Life Management 3

Work and Destiny
Your Work Matters to God

Teacher’s Manual
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Lesson 1-3
Why Work

Why is it that the church has lost its voice and influence in today’s society and in the work place? Why is it that Christians in business have failed to realize the success that they so often desire? Why do young people today have a “you owe me” mentality? What can be done to bring God back into the work place and to make the labor of ones hands an honorable thing, a sweet smelling aroma and a pleasing sacrifice to God?

I. Introduction

Romans 12:1-2
I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. –The Message

Paul in Romans speaks of a worldly thinking that could keep us from experiencing God’s best in the world of work. The truth is that we will spend over 100,000 hours of our life in this thing called “career” or “work.” With that amount of time invested we want to get it right.

A. As Christians, we must constantly be “saving ourselves from this twisted generation” (Acts 2:40).

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

“Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” –NIV

“Be saved from this perverse generation!” –NAS

Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this generation that has gone astray!” –NLT

B. As Christians, we cannot allow the world to force us into its mold or its way of thinking.
Ask class, “What are some of the ways in which the non-Christian world thinks about the concept of work?”

1. We are living in the “ME” generation (Ezek. 16:48-50; II Tim. 3:1-5).

“As I live,” says the Lord God, “neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit. Ezekiel 16:48-50

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! II Timothy 3:1-5

How many of these attitudes that are going to be prevalent in the last days would have a bearing on our relationship to work. The self-centeredness of people can take its toll on their work experience.

a. It causes individuals to demand rights rather than seeing work as a privilege.

b. It causes individuals to work only for money or to obtain the pleasures of life.

c. It causes individuals to put wealth and personal gain ahead of purpose and destiny.

2. We are living in a generation that sees work as part of the “curse” (Genesis 3:17-19).

Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

Work, in and of itself, is not part of the curse that resulted from the fall of man into sin. Actually, God gave a significant amount of work to Adam and Eve prior to the introduction of sin into the situation. However, the introduction of sin into
the human condition and the resulting curse on the ground significantly affected work in a negative way.

To view work as a “curse” will cause several different reactions.

a. It will cause individuals to avoid work as much as possible.

b. It will cause individuals to have a negative attitude toward work, instead of work being a joy.

c. It will cause individuals to fail to find or even expect fulfillment in their work.

3. We are living at a time where there is no concept of the spiritual nature of work. Our spiritual lives and our work lives are completely separate.

a. This concept causes individuals to separate their worship of God and their occupation rather than seeing their work life as an offering of worship to the Lord.

b. This concept causes individuals to look upon business endeavors as secondary to “religious” endeavors rather than seeing their business life as honorable and pleasing to God.

c. This concept causes individuals to lose a vision for accomplishing a spiritual task through their life’s work.

C. As Christians we must be willing to give ourselves wholly to the Lord, not just in what are perceived to be spiritual things, but in every area of our life.

D. As Christians, doing the will of God and cooperating with His creative purpose must be the highest priority.

(Note: Some of this will be review for those who were in Life Management I, but for the sake of those who are just joining us, we have to make some important statements relative to God’s purpose in our lives.)

It is clear that God has a definite plan and purpose for each person that is brought into the world (Jer. 1:4-5).

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”

1. Paul’s prayers for the saints clearly indicate that God has a purpose. He prayed the following:
a. That we would not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:15-17).

So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. Don’t act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what the Lord wants you to do. –NLT

b. That we might be filled with the knowledge of His will (Col. 1:9-13).

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

So we have continued praying for you ever since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you a complete understanding of what he wants to do in your lives, and we ask him to make you wise with spiritual wisdom. 10 Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better. –NLT

c. That we might stand perfect and complete in all of the will of God (Col. 4:12).

…always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Colossians 4:12b

…asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident of the whole will of God. –NLT

d. That God would make us complete in every good work to do His will, working in us what is pleasing in His sight (Heb. 13:20-21).

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

2. The fact that Paul prayed such prayers seems to indicate that there is a struggle for the will of God and that it is not automatic in our lives.
Actually, our life is a struggle because we are confronted with a choice of wills (See: John 1:13; Gal. 1:1; John 8:44).

a. My will or the “will of the flesh” (Mt. 26:39-42; Eph. 2:3; II Pet. 1:21)

   And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires [lit. “wills”] of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. Ephesians 2:3

b. Their will (I Pet. 4:1-3)

   This is the will of others in our life. The “others” can include parents, relatives, friends and pastors.

   …that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles … I Peter 4:2-3

c. Satan’s will (II Tim. 2:26)

   …and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

d. God’s will (Mt. 7:21; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11)

   One of the big problems when guidance counselors are giving you career guidance is that they do not consider God’s will as an option.

   3. God’s will does not simply pertain to what we commonly perceive to be “spiritual matters”. It pertains to all of life and every area of life.

a. It involves our salvation (Mt. 18:14; I Tim. 2:4; Jam. 1:18).

   For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time… I Timothy 2:3-6

b. It involves praising God and giving thanks (I Th. 5:16-18).

   Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
c. It involves our sanctification and separation to God (1 Th. 4:3, 7). We don’t have to pray about areas of sin. Sinful behavior is never the will of God.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality… For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

d. It involves our prayer life (1 Tim. 2:8).

I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

e. It involves our business life and pursuits (Jam. 4:13-16; Eph. 6:5-6).

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”, whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. James 4:13-16

Everything that we do either contributes to or detracts from God’s will for our lives.

II. There are many reasons why people work.

Why work?

A. There are many wrong reasons for working.

These wrong reasons for working will never bring us true fulfillment and purpose achievement. Some of these wrong reasons are when we are working:

1. To “make a living.”

This person’s motto is “I owe, I owe, so off to work I go.” This is a survival mentality that never sees life beyond meeting personal needs and desires. I work because I have to live, eat and pay the bills.

2. To work to rest.

This person’s bumper sticker reads, “The worst day fishing is better than the best day working.” For this person leisure is the goal. People are looking for the four day work week. For them the goal is to not work. That is why the first question lottery winners are asked is, “When will you quit your job?”
3. **To accumulate wealth for luxurious living.**

   This is the person who is constantly building bigger barns. Their motto is, “The person who dies with the most toys wins.” The problem is that possessions do not satisfy when they are not goal related and what one has is never quite enough.

4. **To secure the future.**

   For these people, retirement is the goal. It is amazing that we spend the bulk of our lives doing something just so that we do not have to do it anymore. Retirement is not all that it is promoted to be. Many people who have lived very productive and healthy lives get frustrated with retirement; they lose vision and, in some cases, die. People are living to much older ages now and they are capable of working much longer. But if your work has no significance or meaning then “why work?”

5. **To enhance social status.**

   This can be motivated by a desire to be important and powerful. These individuals seek to achieve “the top of the ladder” as if that in itself is the goal. If the reasons are wrong, they will not care who gets in their way on the other rungs of the ladder.

   All of these reasons are basically selfish. They minister to needs within us and to our egos.

B. There are many right reasons for working.

   These right reasons will bring personal fulfillment to us and, at the same time, bring glory to God.

   1. There are GODWARD reasons for working.

      In this case, our work is done…

      a. To serve God and cooperate with His purpose for my life (Mt. 25:21).

         We want to receive God’s commendation at the end of our life that we have done what He indeed wanted us to do.

      b. To bring glory to God and honor to His name (I Pet. 4:11; I Cor. 10:31).

         *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*  I Corinthians 10:31
c. To fulfill the dominion mandate and extend the kingdom of God in the earth (Gen. 1:26-28).

That which God created He gave to man to enhance. Our garden is that place or situation of life over which He has given us control. We all have a garden. What does that garden look like? We extend God’s kingdom through diligence and a spirit of excellence in all that we do so that we can be a testimony for the God that we serve. Our business life when done to the glory of God will be a light and a witness to the world.

2. There are MANWARD reasons for working.

In this case, our work is done…

a. To benefit mankind.

In our work life we should see ourselves contributing something positive to the world in which we live. It should be a better place because we inhabited the planet. Not all work actually benefits mankind. You can be diligent and excellent in the making of cigarettes, but it will not be a benefit to mankind.

There is such a thing as “worthless work.” It is work that has no value to mankind. Some of these things might include: bartending, producing pornography, making useless products, etc.

To spend your life involved in such ventures is a waste of a life.

b. To bless others.

Not all work blesses others. When people receive the impact of that which you do, they should have been bettered as a result.

c. To meet human needs (Eph. 4:28; Acts 20:33-35).

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

Ephesians 4:28

The reason that we work is to create a financial abundance so that we can extend God’s work and help meet the needs of others.

