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Deuteronomy 8:17-18

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The Case for Building a Kingdom Business

By Robert C. Benson, President

“Do you want to accept a challenge that will be the integrating dynamic of your whole life? One that will engage your loftiest thoughts, your most dedicated exertions, your deepest emotions, all your abilities and resources, to the last step you take and the last breath you breathe? Listen to Jesus of Nazareth; answer his call.”

Os Guinness, The Call

This is the second issue of a new and separate ABA newsletter, *The Spirit Led Business™*, providing insight on building a Kingdom of God business – a company led by a person who in turn is led by the Spirit of God. The focus of this article is on examining the basis for building a Kingdom business.

Situational Analysis

God had work and commerce in mind from the beginning of creation “*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground”* (Genesis 1:26). “*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it”* (Genesis 2:15). Work is not the consequence of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. The consequence of their disobedience is intolerable work – unproductive painful labor, “*Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field”* (Genesis 3:17-18). God’s original plan was that mankind would work, creatively develop the earth and populate it.

The organization structures and business examples discussed throughout Scripture demonstrates that commerce and business were intended in God’s design. “*The LORD demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standards for fairness”* (Proverbs 16:11 NLT). “*Develop your business first before building your house”* (Proverbs 24:27 NLT). “*All goes well for those who are generous, who lend freely and conduct their business fairly”* (Psalms 112:5 NLT). *Look here, you people who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.’ ... What you ought to say is, ‘If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.’ Otherwise you will be boasting about your own plans, and all such boasting is evil”* (James 4:13-16).

Some business owners I know, myself included, believe that God called them into business. But in spite of the obvious need for businesses to provide for the people, God instructed man to populate the world with. Michael Baer says in his book *Business as Mission* that “In much of the world there is a fundamental conviction among sincere Christians that there is something intrinsically wrong with business and no serious follower of Christ would go into business, much less consider it a calling.” In reality, the “goodness” of a business is dependent on the people running the business, just like any other organization. “*A company is but a shadow of its president*” (Emerson).

Amazing, there are Christian business owners who believe you absolutely can not mix Christianity and business. This is obviously an erroneous belief because, as printed in our sidebar, the Bible says clearly that God has a role in business success or failure: “*You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant...*” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18). To confirm this in more detail, read Deuteronomy 28-30.

It is no wonder that erroneous beliefs such as these have penetrated Christianity considering the Bible tells us Christians are at war with the devil, also called Satan, who is referred to by the Lord Jesus Christ as “*a liar and the father of lies*” (John 8:44). Erroneous beliefs such as those above are nothing more than lies, one of the “*schemes*” of the devil (see Ephesians 6:11) and one of his core strategies to derail Christians from successfully building the Kingdom of God.

I know of other business owners who avoid (knowingly or unknowingly) building a Kingdom business because they are not sure they want to contend with the increased spiritual warfare it will bring into their life “*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*” (Ephesians 6:12). Fear is another of Satan’s core strategies to try to stop the advance of Christ’s Church on earth. So what is a Kingdom Business?

KINGDOM BUSINESS DEFINED

You may be wondering “What is a Kingdom business?” Good question. Most Christian business men I have known over the years think of their business as a Christian business. That is, they try to run it according to biblical principles in such a way as to bring glory to God.

Most seem to agree what a secular business is – a business owned by non-Christians whose mission is to provide a quality product or service to their market place. In the process they may or may not use principles that are consistent with the Bible. Those who do are not doing it intentionally, but because many Biblical principles are built into “professional business practices”. To clarify the difference between a Christian business and a Kingdom business let’s look at Michael Baer’s definitions:

- **Christian Business** – “commonly used to refer to either a business that is owned by a Christian or a business managed according to Christian principles... Sometimes used to describe a company that is actually involved in some kind of religious work, such as a ...Christian bookstore.”
- **Kingdom Business** – “a business that is specifically, consciously, clearly, and intentionally connected to the establishment of Christ’s Kingdom in this world.”

