



Depth Perception™

Commentary from Design For Ministry™

Milwaukee – Philadelphia – Tampa

What's in it for me?

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Chris Seay, pastor, filmmaker and author of *The Tao of Enron*, dined with a former Enron VP as he researched his book. "I'd love to tell you the whole story," the VP declared, "but I need to know what's in it for me?" (NavPress, 2002, p. 123). Mr. Seay didn't proceed with the interview, remarking he had just learned everything he needed to know in that one comment.

Mr. Seay was right. Enron collapsed from greed and selfishness more than any other reason. Those of us who don't live in Houston where Enron was located, or did not have the experience of owning Enron stock, can stand at a distance shaking our heads, wagging our fingers and clucking our respective tongues. But are we really that different?

Congregations, ministry organizations and nonprofits regularly hear "**What's in it for me?**" from their donors. It may not be those words exactly, but the question is asked consistently.

For instance, consider the congregational leader, upset with the denomination's regional office over a slow response, who fumes, "We send you \$47,000 a year and what do we get for it?"

All too often, the regional office makes two mistakes in response. First, they double check and inform the congregational leader that they received less than \$45,000 the previous year, and that the congregation is currently behind on this year's appropriations. Second, they use language that indicates they deserve the funding (*what's in it for me* – again), and that the congregational leader is being impolite and inconsiderate.

Selfishness clouds all of our hearts, even when we get our paycheck from a charitable organization. If we could just take a moment and confess this – personally and corporately – perhaps the light could shine a bit more brightly.

– mark I. vincent