I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. 34 Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 35 I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20:33-35
3. There are SELFWARD reasons for working:

In this case, our work is done…

a. To accomplish the will of God for my life (Acts 20:24).

   But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus.

b. To become all that God has made it possible for me to become in Christ (Phil. 3:11-14). We want to apprehend that for which we have been apprehended.

c. To receive the reward from the Lord (I Pet. 5:4; II Tim. 4:6-8; I Cor. 9:24-27).

   For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. II Timothy 4:6-8

When you have the right attitudes about work, it doesn’t matter whether you actually have a job or are gainfully employed or not. You will still work with a sense of purpose to meet the needs of others, benefit mankind and glorify God with the use of your time.

When you do not have a job, you are either looking for work or volunteering your time to a righteous cause.

III. There are many examples of people who followed God’s model for work.

   A. Jesus understood His purpose in His work (Heb. 10:7; Luke 2:49; John 1:18; 4:34; 5:17; 9:4; 17:4; 19:30; I John 3:5, 8)

      Then I said, “Behold, I have come…to do Your will, O God.” Hebrews 10:7

      And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Luke 2:49

      Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” John 4:34
But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” John 5:17

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. John 9:4

I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. John 17:4

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” John 19:30

Jesus had a specific work that the Father had designed for Him to do. He was the only one who could do it. He had to stay focused on His mission. His mission required discipline and sacrifice. His mission was:

- To do the will of God.
- To be a living demonstration of the Father to the world.
- To manifest the power of God.
- To destroy the works of the devil.
- To deal with sin in the workplace.

This mission is not unlike our mission. Jesus became a pattern for us to follow.

B. Paul understood his purpose in his work (I Th. 2:9-12; I Cor. 15:10)

For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

I Thessalonians 2:9-12

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. I Corinthians 15:10

Paul labored to give us an example.

C. There are others in the Bible who understood their purpose in work.

These include people like Joseph, Nehemiah, Job and Daniel. One thing these individuals had in common is that no sin was recorded against them. “You mean you can work in “secular” areas and do it without sinning?” ABSOLUTELY!
IV. In order to work for the right reasons we must get a vision for our work.

Confessions of a person with vision for his or her work:

A. “I am working for God in my business life.”

B. “God is going to use me in my business life to extend His kingdom.”

C. “I am going to have the opportunity to touch the lives of others in a significant way through the work that I do.”

D. “The world is going to be a better place because I have touched it by the grace of God.”

E. “God is going to open doors for me that no one else (including the pastor) could walk through.”
Lesson 4  
Work and God’s Eternal Purpose

In Life Management 1 we discussed the dominion mandate and the eternal purpose of God. When we talk about our work life or our career life we are talking about using our gifts, talents and abilities in the workplace to extend God’s kingdom and advance His purposes.

I. God wants His kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

A. Jesus instructed us to pray that His kingdom come and His will be done (Mt. 6:10).

*Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

This is not something that God does by Himself. We have a part to play in making this a reality. When we pray this prayer we are asking God to take dominion over us first so that we can extend His dominion over the rest of the earth.

B. His kingdom coming starts with believers themselves.

The kingdom must come to our own hearts and lives.

1. We must enter the kingdom ourselves through the new birth.

   We must:

   a. Repent (Mt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15).

      *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* Matthew 4:17

   b. Believe the gospel (Mark 1:14-15).

      *Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”*

   c. Be born again (John 3:3).

      *Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

   d. Be born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5).
Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

e. Be converted (Mt. 18:2-4).

Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.


g. Press into the kingdom (Luke 16:16).

“The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.

“Until John the Baptist began to preach, the laws of Moses and the messages of the prophets were your guides. But now the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and eager multitudes are forcing their way in.” —NLT

2. We must make the principles of the kingdom number one in our lives.

The issue is lordship or rulership. Who is going to rule over you and to whom are you going to yield your members?

Jesus must be our king. We must, therefore, choose Him over other pressures that will confront us.

We must choose to follow the Lord...


“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”


Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” 60 Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.” 61 And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my
But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

c. Over material possessions (Mark 10:17-27).

Read Mark 10:17-27

d. Over sin (Mt. 18:6-9).

“If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

e. Over all (Mt. 6:33).

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

3. We must structure our lives in such a way as to extend God’s rule and reign in the earth.

C. His kingdom “coming” involves believers seeing themselves as representatives of the king of the kingdom 100% of the time.

Different believers have different levels of commitment to this principle.

1. Some believers go to work with no concept of being a representative for God in their place of business.

2. Some believers feel that the principles of the kingdom of God are not relevant to the world of modern business.

3. Some believers see no value or importance in their jobs and see it as the boring part of their lives and are constantly waiting for the enjoyable and important things to happen after they “clock out.”

4. Some believers may actually do damage to the cause of Christ and kingdom extension by their attitudes and work performance.

5. Some believers see working with the unsaved as a painful necessity rather than a privilege.

6. Some believers do not see those with whom they work as their personal flock to shepherd or their personal garden to tend and keep.
7. Some believers feel that this message only relates to those who have positions of authority in the marketplace.

II. God’s kingdom comes when His purpose is exalted in every area of society.

There are two aspects of the kingdom of God that are taught in the Bible.

A. The General Sense

In a general sense, the Kingdom of God refers to the realm of God that includes everything in the universe whether seen or unseen. In the general sense there is no way to not be in God’s Kingdom. In this sense God’s kingdom is over all and it is from everlasting to everlasting (Ps. 45:6; 145:10-13; 10:16; 103:19).

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. Psalm 45:6

All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations. Psalm 145:10-13

The LORD is King forever and ever. Psalm 10:16a

The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word. Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, you ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul! Psalm 103:19-22

B. The Specific Sense

In the specific sense, the Kingdom of God refers to the reign of God and only includes those spiritual beings and areas that are submitted to the will and purposes of God. This refers to the government of God (In a general sense Satan is in the Kingdom, however, in this specific sense, he is not).

It is in this specific sense that…

1. We can pray for God’s rulership, government or reign (His Kingdom) to come on earth as it is in heaven.
2. We can extend the Kingdom of God or extend God’s rule in the earth.

We extend the Kingdom by bringing other freewill beings and areas of society under submission to the word and will of God.

It should be noted that God is first and foremost concerned about people. He is concerned about areas of society only in so far as they affect the lives and futures of people.

III. God’s kingdom is extended through believer’s who represent His purposes in life.

God’s purpose as it relates specifically to the marketplace involves four main aspects that are laid out in Genesis 1:26-28.

A. Character

This has to do with the fact that God made man in the image of God and that He wants man to reflect His character. God wants His character and nature to be a present reality and a goal. This has to do with establishing holiness, integrity, excellence, justice, diligence and the fruit of the Spirit in the workplace.

B. Relationship

God created man for the purpose of relationship and He wants a personal relationship with all of His creation all of the time. In order to have relationship with God, we must be going the same direction that He is. We must not allow our relationship to be breached by betraying Him in the marketplace. We must see our mission to see others brought into relationship with Him by our witness to the world.

C. Reproduction

God wanted man to be fruitful and multiply. This translates into expansion, growth, increase, prosperity, abundance, influence and multiplication. God’s ultimate goal is that the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. God is the God of more and our lives should be characterized by continued expansion.

D. Function

God wants us to take our talents, gifts and abilities and begin to do godlike function. He wants us to partner with Him. He wants us to learn to rule and reign with Him in this life. He wants us to be the head and not the tail in the affairs of this earth. Reigning with Him now will prepare us for reigning together with Him in eternity. All legitimate work should be an extension of God’s work.
In our second class in Life Management 1, we stated…

“The Father’s business involves ruling and reigning. It involves bringing divine order and establishing dominion over all of the created world.”

IV. Every believer has a personal responsibility to help fulfill the dominion mandate in their area of rule (II Cor. 10:12-18).

For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men’s labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s sphere of accomplishment. 17 But “he who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.
Lesson 5
Work and Money

I. Introduction

Most people get paid for the work that they do. When we think in terms of our work life we usually associate it with the concept of money. Yet is the purpose of work to get and accumulate money? Is money to be the most important consideration relative to work? And if one was not gainfully employed, what would be their relationship to this thing called “work”?

A. Many people today make career choices and determine job loyalty on the basis of the amount of money that they will receive for their efforts.

B. Some of this is due to man’s fallen nature which gives expression to many of the self-centered desires enumerated in I Timothy 3:1-5 (lovers of self, loves of pleasures and lovers of money).

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanders, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

C. Some of this is due to the wrong concept of the overall purpose for work. If we see work as a means to get money so that we can serve ourselves and gain for ourselves all of the pleasures and comforts of life, then all of our decisions will be based on how much money we can acquire for the least amount of effort.

