

## **"GODLY MANAGEMENT IN AN UNGOLDY WORLD" PART 2**

We **considered** at the outset some Biblical precedent and examples of Believers in Business.

We then moved on to see how **important** it is, to have at least some **understanding** of the situation, some of our **members** face, in the Business **environment**.

As they **genuinely** seek to be the Salt and Light for **Christ's** sake.

I then **attempted** to set the **scene** by giving a **window** on some **aspects** of Business in an ungodly world.

We **considered** four particular areas of **concern** and **challenge** these being:

### **Time, Communication, Ethics, Diversity**

**Accompanying** these **challenges** certain key texts were given, which provided **principles** for **guidance** and **encouragement**, as the Christian believer **seeks** to

### **"Stand fast while being both Upright and Profitable - All for the Glory of God"**

Now we come to **consider** how we can **support**, **encourage**, **warn** and **advise** our Christian brothers and sisters working in **business in an ungodly world**.

In doing so I **trust** there will be some **help** for all those in the **workplace**.

Who **operate** in a **situation**, which is becoming increasingly **hostile** to God and His Word!

I would like to **share** with you some **guidelines** and **observations** with Biblical **application**.

Some of the points will simply be **reminders** of what is generally **accepted practice**.

While others, have particular **application** to *"Believers in Business"*.

### **1- The Value of daily Devotions**

This may seem an **obvious** point to **make** for a Christian believer.

However in the **pressure** of **time** and **tiredness**, devotions, can **decline** and be **pushed** out.

Therefore we **need** to **prioritise** their **significance** and **importance**.

This is for both our **spiritual** and **physical** wellbeing.

Choose the most **suitable** time of the day, to allow as much clear **thinking** and **thoughtfulness**, from a tired mind as **possible**.

It is **essential** to spend at least some **time** with the Lord, **before** you start the **duties** of the day.

The Psalmist David, who was **undoubtedly** a busy person, saw this **point** when he **wrote** in his Psalms.

*"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up." Psalm 5.3*

Going out into a **hostile** world without first **committing** your way unto the Lord is a sign of **independence** not **dependence**.

It is going to war without our **spiritual** armour on.

But **in committing** your way first to the Lord, the day then becomes an **effective partnership** with the Lord not a lonely **experience!!** Dependence is for our benefit!

*"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."*  
*Psalms 55:22*

#### **• Example of Daniel**

Daniel was a man with tremendous **responsibilities** as a leader.

Yet his **devotions** were of **paramount** importance to him, **inspiring** his wisdom as a leader.

With this **respect** in mind, Daniel set his **diary** around his **devotions**, rather than his **devotions** around his **diary**!

*“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” Daniel 6:10*

**“Stand fast while being both Upright and Profitable - All for the Glory of God”**

*“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;” Psalms 63:1*

## **2- The Wisdom of Keeping the Right Perspective**

Owing to the **pressures** and **demands** experienced in a Business **environment** it is quite common to get things out of **perspective**.

There is a danger of the **business** becoming an **idol** inasmuch, as it can become the chief **focus** of our **life** and even our **affections**.

For example if you find each week you are **lapsing** into **addressing** the business problems in your **mind** during the worship services.

You can be sure you **actually** have a **spiritual** problem far **greater** than the **practical** business problem **itself**.

This was **certainly** an issue I **struggled** with at a time when the business had become an **idol** in my life.

At such times we need to **urgently** put the **Helmet of Salvation** back on.

*“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” 1 Thessalonians 5:8*

This means to view our **situation** from an **eternal** perspective.

To **remind** ourselves as believers what we have been **saved** to and whose we really are.

We must not allow the **business** to become an idol of **darkness** in our lives.

Rather see how small the **business** really is when compared with essential **eternal** issues.

The business must be kept in its **proper** place in our minds.

It must be kept in a **right perspective**.

It often gets out of **proportion** in our mind.

The business is simply a **means** to an end. It is a **servant** for our practical **provision** which is ultimately to be **used** for the **glory** of God.

**“Stand fast while being both Upright and Profitable - All for the Glory of God”**

*“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Corinthians 6:20*

## **3- The Necessity of a Right Attitude**

Success can give us a sense of **Superiority**.

Success can **effect**, the way we **Communicate** with others and **Relate** to them.

Success can cause us to **Despise**, others not so **successful**.

Success and its **trappings** can **Distance**, ourselves from those of a lower **standard** of living.

Success can **Harden** a person's heart and make them **Unsympathetic**, to failure and weakness. Success can make a person, **Intolerant** of those without their **energy** and **drive**.

*“ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19*

It is interesting to **notice** the **testimony** of Job when he was one the **richest** men in the east.

A very **successful** businessman!

At the same time he was **respected** as an elder in town and as a guide to the **needy**.

