

A MANIFESTO FOR FINANCIAL ADVISORS

JEFF HAANEN

AUTHOR OF *AN UNCOMMON GUIDE TO RETIREMENT*
FOUNDER, DENVER INSTITUTE FOR FAITH & WORK



FINANCIAL ADVISORS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF AMERICA.



They are stewards of a sacred trust, helping clients to save money for when they can no longer work, live a life of generosity, invest in businesses that align with God's purposes for the world, spend wisely, and re-discover their calling to work and serve their neighbors over a lifetime.

Below is a "Manifesto for Financial Advisors." If you're a financial advisor, or you know one, what might it look like to integrate Christian truth into this entire field, a \$27 trillion-dollar industry that is shaping the destinies of millions?¹

Here's a place to begin.

¹ Nick Thornton, "Here's What the \$27 Trillion US Retirement Industry Looks Like," Think Advisor, 2 January 2018, Accessed on August 10, 2018: <https://www.thinkadvisor.com/2018/01/02/heres-what-the-27-trillion-us-retirement-industry/?slretu rn=20180714204623>.

CHRISTIAN FINANCIAL ADVISORS HELP CLIENTS SAVE MONEY FOR WHEN THEY CAN NO LONGER WORK.

Saving is wise (Proverbs 21:20). Financial advisors have the privilege of encouraging people to prepare for the day when they cannot work due to old age or health. They also have the honor of helping clients still have enough to share with others (Proverbs 13:22; 1 Timothy 6:17–19).

But Christian financial advisors resolutely resist the narrative about saving for a retirement built on utopian dreams of travel, never-ending vacation, and a carefree lifestyle. They recognize that sin and the Fall have affected all people, both wealthy and poor, and that there is no such dream of heaven on earth until Christ comes again. They also boldly call into question fear-based motives for saving in retirement, pointing people to trust God alone for their daily bread.

Also, since retirement (the cessation of work for a lifetime) is essentially a foreign concept in the Bible, Christian financial advisors work diligently to help people save for the day when they can no longer work due to health concerns, not for the day when they don't want to work.

To work is to be human.

Financial advisors help their clients save money for retirement in order to provide for themselves in old age or illness, their family, and their community.

2

CHRISTIAN FINANCIAL ADVISORS ENCOURAGE CLIENTS TO LIVE A LIFE OF GENEROSITY.

God's call to generous giving could not be clearer (Matthew 6:19–21; 10:42; Luke 21:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8:12–15; 1 John 3:16–18; Proverbs 11:24–25). Generous living most closely reflects God's grace toward His people (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Christian financial advisors counsel clients in the direction of sacrificial giving toward the mission of the church, the well-being of the poor, and the critical social, economic, and cultural needs of our day. They explore creative ways to assist their clients to give cash, assets, time, skills, relationships, and influence. Christian financial advisors lead by example.

Even though Christian financial advisors often don't have a financial incentive to encourage generosity amongst their clients, they do so anyway because God first gave generously to them (John 3:16).

CHRISTIAN FINANCIAL ADVISORS COUNSEL THEIR CLIENTS TO INVEST IN BUSINESSES THAT ALIGN WITH GOD'S PURPOSES FOR THE WORLD.

Christian financial advisors believe that God owns everything (Psalm 24:1), including both their client's money and also the money that is invested in companies through stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.

They are leaders in the space of socially responsible investing (some Christians also call this values-based investing or biblically responsible investing). They believe God's purpose for business is to provide for the needs of world by serving customers and creating meaningful work, while giving glory to God.² Profit, therefore, is a means to an end, not the end of business. They believe investments are intended to help businesses grow and bless their communities. Christian financial advisors also believe business has been tainted by the Fall, and today, corporations, like individuals, are bent toward greed and injustice (Micah 6:8–10). There are no "neutral" investments.

Inasmuch as they are able, Christian financial advisors seek out investments for their clients that align with their client's values and God's good purposes for business. They take leadership in providing ample returns for their clients and multiplied societal blessing through their client's investments.³

² Jeff Haanen, "Theology for Business (Video)," Denver Institute for Faith & Work, Accessed on August 1, 2018: <https://denverinstitute.org/video-the-purpose-of-business-today/>.

³ Organizations like the Christian Investment Forum and faith-friendly mutual funds like Eventide Funds actively explore how to pursue competitive returns for their shareholders while upholding Christian values. For examples of philosophies of Christian faith and investing, watch the video "Investing 360 – The Story of Eventide Funds": <https://vimeo.com/223488058> or read "Integrating Faith Into the Way We Invest," by Tim Macready, CIO of Christian Super, an Australian Pension Fund: <https://denverinstitute.org/integrating-faith-way-invest/>.

CHRISTIAN FINANCIAL ADVISORS COUNSEL THEIR CLIENTS TO SPEND WISELY.

God has given us money to be enjoyed and spent wisely. But Christian financial advisors also recognize that “godliness with contentment is great gain,” and Christian history is filled with vows of poverty and commitment to simple living for the sake of more deeply enjoying the riches of Christ (1 Timothy 6:6, 17–19). Frugality is not a curse but a means to experiencing the abundance of God’s love, care, and heavenly riches.

