

The Christian Model For Business Ethics

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Speaker: Dr. Ray Reynolds (June 29, 2012)

I wonder if you have heard the story of the father who was ready to get his son out of the house. The father approaches the son and says, "I want you to marry a girl of my choice." The son replies, "I will choose my own bride!" The father pleads, "But the girl is Bill Gates' daughter." So the son agrees saying, "Well, in that case...ok."

The next day the father approaches Bill Gates and says, "I have a husband for your daughter. Bill Gates replies, "But my daughter is too young to marry!" The father quickly pleads, "But this young man is a vice-president of the World Bank." So Bill Gates agrees and says, "Ah, in that case...ok."

Finally Father goes to see the president of the World Bank and say, "I have a young man to be recommended as a vice-president." The President replies, "But I already have more vice- presidents than I need!" The father pleads, "But this young man is Bill Gates' son-in-law." So the President agrees saying, "Ah, in that case...ok."

This is a funny story... but this is how business is usually done. The way the father went about it was wrong, but the idea is very interesting. Even If you have nothing, you can get anything. The key is your attitude.

I was once asked the question: "Is it okay for a Christian to be successful?" My answer to that person was... "Have you read the stories of Joseph, Solomon, and Daniel?" Of course, it is okay to be successful. In fact, God demands for us to give our best. To try our hardest. And to work as if we are working for the Lord and not for men. In fact, if you take a close look at the Scriptures, you will see that they speak of ambition, achievement, and great accomplishments. Let me give you a few things to think about.....

(1) Success is measured by a set of standards established by a person or group.

Do you believe that? Then, why can't Christians set that standard? Think about Solomon for a moment....How did he become successful? He worked at it. If you have read Proverbs you know what he sought to do and how he sought to do it. Ecclesiastes on the other hand tells us that we must not make everything about work and success. We have to conclude that it's really about fearing God and keeping His commandments. We need to have a relationship with Him!

Many people, in the day of John the Baptist, felt that they were assured of God's blessing simply because they were descendants of Abraham. They thought they deserved to be blessed just because the Lord was their God and they had Abraham as their Father. The religious leaders of his day promoted and reinforced that idea (**Matthew 3:7-9, Luke 3:8, John 8:39**). So John challenged them to reconsider their way of thinking. What he told them was that what really mattered was what was coming soon.....Jesus. Likewise, we need to be prepared for the coming of Jesus and not worried about all the other things that are superficial.

You see, God wants to bless us. He wants to give us great things. But, we have to use our talents, time, and opportunities to make great things happen. We have to do our best, and we need to create an environment where people can achieve great things and be rewarded for it. In that way we are becoming just like our God. We need to be those that shine the light. We need to be the city on a hill.

(2) Our priorities will determine our success.

Why you pursue something and how you pursue it is just as important as whether or not we achieve it. Go back to John the Baptist for a moment... John's listeners were ordinary people caught up in the everyday scramble of trying to get ahead. But in their pursuit of gain they would ignore the needs of others and take ethical shortcuts. John challenges them to make internal changes (repent) and demonstrate those changes in their daily responsibilities through charity, honesty, and justice (**Luke 3:8-14**). To put their priorities in the right place.

Think about those three I mentioned earlier... Daniel, Joseph, and Solomon. Solomon was born with eyes for the kingdom, but Daniel and Joseph had to work for it. But all three of them achieved great things because they put God on the top of their priority list. Daniel refused to compromise his morality. Joseph refused to compromise his integrity. And, Solomon refused to compromise his methodology. All three knew what God would bless them if they put him on top!

(3) Obtaining success will always carries a cost.

If we doing things in the right way and with the right motives it is worth the cost. If we have to compromise some of our key principles along the way it is not! Going back to John, he warned the people of God's judgment using a simple, well-known image (**Luke 3:9**). Just as a lumberjack would lay his axe at the foot of a tree, the tree must come down. And, if we are outside of the lines of safety, the tree of God's judgment will fall upon us. For John, the cost was imprisonment and execution (**Matthew 14:1-12**). But, to him, it was worth the price.

With Solomon, it cost him a tremendous amount of money to build the temple, but it was so amazing that people came from miles around to see it. It would blind them on the road. With Daniel, it cost him prison time and much heartache. With Joseph it cost him years and years of his life in slavery and prison. But in all of these cases, I think they would agree it was worth it! In **Hebrews 11** it says the world was not worthy of these men.

(4) We should not expect praise or accolades from men.

The story is told of a basketball coach for a small town community college who was in the bathroom shaving one morning in his upstairs bathroom when the phone rang. His wife yelled up to him, "Honey, it's Sports Illustrated on the phone." "Finally," he thought "all this waiting has paid off, we are finally going to get some good publicity." His mind starts racing.....they won the division last year, they had two students that went on to major universities, and this season was top notch. With a point guard who had just set a new school record... So, he tried to hurry his shaving and accidentally cut himself. There was blood everywhere. Then as he is rushing to get to the phone he fell down the stairs, twisting his ankle and bruising both knees. As he turns the corner at the bottom of the stairs, limping to the phone, he puts his hand on the end table to balance his weight and knocks over a lamp into the coffee table... he brushes it off and grabs the phone.....and says, "Sports Illustrated!" "Yes." "Oh, I am so glad you called." Then the voice on the phone says. "Great! Because Mr. Jones, we are calling to tell you that if you act now you can get a year's subscription for \$1.00 off of the news stand price."

Sometimes we want praise and success so much that we build ourselves up, just hoping someone will notice. We work so hard but the Bible says that we need to work for the Lord and not for men. We should work purposefully, sufficiently, passionately, conventionally, sacrificially, humbly, safely, loyally, accurately, fairly, honestly, generously, modestly, diligently, boldly, patiently, respectfully, fearfully, faithfully, prudently, responsibly, obediently, cheerfully, submissively, prayerfully, wisely, peacefully, and expectantly. We do it because it's just the right thing to do.

Before we close I would like to read something to you from **Jeremiah 29**: "*For I know the plans I have for you,*" declares the LORD, "*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,*" declares the LORD" (vs.11-14).

God has big plans for you. God is waiting to bless you! He is yearning to give us great things. May God bless all of our works. And, let's give Him the praise and honor for everything! (PRAYER)