D. If we are going to be able to fulfill our destiny before the Lord, we must deal with the issue of “the love of money” (I Timothy 6:10) and the love of things (Luke 12:15).

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

I Timothy 6:10

And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” Luke 12:15

II. Review God’s Purpose for Work

A. God’s purpose for work is not…
1. To make a living.
2. To work so that I can rest.
3. To accumulate wealth.
4. To secure the future.
5. To enhance social status.

B. God’s purpose for work is…

1. God-ward
   a. To serve God.
   b. To glorify God.
   c. To be good stewards of the gifts and graces of God.
   d. To extend God’s kingdom and fulfill His purpose.

2. Man-ward
   a. To benefit mankind.
   b. To bless others.
   c. To meet human needs.

3. Self-ward
   a. To accomplish God’s will for my life.
   b. To become all that God has made it possible for me to become in Christ.

III. Wrong Concepts of Prosperity and Abundance

There are a couple of words that are used a lot when it comes to the areas of work, money and life’s endeavors—prosperity and abundance. There are words that all of us want to experience. But what do they actually mean? Is our definition of these concepts the same as God’s definition?

A. Prosperity

1. The wrong concept defines true prosperity as monetary abundance.

   Dr. Cho said, “Americans tend to equate prosperity with money. However, in the Orient we have a different idea. Prosperity means successfully fulfilling the goal. One must not connect prosperity with financial success because, in many cases, having prosperity means losing all…I am sick of hearing prosperity being connected with money. Prosperity is successfully fulfilling the goal that God has set for us.” (Charisma Magazine, March 1988).
2. The right concept defines true prosperity as successfully reaching God’s goal for my life.

“To find his place and fulfill it is success for man.” –Phillip Brooks

a. God desires that His people prosper and He promises that they will prosper as they follow His plans.

b. Prosperity comes when we live in harmony with God and His word.

Those who live according to God’s word have many promises found in Psalm 119—the Psalm of the Word.

When we live according to the Word of God:

- We will experience blessing (vs. 1-2).
- We will not be ashamed or suffer embarrassment (vs. 6, 22, 31).
- We will be cleansed (vs. 9).
- We will be strengthened (vs. 28).
- We will find great freedom (vs. 45).
- We will find new excitement in serving the Lord (vs. 50, 93).
- We will experience God’s mercy (vs. 77).
- God will deal with our enemies (vs. 78).
- We will have good friends (vs. 79).
- We will have inner peace (vs. 165).
- We will experience life to the full (vs. 116, 144).
- We will experience God’s presence (vs. 151).

B. Abundance

1. The wrong concept declares that monetary abundance is the reward of a lifestyle that is pleasing to the Lord and is to be enjoyed by the recipient.

“While we fight among ourselves about doctrine, we are united in the common worship of money and material success.” –Eric Gill

Dr. Cho said, “In the United States, prosperity teaching could not have caused problems had Christians used prosperity for the building of the kingdom of God, but many Christians claim prosperity just to buy a Cadillac, to have a big home and to live a sumptuous life. That is a very degenerated Christianity.”

2. The right concept declares that monetary abundance is a special blessing of God that He expects to be utilized for His purposes.
“Money, material though it be, does not lie at the base of the most useful work you do. In itself nothing, it is the basis of much of the best effort which can be made for spiritual purposes.”  --A. J. Balfour, 1918

IV. A Balanced Perspective

A. The example of Jesus will help us to achieve a balanced perspective.

1. Jesus’ meat was to do the will of the Father.

2. If in doing so it meant self-denial, He was willing to do so.

3. He came to minister or to serve others. To do so He had to limit the expenditures of money and time on Himself.

4. Jesus advocated simplicity of life. This was a clear choice on His part so that He could “minister and give His life a ransom for many.”

B. There are other considerations that will help us to achieve a balanced perspective.

Bernbaum in his book, Why Work? Summarizes the teaching of the Bible this way:

1. A high salary should be extremely low on the list of criteria for assessing career options.

2. Considerable restraint should be shown in our expenditures, with the concept of limited lifestyle providing room for the legitimate enjoyment of the good things of God’s creation coupled with an avoidance of superfluity.

3. The balance between personal expenditure and giving to various aspects of the work of the kingdom should be tilted in favor of the latter.

4. Our model is to be like Christ and it is one not of upward mobility but downward humility.

5. When God begins to bless financially, it creates for us a major stewardship responsibility.

The following quote is taken from the book, Work, Work, Work! by Ben Patterson:

“All work, from the simplest chore to the most challenging and complex undertaking is a wonder and a miracle. It is a gift and a blessing that God has given to us to be something like He is, and to do something like He does—to rule the earth as His stewards. To work is to do something that is essential to our humanness.
“God made us workers so that we might be like Him and have the joy and fulfillment of doing with the world something like the thing He Himself does. We were made to work.

“If we truly ordered our lives according to the biblical idea of work, we would ask of ourselves and our work not ‘How much will I make?’ but ‘Will this work use my abilities and gifts to the fullest?’

“If we cannot see the work we do in some way the fulfillment of our call to be like God and to exercise His love and authority over creation, then one of two things is wrong. Either we lack the vision or skill to see and should ask God for clarity to relate the work we do to His purposes or the work that we are doing is unworthy and we should promptly get out of it.

“A salary and a profit should be the by-product of good work well done, not the reason for the work in the first place. When they become the chief reason for work, then our work ceases to be for the glory of God and becomes something we do for our own glory. When that happens, our work goes sour.

“If we truly believed and ordered our lives according to the biblical idea of work, we would also take on a new attitude toward both work and leisure. If we really believed that work is something for which God made us—that we live to work, not work to live—then we would not look upon our work as something we must hurry up to get done so that we can get on with our play. We would look upon our play and rest as a change of pace or rhythm that refreshes us for the delightful purpose of getting back to the work God created us to do.”

V. Questions to Ponder

A. If money is a secondary consideration to work, should anyone ever be unemployed?

B. If my work is an expression of my calling, can I function whether I am paid or not?

The dominion mandate would dictate that whether a person is gainfully employed or not he or she would continue to work to meet needs or to extend God’s purpose. Idleness and sloth are condemned in God’s economy.

VI. Concluding Thoughts

A. God has provided the means for us to meet the needs of our family.

B. Every worker should benefit from the fruit of his or her labors.

C. We all need to develop an attitude of contentment rather than covetousness.
D. We should pursue a lifestyle of limits, not luxury. When is enough, enough?

E. We should cultivate habits of generosity, not greed. God fully intends for us to give money away (I John 3:17-18).

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. I John 3:16-18
Lesson 6
Choosing Your Life’s Work

I. Does God have a specific career for every person? Is a career the same thing as a “calling”? Is there only one job for me?

A. God has made us with the ability to function in many different realms. The talents, gifts and abilities that we possess could find expression in a number of careers.

B. God wants us to have a job/career that we can love.

1. The truth is that most people do not like their jobs.
2. Unless we are doing something we enjoy doing our job satisfaction, our commitment and our diligence will be very low.
3. What are the things that you especially enjoy? Could any of these things serve as the basis for a career?

C. God wants us to have a job/career that is worth having.

1. Merely enjoying an activity is not enough. I may enjoy fishing, but I may not be able to find someone who will pay me to do it.
2. My career must also be a worthwhile endeavor as judged by the world around me.
3. I must be seeking more than a large salary or a comfortable position; I must be seeking to be a contribution to the wellbeing of others and the benefit of mankind.

D. One should exercise caution in seeing one particular job as a “calling” from the Lord.

1. If your job is your calling, it is the only one in which you can fulfill your destiny. Think more in terms of fields of endeavor.
2. If one specific job is your calling, what happens if the job changes, the company goes out of business, the occupation becomes obsolete or you lose the ability to do the specific tasks related to that job?

E. Regardless of your specific job or career, every believer has a general call from God that will affect how he or she functions in the marketplace. It is this call in which we are to “walk worthy” (Eph. 4:1).

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called…

1. We are called:
a. With a holy calling (II Tim. 1:9)  
b. By grace (Gal. 1:15)  
c. By the Gospel (II Th. 2:14)

2. We are called unto:

a. His purpose (Rom. 8:28)  
b. Liberty (Gal. 5:13)  
c. Peace (I Cor. 7:15)  
d. Fellowship (I Cor. 1:9)  
e. His Kingdom and Glory (I Th. 2:12)  
f. Eternal life (I Tim. 6:12)  
g. Glory and Virtue (II Pet. 1:3)  
h. Blessing (II Pet. 3:9)

3. We are called to be:

a. Saints (Rom 1:7; I Cor. 1:2)  
b. Sons (I John 3:1)  
c. Disciples (Mt. 28:18-20)

II. What are the foundations to choosing a life’s work or career?

A. Understanding Yourself.

Understanding yourself is the first clue to being able to choose a life’s work. How has God made you (Ps. 139:13-16)?

