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Nine Rules of Thumb for Donors

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1. **The Principle of Indispensability.** Support indispensable causes to which your support is indispensable. Look for organizations that use funds extremely wisely, treat dollars like “the widow’s mite,” and produce a significant kingdom return for the dollar spent.
2. **The Principle of Synergy.** Seek synergy. We assess synergy as an opportunity where $1 + 1 = 3$ or more. Consider where and how your contributions can have an exponential impact.
3. **The Principle of Leadership.** Know who’s in control. Leadership is critical to any organization. To ensure that a ministry is effective in their impact and represents good stewardship with donors’ dollars, it’s important for organizations that you’re donating to have great leadership.
4. **The Principle of Anonymity.** Consider the pros and cons of anonymity. There’s a biblical concept that your giving should not be prideful, and giving anonymously is one way to accomplish that. Scripture also makes it clear that if we receive reward for our giving here on earth, it robs us of the reward waiting for us in

heaven. On the other hand, it also challenges us to model good Christian behavior and be a light to others. It's important for each individual to find that right balance in their giving.

5. **The Principle of Dependency.** Do not foster dependency. Giving to organizations that have a self-sustainability game plan is important. Being totally dependent on donor support for an organization's entire existence weakens and puts the organization at risk.

6. **The Principle of Initiatives.** Favor initiatives. When it comes to initiatives, we look for opportunities to help charities/ministries take key steps in advancing their mission and aid them in pursuing something new that may not be included in their current budget.

7. **The Principle of Leverage.** Contribute to organizations that have leverage. Support efforts that bring about the greatest multiplication of results from the time or money you contribute. Leverage can take different shapes and sizes. But organizations that understand and look for leverage to stretch the dollar, improve stewardship, and increase their impact at a much faster pace than the growth of their budget is a very attractive ministry to support. Sharing best practices and partnering with other organizations can drastically increase impact moreso than trying to do everything yourself.

8. **The Principle of OPM.** Use other people's money (OPM). Seek OPM to fund initiatives you support, but only so long as it can be raised without decreasing efficiency or compromising the mission of the organization. Ties into 7 where partnering with other organizations can expand your work without requiring the

expansion of your budget. Sharing your best practices enabling others to improve their effectiveness is a great way of increasing your own impact and effectiveness.

9. **The Principle of Transparency.** There are many resources that enable you to discover the financial wellbeing of a particular organization you are considering supporting. It is wise to do your homework and learn a reasonable amount about the history of the organization.