

God Is Your Business Partner

God's economy is different than ours. His economy is based upon a system of values and principles. Ordering your life according to His values and principles will make you successful by any measurement. Living by man's values void of all principles will make you a loser by any measurement. The values of ethics, love, compassion, giving, caring, honesty, integrity, serving, and forgiving will empower you. They have stood the test of time.

For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.
PSALM 50:10

A value system built on dishonesty, lying, cheating, and stealing leads only to disaster. If your desire is to measure success by the size of check you can write, your foundation is already shaky. God's economy measures our success by how our value system adheres to divine principles. God values whether or not we have accumulated those things that take us from this life to the next.

Much of Western culture is centered around the things money can buy. Christian culture in the West is not immune to its influence. It's not that we are necessarily in love with money, but certainly we could say that we are enticed, maybe entrapped, by what we know money can do for us. Of course, we do live in this society and in this world's system, and we should not be so unwise as to think that we are immune to it altogether.

Benjamin Franklin said, "Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more a man has, the more he wants. Instead of filling a vacuum, it makes one."

Money and happiness are not mutually exclusive. Will Rogers said, "Too many people spend money they haven't earned to buy things they don't want to impress people they don't like."

The Bible has a lot to say about material goods and our desire for them. The apostle Paul suggests that contentment is a very powerful value to guide us. Then he reminds us that we came into this world with nothing and will depart in the same way. He says we should be happy when we have food to eat and clothes to wear. He notes that people

who desire to get rich quickly often fall into temptation, fulfilling harmful desires that lead to ruin and destruction.

When we are successful in God's economy, we benefit both now and for eternity. If we have become successful using the world's standards, we will always have to be on red alert, because thieves can steal, moths can destroy, and rust can corrode. If our possessions belong to God, nothing is powerful enough to take them away. So in the face of any natural economy, or even as we face death, our success continues because we have laid up riches in heaven. Though many people of the world possess few material goods, those who live according to the principles of God can anticipate the wealth and treasures awaiting them in heaven, which far outweigh the temporal wealth of this world.

Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power.

I CHRONICLES 29:10-12

Don't make the mistake of thinking your job or your business is what provides your income. God is the source of your abundant supply. Jobs disappear; customers in your business come and go. It is God who sees to it that your needs are met. Everyone and everything else is just His instrument for getting it accomplished. God uses many vehicles to get the job done, but in the end it is not us, but God's blessing upon our lives.

"The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty.

HAGGAI 2:8

Billy Graham said, "If a person gets his attitude towards money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area of his life. Tell me what you think about money, and I can tell you what you think about God, for these two are closely related. A man's heart is closer to his wallet than almost anything else."

Jesus taught that we must be responsible in our finances. God is the source of all wealth. He is the original owner of all things, for He made all things. As Scripture says,

He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. In addition to the ways He provides for us supernaturally, God also gives us the ability to earn a living (Deuteronomy 8:18).

When you partner with God in business, He not only will bless it, but He also will let you enjoy prosperity. But there is a caution not to keep everything to yourself. When you partner with God, He will prosper you! When God becomes your source, your well will never run dry. When we become Christians, we become children of God, and the Bible says God wants to give gifts to His children.

Someone once said that the real measure of your wealth is how much you'd be worth if you lost all your money. In the sixteenth century, Izaak Walton said, "Look to your health; and if you have it, praise God and value it next to conscience; for health is the second blessing that we mortals are capable of, a blessing money can't buy."

What does God already own that you are trying to keep absolute control over by refusing to acknowledge His ownership? What about your business or your house? What about your transportation vehicles, your recreational vehicles, your clothes, toys, and other worldly goods?

What about your body? According to Romans 12:1 (1 Corinthians 6:13), your body belongs to the Lord. Does your time belong to you or to God? What about your income, your savings, your investments, and your other possessions? Do these things belong to you or to God? Have you been allowed oversight of them for the purpose of showing good stewardship, or have you taken them over, assuming they are yours only?

Everything you say, every decision you make, every action you take must be accountable to the principles of God.

What about your entire life? Your dreams, your goals, your visions—are they born of God, or have you allowed your carnal nature to take complete control? Are you a thief or a steward? If a steward, then what kind of steward are you? Are you one that God can trust with complete care, or are you careless in your stewardship?

Not only are the silver and the gold the Lord's, so is everything else. Everything belongs to God. So why not give it all to Him? In 1 Corinthians 4:2, Paul says it is required that "those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." In other words, we are all

stewards and must be the kind of stewards that are faithful. A steward is simply a manager of someone else's money and possessions. We must acknowledge God's ownership of everything and manage or use it as He would have us. We gain by giving; we lose by withholding.