God made you perfectly suited to certain tasks. It is equally true that each person on the face of the earth is totally unsuited to even more tasks. Part of finding out your career is finding out more about yourself. What equipment has God given you? What are your resources as a person created in the image of God? The truth is that the design of something reveals the function of that something (watch, pencil, automobile, etc.). It is clear that God wants us to maximize our talents for his purposes (Mt. 25). Understanding yourself includes assessing your:

1. Natural talents and abilities
2. Physical, emotional or mental limitations
3. Aptitudes and personality type (artistic, detail person, etc.)
4. Interests, desires, passions and hobbies
5. Natural history, culture and context
You may want to take one of several diagnostic tests that are available to assist you in your self-analysis (such as SIMA, or System for Identifying Motivated Abilities).

Ask yourself, “If I could pursue any career with the assurance that I would not fail, I would want to ________________.”

B. Understanding Your World.

The next step in discovering what to pursue as a life’s work involves understanding the world in which you live. What is the natural context in which you find yourself? What are the needs? Where could you make a significant contribution? How could you be the best servant to the needs of others?

1. The Country
2. The City
3. The Needs Around You

C. Understanding the Times.

Another step in discovering life’s pursuits is understanding the times in which you live. We must be like the men of Issachar (I Chr. 12:32).

…the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do…

1. We have more choices than ever before.
2. Because of the times many of our current choices will be obsolete in a few years.
3. At any given time certain fields are expanding and other fields are shrinking (buggy whips or car tires).

III. What do I need to do with this information?

A. Research job choices that seem to fit you.

We live in a day when information is easy to obtain.

B. Interview people who are involved in those careers.

You cannot judge a career from the outside or the television version of that career.

1. Some questions that you can ask include:

   a. Why did you choose this field?
b. How did you prepare yourself for this field?
c. What do you dislike about it?
d. What do you like about it?
e. What advice would you give to me if I would like to enter this field?

2. Visit workplaces where this work is done.

C. Make a choice.

1. Use wisdom in making decisions. Three areas of wisdom include:
   a. Wisdom from the scripture (obviously you would not look into a career that
      was immoral or illegal).
   b. Your own experience of wisdom including past job experiences.
   c. The wisdom of others (Parents, pastors, counselors).

2. Ask God for His guidance and His peace.

3. Make a definite choice. No one can do this for you but a choice must be made.

4. Pursue your choice fully unless you hear otherwise (Is. 30:21).

   *Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,”
   whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.*

5. Be prepared for obstacles along the way.

6. Be willing to start at the bottom.

D. Put yourself on a pathway for success.

1. Preparation
2. Training
3. Focus
4. Application or presentation.
   a. Your appearance
   b. Your details (resume)
   c. Your follow through

E. Adjust your lifestyle for success.

1. Limit your day to day choices.
2. Weigh carefully each decision.
F. Do not be afraid to make a change as things change and as the Lord leads.
Lesson 7
The Only Policy

I. Introduction

A. A recent survey of top executives of large companies revealed that there is a common concern in the workplace.

1. Employers were most annoyed at the dishonesty and lack of integrity of so many of their employees.

2. The second most prevalent complaint was that of employee “goof-offs” and irresponsibility.

3. Some of the other major complaints included:
   a. Absenteeism and lateness
   b. Not following instructions or ignoring company policy
   c. Whining and complaining about the job or company
   d. Lack of commitment, dedication and concern
   e. Laziness and lack of motivation and enthusiasm
   f. Overall bad attitudes when asked to do things

It is not hard to see that most, if not all, of these things in some way relate to honesty and integrity in the marketplace. It has been said that, “Honesty is the best policy.” But for the Christian, “Honesty is the only policy!”

B. Honesty should be the only policy for the Christian worker.

1. Honesty implies a refusal to lie, steal, defraud or deceive under any circumstances.

2. True honesty is not situational.

   If you find your sense of honesty adjusting when the truth may not be to your advantage, you are a dishonest person. Most people are honest until they are faced with a situation tempting enough to make them dishonest.

3. There are no degrees of honesty.

   An honest merchant is one who puts up a “going out of business” sign and then goes out of business.
C. Integrity should be the mark of the Christian in the workplace.

1. Integrity implies such uprightness that one is incorruptible or incapable of being false to a trust or to a responsibility or to one’s own standards.

2. Integrity is a steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code.

3. Integrity is the quality or condition of being whole or undivided. A person of integrity is everywhere the same person.

II. Problems in Education

Some of the problem lies with the educational systems of our modern day world. Many school systems are adopting values clarification principles that tend to put all moral absolutes into question.

A. All ethical behavior is seen as situational and exercises are sometimes aimed at creating scenarios where it is appropriate to lie, cheat or steal.

B. Students involved in business administration fully accept the notion that they will have to engage in behavior that is less than ethical.

An interview with students in a prominent business institution revealed that over 50% of the students accepted as fact that they would have to engage in activities that were less than ethical if they were to be a success in their fields.

C. There seems to be a great contradiction where, on the one hand, employers are looking for people of honesty and integrity and yet, at the same time, they are themselves being trained in and utilize questionable business practices.

III. Pressures in the Workplace

In addition to educational issues, there is pressure in the workplace to compromise standards of honesty and integrity.

A. There are pressures at the management level.

1. In a group of 800 managers surveyed anonymously, most felt pressure to compromise personal ethics for company goals.

2. Other similar studies have revealed the same findings.

B. There are pressures on the peer level. There is pressure to:
1. Slow down work
2. Participate in or cover up employee theft
3. Misrepresent a product
4. Pad bills and magnify expenses
5. Enhance benefits and expense accounts
6. Utilize company assets for personal enjoyment

Jerry White in his book *Honesty, Morality and Conscience* states, “The influence of people on people is a powerful force, affecting everyone...A reasoning mind can become powerless in the face of this pressure. Even the most committed individualist conforms in some ways to the lifestyle of others.

“This influence is stronger than any of us would like to admit. We want to act individually and independently, but in reality we conform much of our life to those around us. The pressure we face from others is one of the greatest barriers to making proper ethical decisions.”

IV. What the Bible Says

The Bible has a lot to say about honesty and integrity that can easily be applied to the workplace.

A. You never have to compromise justice to have success.

*You must never twist justice or show partiality. Never accept a bribe, for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and corrupt the decisions of the godly. Let true justice prevail, so you may live and occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you.*

Deuteronomy 16:19-20, NLT

B. You do not have to cheat people to be prosperous.

"You must use accurate scales when you weigh out merchandise, and you must use full and honest measures. Yes, use honest weights and measures, so that you will enjoy a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you. Those who cheat with dishonest weights and measures are detestable to the LORD your God.*

Deuteronomy 25:13-16, NLT

C. You do not have to apologize for God’s high standards.

*The LORD demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standard.*

Proverbs 16:11, NLT

D. Being honest is better than being rich.
It is better to be poor and honest than to be a fool and dishonest.
Proverbs 19:1, NLT

E. Integrity is part of the inheritance that you can to pass on to your children.

The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children after them.
Proverbs 20:7, NLT

F. True integrity means treating everyone with the same care.

The LORD despises double standards of every kind. Proverbs 20:10, NLT

G. Dishonesty may seem to gain one an advantage in the short term, but in the long term one’s dishonesty will be a man’s undoing

Food gained by fraud tastes sweet to a man, but he ends up with a mouth full of gravel. Proverbs 20:17, LB

H. Honesty at all times is a great way to keep your conscience clear.

I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and everyone else.
Acts 24:16, NLT

I. Integrity means that we have not wronged anyone, led anyone astray or taken advantage of the weak in our dealings with people.

Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete purity because we fear God. Please open your hearts to us. We have not done wrong to anyone. We have not led anyone astray. We have not taken advantage of anyone.
II Corinthians 7:1-2, NLT

J. Integrity means that we handle finances in a open and honorable way.

He was appointed by the churches to accompany us as we take the offering to Jerusalem--a service that glorifies the Lord and shows our eagerness to help. By traveling together we will guard against any suspicion, for we are anxious that no one should find fault with the way we are handling this generous gift. We are careful to be honorable before the Lord, but we also want everyone else to know we are honorable. II Corinthians 8:19-21, NLT

K. Integrity means living honorably in everything that we do whether it be in our work life or in other aspects of our life.
Pray for us, for our conscience is clear and we want to live honorably in everything we do. Hebrews 13:18, NLT

L. Integrity will be a testimony to the world and will influence them to believe your message.

Be careful how you live among your unbelieving neighbors. Even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will believe and give honor to God when he comes to judge the world. I Peter 2:12, NLT

V. Bringing Honesty into the Workplace

A. Honesty in the workplace means making a commitment to just weights and measures (Deut. 25:13-15)

Ask Class: What are some of the things that you feel would be an example of unjust weights in the marketplace? Do you have any examples from your own personal life?