“BUSINESS IS A HIGH CALLING FROM GOD”

If you have ever felt led to more intentionally integrate God into your business mission, there is a good reason for that desire. Baer goes on to say “business is a good thing from God...a high calling from God.” If you believe you have such a leadership calling from God, you are likely correct and you are faced with a challenging job. But “*do not let your hearts be troubled*” for you were made by God with that objective in mind:

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” (Psalms 139:13-16)

The Bible does not teach that we have three lives: spiritual, family and business, and that we are to prioritize them in that order as some suggest. Scripture teaches us that we have one life and all children of God are all called to live it for The Lord Jesus Christ in the building of his Kingdom.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” (Colossians. 3:23-24)

Renowned Author, Os Guinness, in his book “The Call – Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life”, defines the notion of calling this way: “*Calling is the truth that God calls us to himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion, dynamism, and direction lived out as a response to his summons and service.*”

Mr. Guinness outlines four meanings of the notion of calling to help us understand what a calling is. In his meanings he says: “*...calling has a vital extended meaning in the New Testament...as Jesus calls his followers to himself, he also calls them to other things and tasks...But deeper even than these particular things, discipleship, which implies ‘everyone, everywhere, and in everything,’ is the natural and rightful response to the Lordship of Christ.*”

If God has saved your life by calling you to become a child of God, he has called you into the Kingdom of God. And if he has called you into the Kingdom of God he has called you to assist the Lord Jesus Christ in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).

FINDING YOUR KINGDOM PURPOSE

Baer, a businessman and former pastor, points out that God “is a God of purpose and plans, that he has an end in mind for the things he does and creates.” The Bible teaches us that we each have a purpose. In addition the Scriptures above, consider the following: “*In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will*” (Ephesians 1:11) “*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do*” (Ephesians 2:10).

God has a plan to build the Church, the Body of Christ, and in so doing, to redeem all of creation for, according to the Bible, all of creation was affected by Adam and Eve's disobedience: “*The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to*

decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Romans 8:19-24).

The body of Christ, “the sons of God” collectively, is God’s presence on earth. Building the Kingdom of God on earth through the body of Christ is God’s plan. And there is no Plan B. Your role in God’s plan, his purpose for you, is going to be consistent with the way he “*knit me [you] together in my [your] mother's womb*”. And it has nothing to do with whether or not you have gone to seminary: “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord*” (Colossians. 3:23). As a member of God’s family you have been given a highly noble and valuable purpose by Him and He needs you to help build the Kingdom!

INTENTIONALITY

Baer says “a Kingdom business is intentional.” It involves intentionally integrating your God given purpose with God’s purposes in the Bible.

“We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all. However, he has given each one of us a special gift according to the generosity of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:4-7 NLT)

So be intentional about your decisions, knowing that God will direct your steps “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6). And ask for help in building a Kingdom business with absolute confidence that he will help you because building the Kingdom of God is “according to his will”: “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of him” (1 John 5:14-15).

Therefore, determine to build your business for the right reasons, obey the Lord Jesus Christ and “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths*” (Proverbs 3:5-6). “*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians. 10:31). And, “*seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*” (Matthew 6:33-34).

EQUIPPING YOU FOR THE JOB

Dallas Willard said, “It is as great and as difficult a spiritual calling to run the factories and the mines, the banks and the department stores, the schools and government agencies for the Kingdom of God as it is to pastor a church or serve as an evangelist.”

If you are to build and lead a Kingdom business, you are going to need Kingdom resources and know how to use them. Why? 1) because in addition to the normal challenge of building a business, you are going to need to grow spiritually and 2) because you face three struggles in the spiritual realm. These are battles with 1) The World; 2) The Flesh; and (3) The devil. Following are some action steps to guide you in building a Kingdom business:

1. Read “Business as Mission” by Michael R. Baer. This is a MUST READ and it has some very sound advice for you in determining your business Kingdom purposes, managing relationships, developing excellence, integrating Business as Mission and Action Planning for Kingdom Business.

2. **We are jointly sponsoring a free (except for out-of-pocket expenses) series of workshops with Nault Financial Group to meet together with other business owners and discuss the “Business as Mission” book. A briefing to provide an overview of the workshops is being held on September 28, 2010 from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Call me at 303-335-4219 and I will answer your questions and provide you information about the briefing.**
3. Follow our free newsletters on “The Spirit Led Business” as we coach you with insights for growing spiritually and building a Kingdom business.
4. We have a 26 year proven track record of helping small and mid-sized companies grow and produce wealth. Call me to set up a get acquainted meeting, and I will give you a complimentary copy of Baer’s “Business as Mission” book. For more information and a free Business Priorities Assessment go to our website at www.ABAdvisors.com

The next issue of *The Spirit Led Business*[™] will be about *How to Become a Christian and How to Know You Are One*. Encourage others to join us on this journey.

Note: All Bible verses are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.
NLT = New Living Translation.

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