	OWN	Violations	OWN	Score
Apple Computer	NO	YES	NO	304
AT&T Corporation	NO	YES	NO	333
Bank of America	NO	YES	NO	301
Chevron	NO	YES	NO	259
Cisco	NO	YES	NO	340
Citigroup	NO	YES	NO	242
Comcast	NO	YES	NO	291
Walt Disney Corp	NO	YES	NO	326
ExxonMobil	NO	NO	NO	345
General Electric	NO	YES	NO	184
Home Depot	NO	YES	NO	344
Idearc	NO	NO	NO	NA
Intel	NO	YES	NO	311
IBM	NO	YES	NO	298
JP MorganChase	NO	YES	NO	270
Johnson & Johnson	NO	YES	NO	187
Lucent	NO	N/A	NO	220
Microsoft	NO	YES	NO	315
Pfizer	NO	YES	NO	243
Procter & Gamble	NO	YES	NO	375
Time Warner	NO	YES	NO	172
Verizon	NO	YES	NO	275

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Now let's take a look in Table 1-A and 1-B at what the investment management companies which practice BRI have discovered about the activities of these same companies.

It is important to note that each money manager has its own system for screening, and company ratings could have changed since this writing. For your understanding, some of the details of how each manager does its screening will be discussed in later chapters.

The chilling question that comes immediately to mind, however, is how in the world can the most popular investments among individual investors be so *unpopular* with money managers whose job is to screen out investments that are undesirable?

### SO WHERE CAN A CHRISTIAN GO TO INVEST?

At first glance it appears that there are few companies left standing when the BRI troops have gone through and eliminated all the bad guys. That, however, would be an inaccurate conclusion as the screening for each provider actually eliminates only a relatively small percentage of the total companies in the market as a whole. If you look at the roughly 8,000 publicly held companies, 5 to 10 percent may get screened out. If you look at the Russell 1000, it would be 15 to 20 percent, and if you take into consideration Standard and Poor's 100, you would find about 20 to 25 percent being screened out.

Many of the culprits tend to be large capitalization companies who triggered violations from their activities, either as a direct result of their business or of their corporate policies. Another factor in determining whether a stock is excluded from a portfolio is the fact that some money managers emphasize stocks that may not be in the same asset class as these large capitalization issues noted in the chart. For example, CAMCO Investors of Cornerstone Asset Management Company indicated that they traditionally have a bias toward the mid cap sector of the market and, as a result,

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do not typically consider investing in these “favorite holdings.” They also indicated that when they do add a large cap component to their portfolio, the companies and the violations listed above would still apply.

### CHECK YOUR PORTFOLIO

As you check to see if you are already a shareholder in some of these companies, you may be in for a nasty surprise: **You may have investments in a company that violates biblical principles!** Take comfort: This great awakening may be just what you need to move you to see God work in another part of your life—your investments!

How should you react to this unwelcome revelation? Should you make the radical move of immediately selling all such assets and withdraw completely from investing? (How does one do that in today’s world anyway?) Or should you simply ignore your new-found knowledge and look the other way?

It is common for some well-meaning Christians to take a defensive position over their investments because the offending companies also may be lauded as leaders of American industry. They participate in our dynamic economy with growth and productivity, and they have provided paychecks and comfortable retirement plans for many people.

That doesn’t excuse them, however, if they are sponsoring activities that oppose Christianity. The sad fact is, the likelihood that you own one or more of these stocks is quite high unless you already have done your homework and researched these companies to discover what they are doing in all areas of their corporate outreach. Even if you don’t own these stocks individually, if you invest in mutual funds it is still very likely that your fund will own many of these companies.

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As a shareholder, you are a fractional owner in that company. As a Christian shareholder, you have an additional responsibility to act as God's proxy. Consider this: By always giving approval for any proposal of management, you have helped endorse the actions of that company. Voting with management without thinking about the consequences has been a longstanding tradition that the managements of public corporations take into consideration and rely upon. By throwing your proxy in the wastebasket or automatically marking it with management, you may have been unwittingly complicit to sinful activities conducted by corporate America today.

In the chapters ahead I will show you how to take the steps necessary to conform to Biblically Responsible Investing and become better stewards of all that God has given to you. Meanwhile, let's take a hard look at how companies may be failing God—and we as shareholders may be failing them.

### **THE BIBLICAL CASE AGAINST CORPORATE AMERICA**

Among this list there are several companies who annually make large donations to Planned Parenthood, offer same-sex benefits or subsidize entertainment that is beyond X-rated. Almost all offer executive compensation plans that are out of control.