A just weight is the giving of a full amount in exchange for a full payment. This implies:

1. Giving full quality for what is paid for.
2. Giving exactly what is being advertised.
3. Providing a service that is in keeping with what is promised.
4. Setting a fair price for services rendered.
5. Giving a full day’s work for a full day’s pay.

In Industry Week, Frank Sonnenberg, author of Managing with a Conscience notes that “Seventy-five percent of Americans say they can be significantly more effective on their jobs.”

B. Honesty in the workplace means making a commitment to total honesty (II Cor. 8:21)

Ask Class: What are some of the greatest temptations to dishonesty in the marketplace?

Total honesty means that, to the best of our knowledge, we are speaking the truth to everyone including our employer, our co-workers, our employees and our customers. This implies:

1. Accurately reporting our use of time.
2. Accurately representing ourselves and our abilities on our resumes and job applications.
3. Accurately estimating the length and cost of jobs.
4. Accurately reporting business expenses.
5. Not promising delivery or performance that you know is impossible.

VI. Things that will Help Us

There are several things that will help us to keep honesty as the only policy.

A. An Attitude of Serving

If in our work we think of ourselves as servants of God, our employers, our employees and our customers, it will keep from doing anything that would injure or defraud them.

B. A Sense of Accountability

If in our work we know that God will hold us accountable even if our boss does not then we will be more careful in how we represent ourselves.

C. A Reasonable Profit

If we understand that God is in full support of us making a reasonable profit, then we will not feel guilty when we build that into our service. The whole principle for being in business is to make a profit. But our reasonable profit must be coupled with a reasonable wage for our employees.

D. The Blessing of God

If we understand that God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, then we will understand that we do not have to compromise our principles of faith to receive His blessing.

*There is no acceptable substitute for honesty; and there is no valid excuse for dishonesty.*

VII. Reestablishing Your Testimony

This section is for those who have not done well in the area of honesty in the workplace. If you are going to be God’s representative in the workplace, it may mean reestablishing yourself as an honest person. Here are some steps in that process.

A. Acknowledge your failure before the Lord.
B. Abandon all excuses and the shifting of blame to others.

C. Apologize to anyone who is involved.

D. Accept the consequences of your actions.

E. Atone for or make restitution where necessary.

F. Acquire other relationships that will help to bring accountability to your life.
Lesson 8
The Price of Excellence

I. Introduction

A. The goal of all work is not simply to please men but to please and glorify God (Col. 3:23).

1. As believers we want “walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work” (Col. 1:10).

   And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God…--NIV

   Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better. –NLV

2. Pleasing the Lord involves many things, but in relation to our work it means at least seven specific things.

   When we work “as unto the Lord” it means that…

   a. We offer our very best to the Lord (Mal. 1:8).

      It means we do not offer the Lord any lame or blind sacrifices.

      “When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn’t that wrong? And isn’t it wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!” says the LORD Almighty. –NLT

   b. We live upright lives before the Lord (I Chr. 29:17; Pro. 11:20).

      I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.

      I Chronicles 29:17, NLT

      The LORD hates people with twisted hearts, but he delights in those who have integrity. Proverbs 11:20

   c. We diligently seek what is good and virtuous (Pro. 11:27; Heb. 13:16).
He who earnestly seeks good finds favor, but trouble will come to him who seeks evil. Proverbs 11:27

But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Hebrews 13:16

d. We obey the voice of the Lord (I Sam. 15:22).

So Samuel said: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.”

e. We use just weights and measures in all of our dealings (Pro. 11:1; 12:22; 16:11-15).

Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight. Proverbs 11:1

Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight. Proverbs 12:22

The LORD demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standard. A king despises wrongdoing, for his rule depends on his justice. The king is pleased with righteous lips; he loves those who speak honestly. The anger of the king is a deadly threat; the wise do what they can to appease it. When the king smiles, there is life; his favor refreshes like a gentle rain.

Proverbs 16:11-15, NLT

f. We use honest business practices and keep our promises (Eccl. 5:4-6).

God is not pleased when we do not keep our word.

So when you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. It is better to say nothing than to promise something that you don't follow through on. In such cases, your mouth is making you sin. And don't defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and he might wipe out everything you have achieved. –NLT

g. We choose godly character and wisdom over temporal riches (I Kgs. 3:10-14).

God was delighted that Solomon chose wisdom over riches and power.

The Lord was pleased with Solomon's reply and was glad that he had asked for wisdom. So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in
governing my people and have not asked for a long life or riches for yourself or the death of your enemies—I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding mind such as no one else has ever had or ever will have! And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and honor! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! And if you follow me and obey my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life.” —NLT

3. God promises special blessings to those who seek to please Him.

   a. God will give you peace with your enemies (Pro. 16:7).

      When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

   b. God will bring you into a large place (II Sam. 22:20).

      He also brought me out into a broad place [NIV, spacious place]; He delivered me because He delighted in me.

   c. God will establish your steps (Ps. 37:23-24).

      The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will not fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand. —NLT

   d. God will uphold you (Ps. 37:23-24).

      The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the LORD upholds him with His hand.

B. Therefore, excellence before the Lord is the most important thing no matter how this excellence is judged by men.

1. We are to concentrate our effort on receiving God’s favor and approval (II Tim. 2:15).

   Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

   Do your best to win God’s approval as a worker… --CEV

   Concentrate on doing your best for God, work you won’t be ashamed of… --MSG

   Work hard so God can approve you. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed… --NLT
2. Ultimately, God is the one who will judge all men’s work (I Cor. 3:13-15; Mt. 16:27; Rev. 20:12-13).

But there is going to come a time of testing at the judgment day to see what kind of work each builder has done. Everyone’s work will be put through the fire to see whether or not it keeps its value. If the work survives the fire, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builders themselves will be saved, but like someone escaping through a wall of flames.  I Corinthians 3:13-15, NLT

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.  Matthew 16:27

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.  Revelation 20:13-13

C. God did not promise us that men would always accept us, always appreciate us, always agree with us, always rejoice over our standards or always commend us for our good behavior.

1. The Bible says that we are to beware “when all men speak well of us” (Luke 6:26).

2. The Bible says that the world will hate us because we are not of the world system (John 15:18).

3. The Bible says that at times we will suffer for doing what is good (I Pet. 2:18-24; 4:12-19).

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.  1 Peter 2:18-24
Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?” 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

I Peter 4:12-19

4. The Bible indicates that rejection often precedes exaltation (Heb. 12:1-2).

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

II. The Cost of Excellence

A. Sometimes the cost involves making the personal sacrifices required to become more skilled at what we do. This may involve the following:

1. Financial Sacrifices
   a. The expense of going to school.
   b. The expense of investing in quality tools, books and other equipment that is needed.
   c. The expense of limited lifestyle while training or building your reputation.
   d. The loss of income resulting from your refusing a promotion that would involve a compromise of your integrity.
   e. The loss of revenue from losing a sale that you could most likely make if you had no standards.

2. Sacrifices of Time
a. The time it takes to train and educate yourself for excellence.

b. The extra time that it takes to do a job well.

c. The time that it takes to be punctual and honest with the use of your time at work.

d. The time that it takes to occasionally work extra for the sake of the well-being of your employer and/or customer.

3. **Social Sacrifices**

   a. The sacrifice of not being “one of the gang” because of your standards.

   b. The sacrifice of strained relationships from peer pressure on the job.

B. There are additional costs that may be required to achieve excellence.

   1. It may cost you the loss of business.

      “Christians must be willing to risk the loss of business to maintain a clear conscience.” --Jerry White, *Honesty, Morality and Conscience*, pg. 29

   2. It may cost you your job.

      Personal examples:

      a. JoAnne’s job in the glass shop.

      b. My job as an auto mechanic.

**III. The Reward of Excellence**

It must be remembered that God will always reward you for your faithfulness and spirit of faith (Heb. 11:6).

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

A. The reward is not always immediate (Heb. 6:10-12).

*For God is not unfair. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other Christians, as you still do. Our great desire is that you will keep right on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true. Then you will not become*
spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead, you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God’s promises because of their faith and patience. –NLT

B. The reward is not always in the form of material blessings (Mt. 5:3-12).

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

C. The reward, however, is certain (II Chr. 15:7; Luke 18:29-30).

But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded! II Chronicles 15:7

So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.” Luke 18:29-30
Lesson 9
Promotion through Excellence

I. Introduction

A. Promotion

1. Promotion can be defined in the following ways:
   
   a. To contribute to the progress, development or growth of, to further, to encourage.
   
   b. To advance to a higher position, grade or honor.
   
   c. To work in behalf of; advocate an activity.