*“I was eyes to the blind, and feet, was I to the lame.” Job 29:15*

### **“Stand fast while being both Upright and Profitable - All for the Glory of God”**

A person who has been **prospered** by the Lord and yet remains of a **humble** disposition and spirit follows in the **footsteps** of their Master Jesus Christ.

*“Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.” Psalm 138:6*

## **4- The Significance of Stewardship**

This is a very **sensitive** area and if and when a brother or sister requests **advise** then it is important to deal in **principles** rather than **numbers**.

With this in mind and as this is **undoubtedly** an issue which **affects** people in business I suggest to you some **guidelines**.

### **• The Discipline of Lifestyle**

**Enjoy:** God's providential blessing with a clean heart and clear conscience. Be thankful!

**Remember:** Wealth in and of itself is not sin, only the misuse of it.

**Respect:** The prudence of quality, but without extravagance and show.

**Avoid:** The pitfalls of image based living –

**Reject and Resist:** A materialistic attitude!

*“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” 1 Timothy 6:9*

**Constantly Remember:** The Word of God, which calls us to *“Moderation in all things”*

**Beware of:** The danger of laying up treasure while at the same time being not rich towards God

**Be Willing:** To share your providential blessings from God with others.

**Be Aware:** Of the danger of forgetting where the providential blessings have come from.

This is one of the **issues** that Moses **warned** the Children of Israel of **just** before he **went** to **be with** the Lord!

*“And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.” Deuteronomy 8:17-18*

### **• The Grace of Giving**

Providential **blessing** and **prosperity** from the Lord bring with them **challenging** responsibilities of stewardship.

The Lord has both the **spiritual** and **practical** welfare of His Church in mind.

He prospers **providentially** for the purpose of **supporting** His church **practically**.

It is important that we do not lose sight of the **significance** of a giving **ministry**.

If God has given you **skills** in the area of making honest gain in **business** then see this as part of your **calling** to **support** the **ministry** of the Gospel.

*"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Pr 3:9-10*

So there are some clear Biblical **principles** in this area.

#### **Be generous**

*"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7*

#### **Be discreet**

*"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:" Matthew 6:3*

#### **Be ready**

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

#### **Be faithful**

*"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." 1 Cor 4:2*

#### **Be Loving**

*"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:3*

#### **Be Wise**

*"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5-6*

#### **Be Diligent:**

*Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. Prov 27:23*

### **5- Opportunities for Witness!!**

**Employers:** Terms – Objective – Rewards – Concern - Christian Love

**Employees:** Diligent – Hardworking – Trustworthy - Pleasant

**Customers:** Standard – Service – Price – Honesty – Reliability

**Suppliers:** Payment Standards – Loyalty – Price Agreements

**Entertainment:** Lunches – Dinners – Conferences - Conversation witness

To **maintain** a faithful **witness** there are **three** key **relationships**, which need to be **understood** and **respected**.

- 1- Our relationship with **God** – Whereby our Identity is **Derived**
- 2- Our relationship with **The Church** – Whereby our Identity is **Maintained**
- 3- Our relationship with **The World** – Whereby our Identity is **Expressed**

*Illust: Daniel in Babylon in the world but not of the world. Not losing our distinctiveness.*

We live in a **sinful** and **secular** humanistic society, which parades itself **unashamedly** in the work place. Diverse ungodly lifestyles are **paraded** in an **arrogant** manner in front of Christian believers.

Whose **freedom**, of speech, is now limited by the threat of **litigation**!

The workplace is sometimes **described** for a Christian believer as being in Church on Sunday and Babylon on Monday.

Nevertheless in the **reality** of our **unavoidable** call to live in a world more akin to Babylon than Zion, we can show the **love of Christ**.

We can **reflect** something of His **wonderful** example.

We can by our **testimony** show forth our Saviour and Lord for His **glory**.

This is our **calling** for which we require the **gracious** help and **enabling** of the Lord.

One of the points made **consistently** to me recently by **brethren** in **business** is the significance of **testimony** by Christ like **behaviour**.

One brother **put** it like this. It is all to do **first** and **foremost** with how we **act** and **re-act**.

This brother testified of one **professing** Christian Director of a Company he knew, whose **testimony** was totally **destroyed** by his **aggressive attitude** in **attempting** to get his own way.

While another Christian **believer**, this brother **knew** and **employed**, endeared himself, to his **colleagues** by **dedication** to duty, while maintaining a **pleasant** attitude.

Another brother describes **witness**; as not so much the **place** where you are that is **important**, but the **intensity** of your presence, which **counts**.

*Illust: The Conscientious Christian cleaner and The Customer visiting the factory!      Work!!*

Suppressing Christian **identity** is like keeping an inflated ball **underwater**.

Either the ball **surfaces** to be seen or we have to **deflate** the ball and let it sink.

