

## MARCH DEAL

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### Eternal Perspectives at Easter

A 7-Day Devotional on 7 Attributes of God's Kingdom

by Michael Stewart and Kenneth Boa  
with contributions by Jenny Abel and Rodney Cripps



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Many themes and images vie for your attention during the Easter season. This e-book is just one way to help you and your family intentionally focus on the things of God. The readings and activities guide you each day of Holy Week to focus on one aspect of God's kingdom: greatness, goodness, grace, gratitude, growing, going, and glory.

We hope this booklet serves as a guide for you to practice God's presence at the beginning of each day, or serves as a way to end each day reflecting on the sacrifice and resurrection of our Lord.

## HOPE & THE REALISTIC IMAGINATION

By Cameron McAllister

Though William F. Lynch is best remembered for *Christ and Apollo*, his book *Images of Hope* features one of the more incisive treatments of the subject of hope in recent years. Inspired by his work with mentally ill patients, Lynch shows the practical necessity of hope in every-day life. Surprisingly, he points to the realistic imagination as “the gift that envisions what cannot yet be seen, the gift that constantly proposes to itself that the boundaries of the possible are wider than they seem.”<sup>1</sup>

For those of us who think of the imagination as synonymous with fantasy or make-believe, Lynch's description may sound odd. But when we romanticize words like *imagination* and *hope*, we often end up elevating them into irrelevance. In truth, the realistic imagination is as gritty and hands-on as a doctor seeing a mended limb when confronted with a broken arm, or like the eager couple who purchase a “fixer-upper” because they see the space otherwise. On a more profound note, the person in the throes of deep neurosis desperately needs the lifeline of the realistic imagination to shatter the illusion that her problems are permanent. Lynch got in the habit of asking his patients, “Do you remember what was badly worrying you three weeks ago?” The question helps free the person from the “troubling event, not by denying it but by enlarging the areas of reality.”<sup>2</sup> That's a radical statement, one that depends on the reality of God.

Terry Eagleton once quipped that the opposite of hope is not hopelessness, but pure self-determination.<sup>3</sup> If self-determination is indeed the default setting of modern men and women, then the areas of reality are critically constricted: we are truly alone, the intractable problems of human life insurmountable. Scientists can't save us. Politicians, Supreme Court justices, and celebrities can't save us. The free market can't save us. Despair seems the only honest response.

Why do so many Christians fall into this line of thinking? Why do we assume reality is so narrow?

Consider Psalm 139, rendered in the majestic language of the King James Version: “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee” (vv. 7–12). To internalize this colossal truth is to see the boundaries of reality fantastically expanded. If this is *our* world, we have reason to despair. If this is God's world, however, we have nothing to fear. No matter how abject the circumstances, no ultimate harm will come to us.

<sup>1</sup> William F. Lynch, *Images of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), 35. <sup>2</sup> Ibid., 36. <sup>3</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Hope Without Optimism* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 69.

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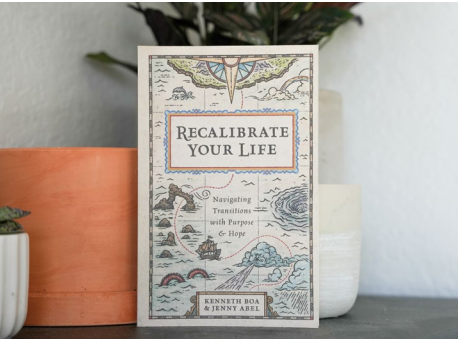
## RECALIBRATE YOUR RESOURCES

Throughout Your Word, O God, we see calls to generous and sacrificial giving. You desire wise stewardship from Your children, and You hold us accountable for all that You have entrusted to us, including the riches of your grace. May we take this responsibility seriously and fulfill it joyfully, knowing it is designed for our spiritual enrichment, the blessing of others, and the enlargement of Your kingdom. May we heed the warning of the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12, resisting the temptation to hoard, to boast, and to brag. Help us hold loosely to the tangible wealth we receive. Give us hearts that desire to freely give out of all that You have given to us—both tangible and intangible gifts. May we truly take to heart the maxim that those who sow sparingly will reap sparingly, and those who sow bountifully will reap bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6).



# WISELY INVESTING YOUR LIFE

By Jenny Abel and Kenneth Boa



WHILE THE FIRST TWO SECTIONS of *Recalibrate Your Life* examine the **perspective** and sense of **purpose** needed to navigate life’s transitions well, the third and final section emphasizes our **practice**, with a focus on this question:

*How do I wisely invest my life?*

To expound a bit more: “On our earthly sojourns we are called in Christ to wisely invest our lives—all that God gives us—in such a way that we fulfill his purpose for us and arrive at our eternal home to the words, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant’ (Matthew 25:23). Another term for this responsibility is *stewardship*.”<sup>1</sup> The point is this: We may have the right mindset about our life; we might even have a strong sense of personal calling. However, these will do little good (for us or those around us) if we don’t put words into action. We must deploy the resources in our lives in a faithful manner—wisely stewarding all that God has given us.

We can think of our stewardship responsibility in five categories: **time**, **talent**, **treasure**, **truth**, and **relationships**. When we’re recalibrating—taking a step back and examining our lives at arm’s length—it’s often one or more of these areas that needs adjustment. Following are just a few ideas for how to wisely invest these five resources; more are found in chapters 9–13 of *Recalibrate Your Life*.

