

#198 “God-Honoring Business Practices”
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There is nothing wrong with trying to make money or even a lot of it as long as we do it honestly, morally, and while treating others the way we wish to be treated when we enter a business transaction. Whether we are in management, sales, marketing, human resources, or another aspect of business, we have a chance to be a testimony and to stand apart from the world’s ways of doing business. The world understands manipulating people into buying something that they don’t really need. It understands being rude and overly pushy. It is well-versed in taking short-cuts, even ones that could jeopardize the customer’s safety. The world thrives on the fine print and legalese to protect its own interest and to take advantage of unwitting customers. This is not to be the Christian’s way of operating whether he or she is part of a “Christian business” or not. Whether we are an employee or an employer, we should never compromise our morality no matter the environment or the particular challenges. To do so would be to miss out on some of the real blessings of this life and the next as we see our testimony impact and truly change the many people we come into contact with. We must never underestimate the power of honesty, kindness, and treating others the way we would prefer to be treated.

First of all, let us recognize that, technically speaking, there is no such thing as a Christian business. There are people who are Christians who run businesses or who are employees of said businesses, but only people rather than legal entities can be Christian. This is because corporate vehicles do not ask Jesus into their hearts as Savior, nor do they have the responsibility to evangelize and be a Christlike testimony. People do, and if we are Christians, we have that responsibility, whether we are in a “Christian business” or not. A Christian business is not a Christian business simply because it is listed in a “Christian business directory” or because it has a fish symbol etched into the corporate logo or stationery. It is more than just what is stated in the mission and purpose statements. Even the world usually includes things like honesty, integrity, excellence, and customer-service in its core values. What really sets a business apart that desires to honor God is how its people conduct themselves and in how they treat their customers. As employers and employees, we should make sure that our hearts are in the right place, not seeking the glory of others but rather only ultimately the glory of God. As Colossians 3:23 says, “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.” We should make sure that we are not driven by the love of money because the lusts of the flesh will corrupt our values. 1 Timothy 6:10 says, “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” With right attitudes and priorities, our goal can be to maximize profit, sales, etc. as long as we do not go about it unethically. Leviticus 19:35-36 says, “You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measurement of weight, or capacity. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin; I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt.” Dishonesty, defrauding, and deception can take place at any level of a company, and God is adamant that business be conducted fairly, justly, and in a straightforward and transparent manner. Matthew 7:12 says, “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for

this is the Law and the Prophets.” There was a day when the “customer was always right.” But this is very rarely the case anymore. Corporations hide behind poor customer service, complex math, unclear warranties, and legalese. Businesses think that just because they made money, they have been successful regardless of how they treated the customer. Christian business owners must see each customer not as a line on a spreadsheet but as a person who needs to see a radically different testimony of God’s grace and transformation. They need to see real care and unusual honesty.

What we do at work is part of who we are. We cannot afford to compartmentalize how we conduct ourselves in the business world from how we conduct ourselves at home or at church. To compromise in one area is to compromise our entire testimony. James 3:10-12 says, “From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.” The workplace can be an extremely challenging environment for a believer who wants to live in a God-honoring way. The corporate brainwashing is purposeful and intense, and there is not always an opportunity for deviating from the corporate script. But the call to Christians is simple: “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father” (Colossians 3:17). No matter what we do and no matter the level of authority that we have, everything we say and do must be for God’s glory. If we can’t do what we are doing in a God-honoring way, we need to do something else.

It is tough to find an honest paycheck and to provide for one’s family, especially in certain parts of the globe. Yet our legacy is not determined so much by the money brought home as it is in how it is brought home. May God enable us to be steadfast in our testimonies as we refuse to compromise, trusting in Him ultimately for our provision and our daily bread (Philippians 4:19, Matthew 6:11).