2. Some of the synonyms that apply to the word “promote” are “advance, aid, assist, elevate, encourage, excite, forward, foster, further, help, prefer, raise up.”

3. We promote a person by advancing, elevating or exalting him or her to a higher position of dignity or honor.

4. Key biblical verses that deal with promotion:
   
   a. Psalm 18:48c

      You also lift me up above those who rise against me…

   b. Psalm 37:34a

      Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land…

   c. Psalm 75:6-7

      For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another.

   d. Psalm 89:17

      For You are the glory of their strength, and in Your favor our horn is exalted.

   e. Psalm 112 (especially verse 9)

      Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments. 2 His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed. 3 Wealth and riches will be in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. 4 Unto the upright there arises
light in the darkness; he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. 5 A good man deals graciously and lends; he will guide his affairs with discretion. 6 Surely he will never be shaken; the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. 7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. 8 His heart is established; he will not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his enemies. 9 He has dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn will be exalted with honor. 10 The wicked will see it and be grieved; he will gnash his teeth and melt away; the desire of the wicked shall perish.

f. Proverbs 4:7-9

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote you; she will bring you honor, when you embrace her. She will place on your head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory she will deliver to you.

B. Excellence

1. Excellence can be defined as the quality or state of surpassing, exceeding or out doing normal expectations in any area of life.

2. The marks of excellence in the life of the believer include such things as:

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3. The more these things pervade our life the more influence we are going to have, the more productive we are going to be and the more effective we are going to be in establishing God’s dominion.

II. The spirit of excellence paves the way for promotion.

A. It helps you to be what God wants you to be.
B. It helps you to pursue the qualities that are rewarded.

The qualities listed above are rewarded in every arena of society including business, athletics, politics and life in general.

C. It helps you to gain the favor of God and man (Luke 2:52; Acts 2:46-47).

D. Favor invariably leads to promotion.

III. The life of Joseph illustrates promotion through a spirit of excellence.

A. Joseph was one of the purest characters in the Bible. No sin was recorded against him.

B. Joseph had a very high vision for his life.

C. Joseph endured contradiction of circumstances in the realization of his goals and dreams.
   1. Joseph’s dreams were mocked by those closest to him.
   2. Joseph aroused the jealousy of others who plotted to destroy him and his vision.
   3. Joseph was lied about and misrepresented.
   4. Joseph was mistreated by those he was trying to bless.
   5. Joseph was continually pushed down to the bottom of the ladder of success through no fault of his own.
   6. Joseph was forgotten by those he had befriended and by those who could have put in a “good word” for him.

D. Joseph maintained his testimony in the face of contradiction and the rejection of others with different standards.

E. Because of this, Joseph gained the favor of God. God was with Joseph (Gen. 39:3-6, 21-23). If God is with you, it does not matter about anyone else.

F. Joseph was careful to maintain the purity that made him to prosper even in the face of loss of reputation and demotion.

G. Joseph’s spirit of excellence caused him to rise to the top in every setting. This illustrates the fact that you “can’t keep a good man down.”
   1. Potiphar’s House (Gen. 39:1-6)
   2. The Jailor’s Jail (Gen. 39:22-23)
3. Pharaoh’s Egypt (Gen. 41:38-44)

H. Joseph found favor in all of these arenas because of several things.

1. He was responsive to the dealing of God in his life.

2. He did not become a complainer concerning his unfair treatment.

3. He treated the possessions of others as his own.

4. He did not take advantage of his position for personal favors and to get even with those who had offended him on the way up.

5. He was absolutely honest in his dealings people.

6. He had the blessing of God on his life and others could see it.

IV. There are several other biblical examples of promotion through excellence.

A. Daniel was a man who found similar favor and promotion without having to compromise his relationship to God (Dan. 1:3-4, 17-20; 5:11-14; 6:3).

B. Apollos was a man who did everything to the best of his ability and found the favor of God on his life (Acts 18:24-28).

V. There are several keys to experiencing God’s promotion.

A. Do not strive for promotion; seek to serve (Mark 10:43-45; Pro.15:33; 18:12; 22:4). Let another man’s lips praise you (Pro. 27:2).

  *Don’t praise yourself; let others do it!* –NLT

B. Do not push yourself; wait for God to act in your behalf (Ps. 37:1-7; Pro. 29:23).

  Read Psalm 37:1-27

  *Pride ends in humiliation, while humility brings honor.* Proverbs 29:23, NLT

C. Do not compromise your standards; be raised up with your standards (Pro. 21:21).

  *He who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness and honor.*
D. Seek the Lord, not promotion (Mt. 6:33). God honors those who honor Him (I Sam. 2:30c).

*For those who honor Me I will honor…*

E. Be excellent in all that you do. Every task, no matter how small, is deserving of your best effort (Pro. 27:18, NLT).

*Workers who tend a fig tree are allowed to eat its fruit. In the same way, workers who protect their employer’s interests will be rewarded.*

F. Be what you are supposed to be, where you are supposed to be and when you are supposed to be and God will take full responsibility for your success and promotion.

VI. **What are the things that should motivate us to excel?**

As we anticipate promotion from the Lord, there are several things that should be motivating us. We are not being motivated by the prospect of having riches, possessions, power or fame. Our motivation is much more pure that that. As believers who desire to be used of the Lord to extend His kingdom in the earth, we are motivated by:

A. A spirit of thankfulness for God’s gift of salvation.

B. A fervent desire to please the Lord in the work that we do (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25).

*You slaves must obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Obey them willingly because of your reverent fear of the Lord. 23 Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 24 Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and the Master you are serving is Christ. 25 But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites who can get away with evil.*

Colossians 3:22-25, NLT

C. A realization that the enemy of God’s purposes is also working hard (Luke 23:10).

*And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently [powerfully] accused Him.*

D. A desire to fulfill the “dominion mandate” given by God. We want to see the earth filled with the glory of the Lord.

E. A desire that the world would get an accurate picture of Christ.

F. A desire to receive the commendation of the Lord, “Well done!”
Philippians 1:9-11

I pray that your love for each other will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in your knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until Christ returns. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation--those good things that are produced in your life by Jesus Christ--for this will bring much glory and praise to God.
Lesson 10
Something Better than Gold

I. Introduction

A. What do you think of when you hear the following names? When you merely say these names, they evoke a feeling or an image. They evoke a certain character quality. What do you think others would say if I read your name?

1. Bible names
   Moses, Joseph, David, Noah, Jezebel, Judas, Timothy, Barnabas, Paul

2. Other names
   Adolf Hitler, Mike Tyson, Billy Graham, Mother Teresa, Osama Bin Laden, Jesus Christ, __________.

B. What do people think of when they hear your name?

C. What do you want people to think of when they hear your name?

I would like them to think certain things: dependable, faithful, true to commitments, responsible, etc.

II. It is possible to have a good name or a bad name.

A. Your name is equal to your reputation.

A “reputation” can be defined in several ways:

1. A reputation is the account, estimation, value or opinion of character generally perceived about a person or thing. The perception of something becomes its reality.

2. A reputation is the general estimation of a person or thing as held by others.

3. A reputation is a possession that is frequently not discovered until it is lost.

B. The Bible gives examples of both positive and negative reputations.

1. Nabal was a man who had a bad name and reputation. Even his wife acknowledged this fact (I Sam. 25:25).
Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him!

*I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests.* –NLT

2. Abraham was a man who had a good name by virtue of his faithfulness to God (Gen. 12:2; 18:19). Throughout all generations there are those who have sought to be identified with the name of Abraham (Mt. 3:9; John 8:33; Acts 12:26).

*I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.* Genesis 12:2

C. Your name is not just a verbal sound when your name is spoken; it represents you to the world. It is a title. It represents all that you are. It is something that defines you and distinguishes you from all others.

D. A good name is a title that inspires confidence because the person behind it can be consistently depended upon to do what is legally and morally right, whatever the cost.