Christian financial advisors are uniquely able to speak to our cultural moment and the current “retirement crisis” because they believe God Himself, not the pleasures of this world, is our greatest joy. They believe in a deeper wealth than what money can offer.⁴

Christian financial advisors counsel their clients to avoid debt, live within their means, defer gratification, and discover non-consumeristic ways to enjoy life and God’s good world.

⁴ For an excellent treatment on faith, money, and retirement, see: Chad S. Hamilton, *Deep Wealth* (Denver: PFI Publishing, 2015).

CHRISTIAN FINANCIAL ADVISORS COUNSEL THEIR CLIENTS TO CONSIDER THE DIFFERENT SEASONS OF WORK OVER A LIFETIME.

Christian financial advisors see God's pattern of six days of work and one day of rest as a blessing that lasts for a lifetime.

Rather than preparing clients to completely cease from work at retirement, they encourage sabbaticals and seasons of rest to renew a sense of calling for the next phase of life.

Therefore, they are instigators of a deeply counter-cultural movement. They begin to help clients save money for both sabbaticals and for when their clients can no longer work. They ask pointed questions to help their clients see a deeper purpose to life than entertainment or pleasure. Christian financial advisors, then, become sages, mentors, theologians, and philosophers who help their clients prepare for the next season of work, whether they are 60, 70, or 80 years old.⁵

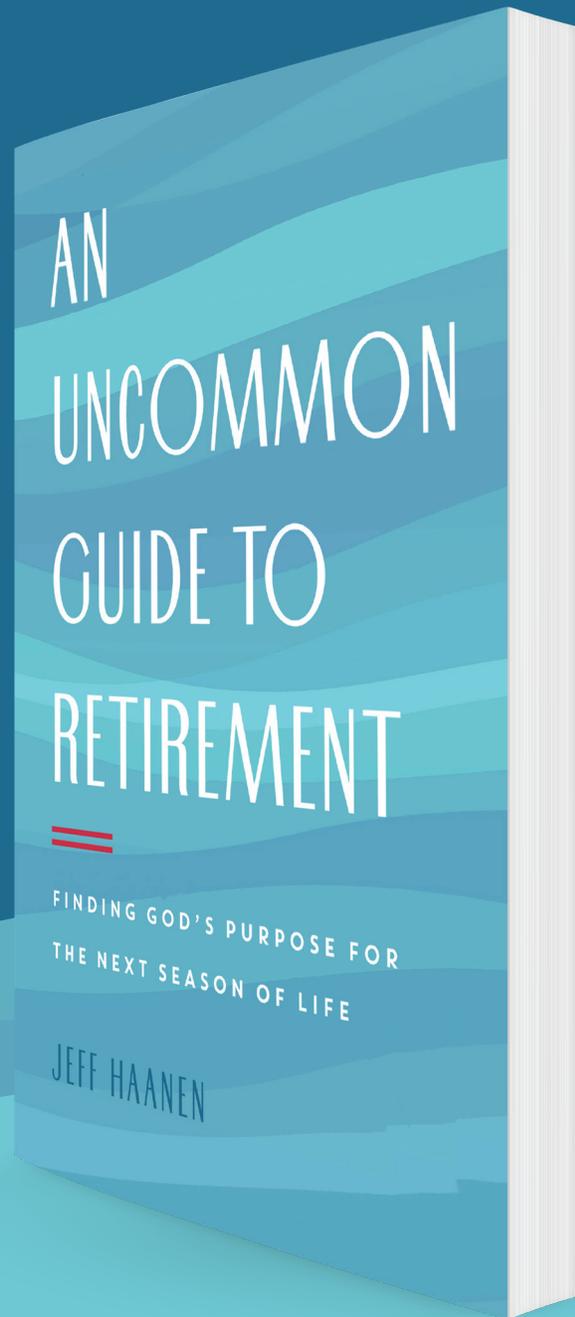
Christian financial advisors are the innovators who call for a new movement of work, sabbatical, and re-engagement based on God's design for work over a lifetime (Leviticus 25).⁶ They openly challenge the "Let's vacation" paradigm of retirement and honor the men and women who work later in life as the dignified elders of our churches, communities, and society.

They are the first to point out the valuable, brilliant, and creative work of men and women stewarding their skills, knowledge, and abilities into the sunset of their lives.

⁵ I recognize this is almost unheard of today. But my thesis in my book, *An Uncommon Guide to Retirement* (Moody Publishers, 2019), is that this rhythm of work and rest is more biblical than the contemporary idea of retirement, and it more closely aligns with God's intent for us to work, in different capacities, over a lifetime.

⁶ Rob West, the CEO of Kingdom Advisors, a Christian ministry to financial professionals, says, "One of the roles of the advisor is to not only help the client to answer the question, 'How much is enough financially?' – in terms of our financial finish line so we can maximize giving – but also, 'What are you going to do in the retirement season?' Even if we stop our vocation, what are we going to do to be of service to the Lord full-time for God's glory?" Both Rob West and Ron Blue, the founder of Ron Blue Co., believe wise financial decisions and a lifetime of work, which change in different seasons, are biblical.

FINANCIAL
ADVISORS
PLAY A
CRITICAL ROLE
IN THE FUTURE
OF AMERICA.



BUY YOUR COPY TODAY AT
MOODYPUBLISHERS.COM



MOODY
Publishers®

From the Word to Life®