## STEWARDSHIP TIME

One way we steward time is by viewing our lives less in terms of “clock time” (*chronos*) and more in terms of “opportunity time” (*kairos*). Paul uses this latter term in Ephesians 5:16, which urges us to “redeem the time [*kairos*],” to “make the most of every opportunity.” None of us controls the amount of clock time we have on this planet, but we can all use our days, hours, and minutes well by embracing the *kairos* time or opportunities that God puts before us. Next time you’re tempted to either wish away time or grumble about not having enough time, consider that every minute matters, and God gives each of us exactly the amount of time we need to accomplish what He wishes with our lives. Ask Him, “How can I honor You, the owner of time and author of history, at this moment?”<sup>2</sup>

## STEWARDSHIP TALENT

The abilities God gives us are designed to edify others and bring praise to His name. They are no cause for bragging, because He is the One who arranges these benefits in our lives in order to bless us and others. Talents may be natural or spiritual, innate or acquired (or a little of both). To recalibrate in this area, consider the work that you do. Are you engaging in work or activity that blends (1) what you love to do (your passions) and (2) what you’re good at doing (your

talents)? It is often at this point of overlap that God will use us—bringing us a sense of true joy and fulfillment as we serve Him and radiate His goodness to others.

## STEWARDSHIP TREASURE

Tangible wealth is the first thing most of us think of when we think of stewardship. As obvious as this area is, it can also be one of the most challenging. That’s why there’s an entire book devoted to this resource category (see “Leverage” sidebar).

## STEWARDSHIP TRUTH

We are good stewards of truth when we proclaim God’s Word boldly, communicate it with gentleness and respect, teach it to others, handle it correctly, and guard against distortions and falsehoods. One concrete idea for stewarding truth is to create a written document that you will hand down to the next generation—a legacy document chronicling your journey to and with Christ, as well as key truths that you seek to live by. The more personal you make this sort of document, the better. Consider jotting down favorite Bible passages or characters and then offering reflections on what they’ve meant to you at specific moments in your life. Whatever you write, consider doing so with a mindset like that of the apostle John: “These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31). Note that you can pass down a document like this to anyone in the next generation(s)—it need not be your own children!

## STEWARDSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

Sometimes, the sheer number of people in our lives paralyzes us into inaction—or we might focus almost exclusively on our nuclear families (spouse, kids, grandkids, etc.). We know we need to love others, including fellow believers and nonbelievers as well, but where do we begin with fulfilling such a huge command? Perhaps the best place to start is with the person right in front of you. Whether it’s a family member, friend, neighbor, colleague, nurse, or caregiver—no matter our age, life stage, or state of health—we can always do three things for the people in our lives:

- \* Love them;
- \* Serve them; and
- \* Pray for them.<sup>3</sup>

These simple actions can be done anytime, anywhere. And when we submit these actions to God, He can multiply their impact—making a mark on an immortal soul for all of eternity.

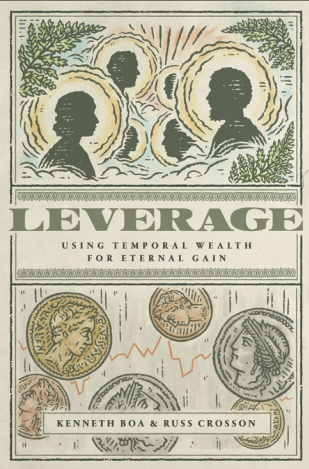
Paul, in 1 Corinthians 4:7, asks the question, “What do you have that you did not receive?” This question provides an excellent theme for recalibrating our resources in all five of the categories just mentioned. The verse prompts us to remember God’s graciousness and blessing in the past; to look upward to the One from whom all blessings flow; to look inward at the resources with which we’ve been entrusted as stewards; and to look forward to all that God wants to do in and through us when we submit everything we are and have to Him.

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Boa and Jenny Abel, *Recalibrate Your Life: Navigating Transitions with Purpose and Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2023), 154. <sup>2</sup> Ibid., 165. <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 208. The only exception would be someone with a serious, organic problem affecting cognition.



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# LEVERAGE



A companion to *Recalibrate Your Life*, *Leverage: Using Temporal Wealth for Eternal Gain* takes a deep dive into the subject of how to view and recalibrate our earthly “treasure” (wealth) so that we’re wisely investing it rather than hoarding it or spending it foolishly. For this book, Ken Boa teamed up with Ronald Blue Trust’s executive

vice president and chief mission officer, Russ Crosson. *Leverage* (which is now available at Amazon.com and trinityhousepublishers.org) challenges believers to see their money in a new way. Combining the wisdom of a theologian (Boa) with the experiences of a practitioner (Crosson), the book guides believers through the principles of biblical generosity first, and then shares a plethora of practical applications that aid in believers’ desires to give generously and wisely.

A major theme of *Leverage* is giving with a “warm hand” (while we’re still living) instead of a “cold hand” (after we die). This dilemma is sometimes known as current versus deferred giving. The authors outline four reasons many people hesitate to give in the present, followed by four benefits of doing so. One benefit is that current giving helps break the power of money in our lives. It also gives us much more control over where our money goes. For example, we may make a provision in our will to give a generous amount to a Christian ministry that is biblically faithful today. But what if that organization closes its doors or undergoes “mission drift” after we die? Would it have been better to disperse our money during our lifetime, perhaps even helping to keep that ministry alive or prevent it from straying from its roots? We have to think not only in terms of financial capital but also in terms of spiritual capital.

*Leverage* offers both big-picture perspective and detailed considerations regarding tangible wealth; it’s an essential tool for those wanting to recalibrate their earthly treasure.