III. A good name is absolutely essential if we want to succeed.

A. We represent God’s name (II Cor. 3:2-3).

*You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.*

B. We honor our parents by it (Pro. 28:7).

*Young people who obey the law are wise; those who seek out worthless companions bring shame to their parents.* –NLT

C. We pass it on to our children (Pro. 10:7).

*We all have happy memories of good men gone to their reward, but the names of wicked men stink after them.* –LB

D. We need it for life’s transactions.

The Bible encourages us to be of “good report” among those within the church and those outside of the church (Acts 6:3; I Tim. 3:7; Heb. 11:39; III John 12). The word “good report” here means a good witness or testimony. Your name is your greatest witness or testimony.
Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business… Acts 6:3

Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 1 Timothy 3:7

Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not fall into the Devil's trap and be disgraced. –NLT

Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true. III John 12

But everyone, including Truth itself, speaks highly of Demetrius. I myself can say the same for him, and you know I speak the truth. –LB

IV. There are many things that can affect the meaning of your name.

A. Your Confession

What you say and the type of words that come out of your mouth can affect your reputation. Whether or not you are true to your word will affect your reputation (Ps. 15:4).

B. Your Behavior

How you behave and the lifestyle that you lead can affect your reputation (I Sam. 18:30b).

David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed.

C. Your Associations

When you associate regularly with certain types of people you gain a reputation (Acts 4:13; also Luke 6:22). Perhaps we could add the concept reflected in an Arabian proverb, “Judge a man by the reputation of his enemies.”

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13

Socrates said, “The way you gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear.”
V. If a person is going to have a good name, he or she must choose it (Pro. 22:1; Eccl. 7:1a).

_A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold._ Proverbs 22:1

_A good name is better than precious ointment._ Ecclesiastes 7:1a

_A good reputation is more valuable than the most expensive perfume._ —NLT

You must choose a good name daily. You must choose a good name every time you…

A. Open your mouth.

B. Get involved in any activity.

C. Make a friend.

D. Set out on a project.

VI. God is in the business of changing our names.

Changing your name or your reputation takes a long time, but with God’s help it can be done.

A. If you have had a bad name or reputation, you do not have to live with it forever.

1. Jacob (deceiver) became Israel (prince of God) with one touch from the Lord (Gen. 32:27-28).

2. Sarai (contentious) became Sarah (princess) when she put her trust in the Lord (Gen. 17:15).

B. In many cultures when people become Christians they change their name.

1. Saul became Paul. His name Saul hurt his testimony.

2. Joses became known as Barnabas—son of comfort (Acts 4:36). He was actually named by others.

C. Every believer has the power in Christ to change their name. You do not have to be Jacob/Sarai anymore. You can be a prince or a princess of God.

VII. Your name ultimately is a memorial or a monument.
A. The Hebrew word for “name” comes from a word that means “memorial” or “monument” (Pro. 10:7).

_The memory of the righteous is blessed, but the name of the wicked will rot._

B. Alexander the Great understood the legacy of a name.

The story is told of a soldier in the army of Alexander the Great who was brought before the great world conqueror for court martial. When the emperor had listened to the charges and the evidence, he turned to the soldier facing condemnation and said, “What is your name?”

“Alexander!” was the reply.

Again the emperor questioned, “What is your name?”

And the second time the soldier answered, “Alexander!”

With a cry of rage, the emperor roared, “I say what is your name?”

And when the soldier answered the third time, “Alexander!” the great general angrily replied, “You say your name is Alexander: You are found guilty of your crime as charged and now you must pay the penalty. Either change your conduct or change your name, for no man can bear the name of Alexander, my name, and do the things that you have done.” —Unfeigned Faith

C. What is your name? Answer: “Christian!”

VIII. Conclusion

A. What does your name mean in the business community? On the job? In your neighborhood?

B. It means what you have made it to mean. You can have the name of one who lives and yet not have the life that goes with it (Rev. 3:1). We all have a name to live up to. We all have a name to carry—the name of Jesus.

_I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead._

C. We must choose a good name. How do you want to be remembered?

D. God promised Abraham that He would make his name great and he would make him a blessing. He wants to do the same for you!
Lesson 11-12
The Christian Business Person’s Code of Ethics

Introduction to the Christian Business Person’s Code of Ethics

Should there be a difference between how a Christian operates or functions in business and how a non-Christian functions in business? The truth is there is not always a difference. The sad fact is some non-Christian business people operate with more integrity than some Christian business people.

Many people in business belong to a business association that is related to their particular field. Auto mechanics can have an association to which they belong that is suppose to lend credibility to their business. They can actually advertise the fact that they belong to this group which is suppose to mean something.

Christians in business should make up a similar distinguishing association. Christians are not just business people; they are “Christian” business people which should set them apart from others in terms of how they actually conduct the affairs of their business.

Often these business associations have a Code of Ethics that they distribute to their members so that it can be displayed in their place of business. When you visit a business you may see a framed example of this Code of Ethics that is openly displayed. Many of these Codes of Ethics are based on biblical values.

Often these framed pieces are not much more than “wishful thinking” on the part of those operating the business. Often they are displayed as some kind of assurance to a potential customer, but they have no value if they are not practiced.

The Bible lays the foundation for a Code of Ethics that reflects God’s ideas about how business ought to be conducted by those who are part of His association of business persons.

Let us walk through the twenty four planks of the Christian Business Person’s Code of Ethics.

The Christian Business Person’s Code of Ethics

The Christian Business Person shall:

1. Acknowledge the Lordship and ownership of Jesus Christ in his or her personal and business life (Phil. 2:9-11; Lk. 6:46-49).
Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11

Lordship implies obedience. If we call Him Lord it means that we do what He says. If we do not do what He says, we are building our lives and our businesses on sand. This requires faith on our part to believe that God knows more about life and business than we do and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? 47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like; 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. 49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.” Luke 6:46-49

2. Acknowledge his purpose for being in business is to glorify God by using his or her business as a vehicle to, (a) reach out to the needy, (b) fund God’s work, (3) supply families’ needs and (d) generate enough profit to continue and expand the business (I Cor. 10:31; I Pet. 4:11).

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. I Corinthians 10:31

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. I Peter 4:11

3. Acknowledge his or her order of priority shall be to (a) uphold biblical principles, (b) serve people, (c) offer a quality product or service and (d) realize a reasonable profit (Matt. 6:33; Mark 10:42-45).

No business person will ever have to violate the Word of God to succeed. Every business person will be tempted to violate the principles of the Word of God to succeed.

Your ethics will be tested! We either believe God or we do not.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33

You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever
desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” — Mark 10:42-45

4. Submit to all of the laws of the land on a national, provincial and local level, providing there is no violation in his or her duty to God (Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1-2).

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Romans 13:1-7

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. Titus 3:2

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. 1 Peter 2:13-17

I know how difficult this is. I know we all feel that we cannot operate a business profitably where we have to honor the laws of the land. I am sure that the situation was no better under the Roman government that was noted for high taxation. Yet both Paul and Peter make it clear that we are to make every attempt to honor the government. Unless the government is telling us to do something sinful, we are to give it due respect.

5. Acknowledge the authority of the local church in the settling of business and financial disputes between fellow Christians and will, therefore, submit to arbitration in such matters (I Cor. 6:1-8).

When you have something against another Christian, why do you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter, instead of taking it to other Christians to decide who is right? Don’t you know that someday we Christians are going to judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can’t you decide these little things among yourselves?
Don’t you realize that we Christians will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disagreements here on earth.  

4 If you have legal disputes about such matters, why do you go to outside judges who are not respected by the church?  

5 I am saying this to shame you. Isn’t there anyone in all the church who is wise enough to decide these arguments?  

6 But instead, one Christian sues another—right in front of unbelievers!  

7 To have such lawsuits at all is a real defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated?  

8 But instead, you yourselves are the ones who do wrong and cheat even your own Christian brothers and sisters.  

I Corinthians 6:1-8, NLT

6. Engage in no activity that would bring reproach to the Christian community (II Cor. 4:1-2; Rom. 2:23-24).

And so, since God in his mercy has given us this wonderful ministry, we never give up.  

2 We reject all shameful and underhanded methods. We do not try to trick anyone, and we do not distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know that.  

II Corinthians 4:1-2, NLT

You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it.  

24 No wonder the Scriptures say, “The world blasphemes the name of God because of you.”  

Romans 2:23-24, NLT

When we act in a way that is contrary to the principles of the Word of God it brings reproach on the name of God and on all those who call themselves by His name. It gives people a “bad taste in their mouth” and they judge God and the church based on our behavior.

7. Acknowledge his or her responsibility for his or her actions, attitudes and verbal promises as well as those of his or her employees (Matt. 12:36-37).

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”  

Matthew 12:36-37, NIV

8. Strive, at all times, to represent his or her product or service fairly and honestly and reflect Christ in every business transaction (Eph. 4:17-25).

With the Lord’s authority let me say this: Live no longer as the ungodly do, for they are hopelessly confused.  

18 Their closed minds are full of darkness; they are far away from the life of God because they have shut their minds and hardened their hearts against him.  