A deflated witness brings **dishonour** unto to the Lord.

The **importance** of your witness as being first **trustworthy**, **reliable** and **kind is vital!**

Answering difficult people with **grace** and **patience** is part of that **witness**.

In our witness in a hostile **environment** Christ calls us to "love thy neighbour".

Therefore the Christian in Business should bring an added **dimension** into the Company through such a **witness**.

They should show a loving **concern** for the **practical** and **spiritual** well being of their **employees** and **clients**.

How many **conversations** for the **gospel** arise simply out of a kind **word**, a kind **action**.

How **conscientious** we are in the workplace is vital to the **opening** of the door to the **witness** of the Gospel in that place.

Especially in a **recession** those who keep their word and are **respected** as people who are trustworthy will find their **testimony** for God's honour of great **value**.

*Illust: On this issue of dealing with such **pressure** in a **recession**, I **recommend** that you purchase the book "Men of Purpose" **available** in the bookshop. In that book we have an account **among** many others, of how Henry Heinz proved God in a **recession**. Through his testimony of **integrity**, in his moral **obligation** to his creditors, he was able to **re-finance** his business. **Where would we have been without Heinz tomato ketchup!!!***

How a Christian responds to **stress** in the work place provides another **opportunity** for witness.

Stress is one of the most **common experiences** in Business.

The **constant** demands of the **market** place, **finance**, **industrial** relations, and **communication** becomes a **potent** mix in bringing about **stress**.

With problems come **worry**, how will the **issue** turn out?

What am I going to say at the **difficult** meeting next week?

What to say to an **irate** customer?

Being on the front line as a Believer in Business holding the line of **integrity**, can be very **challenging** at times.

Believers often have to live out the prayer "Casting all your care upon Him" to receive the **comfort** of the promise "for He careth for you"

A Director of a PLC **testified** to me on a number of **occasions** that his hourly prayer was "Lord help me" So proving God's **faithfulness** in the **midst** of the **stress** and **problems**.

In your **congregations** at the weekend there is likely to be brethren who are **grappling** with issues of **integrity** and **truth** in Business.

**"Standing Fast while being Upright and Profitable - All for the Glory of God."**

**Requires application of the Principle Text:**

*"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life." Philippians 2:14-16*

*"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Romans 14:7-8*

## **6- Importance of Church Attendance and Serving the Lord**

They **rely** upon the Lords Day as the **means** of **grace**, whereby they **receive** the spiritual **strength** and **guidance**, to inspire them for the next weeks **challenges**.

There is **nothing** like a day in the House of the Lord to put **matters** into their **right perspective**.

### **Church attendance:**

Lords Day – Prayer Meeting – Bible Study

*Diary: Business appointments and timing as far as is possible should be around the Church commitments unto the Lord*

*Illust: Parable of Jesus and His invitation to the wedding.*

*"And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused." Luke 14:18*

### **Ministries:**

Sunday School

*Where did you learn to present in that manner – Sunday School*

Youth Work – Outreach – Caring for the Needy

*Businessmen need to do this to keep their feet on the ground and not become distant and have a higher than though attitude.*

*Illust: Testimony of the work party – Solicitors – Consultants – Financiers – Accountants – Painting and Cleaning.*

Humility – Jesus taking a towel and washing the disciples feet!

*"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" Jn 13:4-6*



## 7- The Value of your Family

There is a well **known** saying which says “*Behind a **successful** man is his **wife***”

It is vital **believers** in **business** not to **neglect** their **families**.

**Quality** time probably on a Saturday is **devoted** to the family.

Time **taken** on the Lords Day to ensure **family devotions**.

Care needs to be taken in the **manner** in which you speak to you wife and children.

Business often **requires** quick **cut direct** answers.

Directing, **ordering** is not the way to **speak** to the **wife** or **children**.

*“Let the husband **render** unto the wife due **benevolence**: and likewise also the wife unto the **husband**.” 1 Corinthians 7:3*

*“Lo, children are an **heritage** of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.” Psalms 127:3*

## CONCLUSION

The Christian believer **engaged** in **business** in a Post Christian world needs ultimately to focus upon **Christ** for their **inspiration**.

You need an example of <b>Authority</b> –	Look to Christ
You need an example of <b>Vision</b> –	Look to Christ
You need an example of <b>Purpose</b> –	Look to Christ
You need an example of <b>Servant Leadership</b> –	Look to Christ
You need an example of <b>Dedication</b> -	Look to Christ
You need an example of <b>Care</b> -	Look to Christ

**Remind** you of the words in Hebrews:

*“ Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” Hebrews 12:1-3*

*Illust: Floating compass in a Land Rover whatever the tilt the compass sets upon a fixed point governed by the magnetic pole. Wherever we are we can look from that position to Christ.*

***Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Ref: Philippians 4:8***