Just as it should be noted that we have chosen these companies at random and that many screeners find violations, I also want to point out that in all likelihood there are Christians employed at all of these companies who labor there daily in an effort to be salt and light. Despite their efforts, however, companies have incurred the following descriptions that should lead Christian investors and BRI providers to want to know more about the policies of the corporations in which they are purchasing stock. These are the descriptions you will find from the BRI screenings that define some of these activities. Understand that this is not to be a broad-brush approach to all companies and all violations but a sampling

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of the findings. As you read the list of excerpts from the people who make their living screening and reviewing companies relative to a Christian worldview, think about whether this makes you a proud shareholder:

“Offers same-sex benefits in the same way as spousal benefits”

“Donates funds as sponsor or co-sponsor for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) events”

“Donates, sponsors or co-sponsors Gay Pride events”

“Donates to Planned Parenthood”

“Brings pornographic and so-called adult entertainment to the marketplace”

“Licenses, sponsors and invests in stem cell research”

“Manufactures, sells and develops drugs and products for use in abortions”

“Refused to answer difficult questions about executive compensation at their own annual meeting”<sup>1</sup>

The good news is that companies do change and learn from their shareholders. Violations cited above may be out of date if management has subsequently changed its approach to these issues. Again, I remind you that this sampling of “favorites” is not intended to tell you which of these companies you should buy or sell, nor is it intended to recommend a mutual fund or a money

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The violations stated do not apply to all companies, and each company’s violations should be analyzed to discover why it fails to qualify as an investment for a given money manager.

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manager. What money managers are attempting to do is point out facts so that as an investor you can be a better informed shareholder. Why does any of this matter?

### **GOD OWNS IT ALL**

Let's get back to that premise I stated early in this book. It all starts with your orientation and your understanding of what the Bible says about you and "your" possessions. This flows directly into stock or mutual fund ownership as well. Whose name is on the certificate or the brokerage account that is holding these investments? It may be you, you and your spouse jointly or a trust. Maybe it is your company or one of its benefit plans that has the earthly title listed as "owner." It may even be your retirement plan or the church's endowment fund that is listed as the owner. But who really owns it?

The most difficult concept for us to reconcile as Christians is who really owns the assets that are titled in our earthly names. Once you realize and believe that God owns it and you are merely the short-term steward of all the assets listed right now in your control, this book is going to be an easy read. This principle alone is why Christian investors ought to differ in the way they conduct themselves—because God really is the owner of all they have.

Looking back, I can see how God had a hand in my career. Some would call it luck or coincidence, but I believe it to be divine providence. The best example of this took place in 1973, when in my second year working as a stockbroker for Merrill Lynch, I decided to work on President's Day rather than take the day off. Someone called our general office number to inquire about municipal tax-free notes, and I answered the phone and the caller's questions.

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A significant client account back then might contain \$100,000 in assets, and as I impatiently explained this complicated investment to the caller, I asked how much he was thinking of purchasing. His reply: “Three million dollars worth!”

A few days later, my new favorite client deposited \$5 million and purchased \$3 million in short-term notes. The other \$2 million became the base for various investments that he entrusted to me for the next 32 years of my employment. I always thought that God had blessed me in ways beyond my comprehension, but this was like winning the lottery! As a Christian, I have always thanked God for this blessing, but now I understand more fully that it happened for a reason.

When I retired from Merrill Lynch more than 30 years later, Marvin was still a trusted and wonderful client who sent me at least 10 other clients as referrals. Now, looking back, I must acknowledge that gaining this account early in my career was simply confirmation of the calling on my life then and now: teaching financial investments that honor God. God had blessed me at a time when the survival rate of my colleagues was very low for a purpose. Many brokers left the business because of low productivity. The financial markets then were producing mostly negative returns for anyone holding stocks, and interest rates were in double digits.

With newfound awareness of BRI, I have grown more confident that God has more work for me to do in financial services.

You may be experiencing the curse of wealth that keeps you from seeing God’s will for your life and your money. If you have placed your confidence in your net worth, your job or your position, then God will be shaking your confidence soon! Who gave you life and the intellect to make deals, build companies and invest in public and private ventures?

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A dear friend, Maxton Sutton of Covenant Concepts, is my best example of someone who believes deeply that God owns it all. A few years ago he and his wife Jeannette decided to take this idea seriously. Accordingly, they added Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, to the name and address portion of their checks.