19 They don’t care anymore about right and wrong, and they have given themselves over to immoral ways. Their lives are filled with all kinds of impurity and greed.  

20 But that isn’t what you were taught when you learned about Christ.  

21 Since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus,  

22 throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception.  

23 Instead, there must be a
spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. 24 You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God’s likeness—righteous, holy, and true. 25 So put away all falsehood and “tell your neighbor the truth” because we belong to each other.

Ephesians 4:17-25, NLT

9. Avoid exaggeration, misrepresentation or concealment of pertinent facts in the representing of his or her product and/or service (Lev. 19:35-37; Pro. 11:1).

“Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight, or volume. 36 Your scales and weights must be accurate. Your containers for measuring dry goods or liquids must be accurate. I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. 37 You must be careful to obey all of my laws and regulations, for I am the LORD.” Leviticus 19:35-37, NLT

Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight.

Proverbs 11:1

The LORD hates cheating, but he delights in honesty. --NLT

10. Honor both his or her verbal and written commitments, even to his or her own detriment (Ps. 15:4; Lev. 5:4).

Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? 2 Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts.
3 Those who refuse to slander others or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends.
4 Those who despise persistent sinners, and honor the faithful followers of the LORD and keep their promises even when it hurts. Psalm 15:1-4

“Or if they make a rash vow of any kind, whether its purpose is for good or bad, they will be considered guilty even if they were not fully aware of what they were doing at the time.

Leviticus 5:4, NLT

11. Be diligent and conscientious in the handling of all debts and financial obligations (Rom. 13:8).

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Let no debt remain outstanding… --NIV

12. Promote respect for his or her business and product by being an example in his or her personal appearance, courtesy, punctuality and attitudes (I Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:7).
Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. Titus 2:6-8


The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich. Proverbs 13:4

He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a wise son; he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame. Proverbs 10:4-5

14. Not show prejudice toward a client or potential employees while providing his or her product and/or service (Lev. 19:15; Pro. 28:21).

Showing partiality is never good, yet some will do wrong for something as small as a piece of bread. Proverbs 28:21

You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. Leviticus 19:15

15. Establish and maintain honorable relationships with competitors and other business associates (Lev. 19:16).

“Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people. “Do not try to get ahead at the cost of your neighbor’s life, for I am the LORD. Leviticus 19:16, NLT

16. Endeavor to place the interests of others above his or her own interests (Phil. 2:3-4).

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4

17. Constantly maintain due respect and a servant’s attitude toward those to whom he or she offers his product and/or service (Gal. 6:10).
Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.  

Galatians 6:7-10

18. Treat all employees with consideration, uprightness, respect, love and generosity (Col. 4:1; Pro. 12:10).

*Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.* Colossians 4:1

*The godly are concerned for the welfare of their animals...* Proverbs 12:10a

19. Recognize his or her responsibility to his or her employees to equip them vocationally and to be committed to their spiritual welfare, their emotional stability, their physical health and safety and their financial well-being (Col. 4:1; Eph. 6:9).

*Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.* Colossians 4:1

20. Regard his or her employees as an important resource for positive input into his or her business practices and shall, therefore, provide an avenue for constructive feedback and communication (Job 31:13-15).

“If I have been unfair to my male or female servants, if I have refused to hear their complaints, how could I face God? What could I say when he questioned me about it? For God created both me and my servants. He created us both.” –NLT

21. Continually seek to maintain and improve his or her professional knowledge, skill and competence in his or her field of endeavor (Pro. 22:29; Eccl. 10:10).

*Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.* Proverbs 22:29, NIV

*If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; but wisdom brings success.* Ecclesiastes 10:10

22. Endeavor to show a Christ-like compassion for the truly needy (Pro. 14:31; 28:8).
He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.  Proverbs 14:31

He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.  Proverbs 28:8

23. Justifiably regard it as honorable and pleasing to God to earn a reasonable return on his or her labor and investment (I Cor. 9:7-9; I Tim. 5:18).

For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”  I Timothy 5:18

What soldier has to pay his own expenses? And have you ever heard of a farmer who harvests his crop and doesn’t have the right to eat some of it? What shepherd takes care of a flock of sheep and isn’t allowed to drink some of the milk? And this isn’t merely human opinion. Doesn’t God’s law say the same thing? For the law of Moses says, “Do not keep an ox from eating as it treads out the grain.”  I Corinthians 9:7-9. NLT

24. Acknowledge that his or her business is an avenue of witness to the world and, therefore, will endeavor to reflect godly principles to the world through his or her business (Matt. 5:16; I Pet. 2:11-12).

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.” “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.” Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.  Matthew 5:13-16

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.  I Peter 2:11-12

MOTTO

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God’s grace.

II Corinthians 1:12, NIV
We can say with confidence and a clear conscience that we have been honest and sincere in all our dealings. We have depended on God’s grace, not on our own earthly wisdom. That is how we have acted toward everyone, and especially toward you. –NLT

GOD’S PROMISE

Be strong and very courageous. Obey all the laws Moses gave you. Do not turn away from them, and you will be successful in everything you do. Joshua 1:7 –NLT
The Christian Business Person's
CODE OF ETHICS

It is the belief and firm conviction of the undersigned that the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the highest and absolute authority for all areas of life, including business and finance; therefore, we adopt and ascribe to the following:

The Christian Business Person Shall…

1. Acknowledge the Lordship and ownership of Jesus Christ in his personal and business life (Phil. 2:5-11; Lk. 6:46-49).

2. Acknowledge that his or her purpose for being in business is to glorify God by using his or her business as a vehicle to, a) reach out to the needy, b) fund God’s work, c) supply families needs and d) generate enough profits to continue and expand the business (I Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 4:11).

3. Acknowledge his or her order of priority shall be to a) uphold biblical principles, b) serve people, c) offer a quality product and/or service and d) realize a reasonable profit (Matt. 6:33; Mk. 10:41-45).

4. Submit to all of the laws of the land on the national, provincial and local levels, providing there is no violation in his or her duty toward God (Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 2:1-2).

5. Acknowledge the authority of the local church in the settling of business and financial disputes between fellow Christians and will, therefore, submit to arbitration in such matters (1 Cor. 6:1-8).

6. Engage in no activity that would bring reproach to the Christian community (II Cor. 6:1-2; Rom. 2:23-24).

7. Acknowledge his or her responsibility for his or her actions, attitudes and verbal promises as well as those of his or her employees (Matt. 12:36-37).

8. Strive, at all times, to represent his or her product or service fairly and honestly and reflect Christ in every business transaction (Eph. 4:17-25).

9. Avoid exaggeration, misrepresentation or concealment of pertinent facts in the representing of his or her product and/or service (Lev. 19:33-37; Pro. 11:17).

10. Honor both his or her verbal and written commitments, even to his or her own detriment (Ps. 15:4; Lev. 5:4).

11. Be diligent and conscientious in the handling of all debts (Ps. 37:31; Rom. 13:8).

12. Promote respect for his or her business and product by being an example in his or her personal appearance, courtesy, punctuality and attitudes (I Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:7).

13. Acknowledge that God requires and honors diligence in the performance of all business responsibilities and commitments (Pro. 15:4; 10:4-5).

14. Not show prejudice toward any client while providing his or her product and/or service (Lev. 19:15; Pro. 28:21).

15. Establish and maintain honorable relationships with competitors and other business associates (Lev. 19:16).

16. Endeavor to place the interests of others above his or her own (Phil. 2:3-4).

17. Constantly maintain due respect and a servant's attitude towards those to whom he or she offers his or her product and/or service (John 13:12-15; Gal. 6:10).

18. Treat all employees with consideration, uprightness, respect, love and generosity (Col. 4:1; Pro. 12:10).

19. Recognize his or her responsibility to his or her employees to equip them vocationally and to be committed to their spiritual welfare, their emotional stability, their physical health and safety and their financial well-being (Col. 4:1; Eph. 6:9).

20. Regard his or her employees as an important resource for positive input into his or her business practices and shall, therefore, provide an avenue for constructive feedback and communication (Job 31:13-15).

21. Continually seek to maintain and improve his or her professional knowledge, skill and competence in his or her field of endeavor (Pro. 20:31, Eccl. 10:10).

22. Endeavor to show a Christ-like compassion for the truly needy (Pro. 14:31; 28:9).

23. Justifiably regard it as honorable and pleasing to God to earn a reasonable return on his or her labor and investment (I Cor. 9:7-9; I Tim. 5:18).

24. Acknowledge that his or her business is an avenue of witness to the world and, therefore, will endeavor to reflect godly principles to the world through his or her business (Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:11-12).

MOTTO...

"Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God’s grace." II Corinthians 1:12 NIV

GOD’S PROMISE...

"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go." Joshua 1:7 NLT