

- helping to change society—inner cities, the deprived, jobless, downtrodden, third world nations—through setting up businesses, training people to use their resources, teaching a strong work ethic, and stirring up a passion within people to be productive and to better themselves
- guiding your business according to God’s Word—principles and values of righteousness—simply doing what is right
- helping meet humanity’s greatest need, the *spiritual* need, the need for the gospel and God’s Word

The way to greatness is through humble service. If you wish to be great, then this needs to be your driving ambition. You need to actively seek to serve others.

As a business leader, you occupy a position of authority and influence over others. But no matter what your position is or how much authority you have, you are still called to serve. You are to actively work for the sake and benefit of others by producing the best product or providing the best service possible for your customers or clients, always treating your fellow workers and all others as you should. Your ambition should never be to lead just for the sake of holding a position of authority or for receiving more money, benefits, or honor from other people. Instead, your ambition should be to help as many people as you can. This is *true greatness!*

4. *Be a person of integrity—good character—above reproach.*

“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them. Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight, but the wicked falls by his own wickedness” (Pr.11:3-5, ESV).

One way to contribute to success in your business is to be a person of integrity. It is not an easy task, especially in today's business climate. If you are—or wish to be—such a person, you will need to make decisions and operate your business or department just as God's Word instructs. You will need to do the right thing even when it is difficult or painful. You will need to refuse to do wrong and run from the temptation even if it hurts your business, costs you a promotion, or jeopardizes your job.

Doing the right thing when it concerns money is the theme of the above Scripture. This includes honesty in all business dealings (v.1). Integrity is a powerful quality, and if you possess it, you will be better prepared in all your decision-making (v.3a). If you have integrity, you will not be guided by...

- what your emotions or feelings tell you
- what your personal desires or ambitions are
- what others pressure you to do
- what yields the highest profit
- what gains the favor of a superior
- what makes a sale
- what wins you a contract
- what saves you the most money
- what is in your best interests
- what saves you the most money
- what is in your best interests
- what looks best on reports or financials

As a Christian businessperson, your integrity will lead you to do what is right in every situation. It will guide you according to God's truth. His clear instructions will guide you day by day and bring peace to your soul.

The *treacherous* in verse 3 are those who are crooked or dishonest in the way they conduct business (v.3b). Though they lack integrity, they may still prosper for a while. But

the day will come when their crookedness finally catches up to them. They will be found out, and when they are, they could face the loss of their businesses, positions, criminal prosecution, or even worse.

When you are tempted to compromise your integrity, always remember this fact: one day you will answer to God for your life, including how you conducted your business and performed your job. Admittedly, countless individuals have accumulated great wealth through crookedness. But when they stand before God in the *day of wrath*—the day of judgment—their money will be entirely worthless (v.4). Nothing will stand between them and God's wrath. However, your doing what is right will deliver you from His condemnation.

Furthermore, God gives you a wonderful promise: if you allow integrity to guide you, you will travel a smoother road through life (v.5). This does not mean you will be free of problems, trials, or temptation, but that your integrity will *keep your way straight*—clear of the hazards brought about by dishonesty and crooked dealings. You will avoid the guilt that comes from defrauding others; the fear of being caught and punished; and the shame and lack of respect by family, friends, and all work-related associates. Add to that the months or years of covering your tracks and looking over your shoulder, and the devastating havoc that such dishonesty has on your business or career.

Instead of all the fear, trouble, and loss, you will experience true peace of heart and mind, a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment, and the priceless blessings of God. You will still suffer adversity, as we all do, but you will avoid the excruciating consequences that come to those who lack integrity.

In addition to the personal sense of peace, your career or business will reap the benefits of being *blameless* or unblemished by dishonest dealings. You will have a sterling reputation. Even more important, you will be a powerful witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who lack integrity are a detriment to the gospel. Deceitful, dishonest business leaders who tout their church membership or claim to be

Christians have done great damage to the cause of Christ. But instead of bringing shame to His name—as the dishonest do—your integrity will bring glory to God, especially when others see you doing the right thing at great expense to yourself or your business.

5. *Work hard—laboring willingly and diligently.*

“[Christian employees] 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. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism” (Col.3:23-25, NIV '84).

As a Christian employed by a company, whether an owner, manager, or employee, you are to work “with all your heart” (v.23). This means that your labor should be for more than just a paycheck. Your service and work should arise from a desire to please and be obedient to the Lord. You are not working solely for a business or some executive or manager here on earth, but also for the Lord (v.24). You are working for the most important reason possible: The Lord Jesus Christ has instructed you to work and to work diligently. Jesus Christ is *your* Lord; therefore, as a Christian worker, you should do what your Lord says. There are, however, two other very important reasons you should work diligently.

- a. **Workers who are diligent** will be rewarded by Christ (v.24). On earth, you may be taken advantage of, or even mistreated. But the Lord knows and sees all, and He is going to abundantly reward you if you are diligent in following His instructions to work hard. In fact, God’s promised inheritance is simply astounding, expanding far beyond all that you could ever ask or think. This glorious reward includes a new, incorruptible body, one that is perfect and eternal. When that day comes, you will live forever in the new heaven and earth, where you will serve the Lord Jesus in positions of great leadership and authority.