I have often wondered about the discussion that took place at the printers when they got this request from Maxton and printed that first set of checks. Imagine with me, however, how this has changed the dynamics of all of their transactions! Maxton will relate to you how this works when things don't go right and mix-ups and mistakes take place in the middle of trying to complete a transaction that's being fumbled badly. How difficult it is when you want to let some error-prone clerk have the wrath of your righteous indignation when you have the Lord's name at the top of your check and you plan on paying for the purchase with one of those checks!

### **WHY IS THIS SO DIFFICULT FOR US?**

It's hard to accept the concept that God owns it all because we want to think of ourselves as being in control of our lives and our assets. This tendency for self-reliance and rebellion against anything that makes us accountable is counter to our human instincts for independence. The sooner we can recognize God's sovereignty, the easier it will be to exercise our role in acting with a "limited power of attorney" (limited by our lifetime) to represent God's interests as we seek His will. This would include all areas of financial management and, once we become shareholders, demands that we seek to be Biblically Responsible Investors.

Just as Maxton was reminded every time he and his wife wrote a check that they must ask themselves how God would want them to spend this money, we as investors must first ask how God would invest His money. When it comes time to vote our proxies, we have to decide how God would want us to act in properly hold-

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ing the management teams of our companies accountable when it comes to corporate governance issues.

If you are still in doubt about who owns all of our “stuff,” check out some of these passages:

*In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? (Luke 14:33-34)*

The context of this is not a demand for divestment of all of our assets but recognition of who owns them. If you cannot admit that God owns them, you are not capable of being salt and light to others in your dealings.

Howard Dayton in his book *Your Money Counts* points to 1 Chronicles 29:11-12:

*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.*

### **WE HAVE BEEN TOO PASSIVE AS SHAREHOLDERS**

By this point, it already should be obvious that most of us have fallen short in our duties and responsibilities as they relate to being responsible Christian shareholders. By conceding the moral ground to others who neither read nor care about biblical truth, we have allowed a secular society to force moral principles upon us that brought sexual sin; materialism and impurity of all types to a level of acceptance that now require us to recover this “stolen” property. By not acknowledging the environmental and ecological waste that we are causing, surely we have displeased God with how we are maintaining his perfect creation. Because of the

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selfish and outrageous compensation levels that are being handed out of the corporate boardrooms while the average worker faces health care and retirement benefit deficiencies, God must wonder where the saltiness has gone.

Are you ready to make a difference and become part of a movement of Christians in America who are not going to accept business as usual? Or are you a professional in the financial services industry who has been trained to be oblivious to the moral and spiritual issues of corporate life? Have you been an undercover Christian afraid to stand your moral ground on these issues?

You will meet many people on the pages of this book who will inspire you to stop being so negligent in your faith and understand that doing what Jesus would do at the office and with your investments can and will make a difference. God bless you as you read on and pray about how the Lord needs to work in your life. Please consider the words of Ken Boa and this excerpt from the book, *Holistic Spirituality, Stewardship and Purpose*:

We have seen that holistic spirituality involves a growing responsiveness to the Lordship of Christ in every internal and external facet of our lives. It is not a question of developing a list of theoretical priorities (e.g., God first, family second, work and ministry third, etc.), but more a matter of allowing the centrality of Christ to determine and empower what we should do in each day. Seen this way, Christ is our Life and Lord in all our activities, and whatever we are doing at the moment becomes our priority focus. When the grace of Christ rules in our lives, we will better discern how to allocate the resources God has entrusted to us.

It seems obvious that we cannot separate our investing activities from the rest of our walk with the Lord.

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### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you really think God cares how we make money? If so, how does that apply to your own situation? Did you notice any of the companies listed in the Favorites List as one in which you have invested? Have you ever had occasion to do business with any of them?
2. How do you feel about the idea that God owns it all? Would you be able to change the name on your checks to include Jesus?
3. When you consider the ideas presented by Ken Boa on the way God permeates everything we do, are there aspects of your life that you find hard to relate to that? If so, what and why?

## - END OF SAMPLE CHAPTER -

We hope you've enjoyed the sample chapter of **Kingdom Gains**. If you wish to continue reading **Kingdom Gains**, a copy can be purchased at your favorite online bookseller or at the book's website, [KingdomGains.com](http://KingdomGains.com). Printed and Digital Versions are available for your favorite e-reader.

KingdomGains.com also has additional information about Biblically Responsible Investing providers and further information about the book.