

Best Values and Practice for Running a Business – Kevin Pate

Biblical Mandates That Directly Apply to Business People

The Bible is filled with directives that can specifically apply to Christians in business. In Genesis 1:28, God orders Adam and Eve to ‘have dominion’ – a blessing as well as a mandate that applies to us today. We are to steward His resources and bring them under God’s rulership, forever increasing His Kingdom.

Genesis 1:26-28

26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

A steward is a person who manages another person’s assets. When God called us to steward His Creation, He also called us to steward our lives. Jesus talked about the stewardship principles in The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 28:14-30. He makes it clear that the fruit of proper stewardship is growth and profit – a standard we can apply to our work as Christian business leaders. And with diligent stewardship comes great reward: not only knowing we have the approval of God in following His command, but also enjoying the increase of our responsibility and ultimately the fulfillment of entrance into the joy of the Lord.

Matthew 28:18-19

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Because God’s ways are so much different than the ways of the world, living a life that is based on Christian principles, such as stewardship, presents a unique opportunity to introduce people to Jesus Christ. Others become mentored and disciplined in His precepts, opening the door to faith.

All Christians are commissioned to be full-time ministers of the Gospel of Jesus no matter what their vocation. Since we are called to point people to Jesus Christ through our interactions with them, it makes sense that we should treat customers, clients, vendors, and co-workers in a way that displays the splendor, majesty, and excellence of Almighty God. Remember, God has positioned you to be an effective minister through business – not in spite of it.

2. My Business Is My Ministry

We need not perceive business as a separate entity from the Kingdom, but rather a tool by which to expand His Kingdom. That makes Kingdom business very exciting for Christians, because we no longer see our jobs in the marketplace as mere diversions from our service to God. Instead, we recognize that we are called by God to serve alongside Him and to participate in what He is doing in and through the marketplace.

Abilities

God created you with intent, giving you specific talents and abilities that were not placed in you by accident. Each of us has our own talents and abilities, which often determine our vocation and become the foundation of God's plan for our lives. Since there is no one else with talents and abilities exactly like yours, God has positioned you with a unique opportunity to make a distinctive contribution to His kingdom that only you can make. A look at one's gifts, talents and abilities is often a clue into the divine calling God has placed on his or her life.

Calling

When Christians talk about a calling on their lives, they often mention being led toward a role as a pastor, missionary, or some other 'official' church worker position. But Christians can be called to business, too; and they realize their calling in the same way that full-time church leaders do.

A calling to business is not inferior to other callings. In fact, people who are called to business are the ones who are creating new jobs and capital, which ultimately blesses communities, people, churches and nations. So never minimize the call God has placed on your life. Instead, establish His ways in the business world, and bring prosperity, justice, righteousness, integrity, healing, and hope into the marketplace.

In Genesis 12, we see an example of how business leaders have been uniquely positioned to bring blessings to others through their calling. God made a promise to Abraham, who was blessed so that he could become a blessing himself to all the families of the Earth. When we use business as a platform to bless others, we are walking in our calling and bringing ourselves into alignment with God's plan. That obedience ushers in His presence, power, provision and anointing to continue operating in our ministry.

Anointing

God's presence, power, provision, and anointing are essential for Christian business people to become impactful in the marketplace. The anointing is our most powerful weapon, giving us a competitive edge that propels us toward success. The Bible talks about the importance of God's anointing, which brings:

- Divine Favor (2 Chronicles 16:9)
- Divine Creativity (Colossians 1:16)
- Divine Discernment (Psalm 25:14)
- Divine Wisdom (Proverbs 1:7)
- The Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

Jesus referred to Himself as the Vine of Life. When we draw near to Him through prayer and relationship, He produces His life and energy within us, transforming the way we live. As we connect to God's larger plan, our perspectives on business will change. We are no longer just working in the marketplace to survive or get by, but we are actively engaged and serving as God's representatives to bring His Kingdom into present day reality.

Ministry

The easiest way to discover and experience your purpose in life is by aligning your abilities, calling, anointing. When the three overlap in business, all aspects of work become sacred and holy – just like a pastor's work from a church pulpit. You see, our work is our ministry when we allow God to work through us in the context of our business.

Colossians 3:23-24

23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

3. The Bible on Work

We don't have to look too far within Scriptures to see that God Himself is a worker:

Genesis 2:2-3

2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Likewise, we read in the Gospels that Jesus is a worker just like His Father:

John 5:17

17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

But the Bible doesn't stop there. In fact, the word "work" is mentioned in its different forms more than 800 times in the Bible – more than all the words combined to express worship, music, praise, and singing!

Psalms 90:17

17 And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.

So we know that Jesus Worked, but why exactly did He do it?

1) To do His Father's work

John 14:10-11

10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

2) To bring glory on the Earth

John 17:3-4

3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

Our work was redeemed at the cross by the blood of Jesus Christ.

4. Getting God involved in the Business

As a Christian business leader, it's easy to involve God in the inner-workings of your business. Start by recognizing Him as the head of the business – not yourself. Officially welcome Him into your workplace, and uplift your business in prayer on a daily basis. In Isaiah, God shows us just how critical prayer is to the success of our businesses:

Isaiah 48:17

17 Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go.

Don't be afraid to be specific in your prayers over your business. Start by praying for the business in general and creativity, as well as protection over the borders of your business. Continue to pray over you're your employees, customers, work, growth, and for every need within your business.

Psalms 32:8

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.

When praying, take the time to listen to what God is saying – don't just "drop off" a list of needs and move on about your day.

Daniel 2:22

22 He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.

For example, Joseph received a dream and the interpretation, which allowed him to become the ruler of Egypt under Pharaoh. Likewise Daniel also received the interpretation of the king's dream that saved the life of another person and advanced his own career.

5. Business Can Be Transformational

Transformation is not something that happens by chance; rather, it can only begin with a habit of daily surrender and obedience to God. By honoring His laws and principles, you can not only change your business – you can change nations!

Romans 12:2

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Never underestimate your abilities or responsibilities as a Christian business leader. Change in a nation must always start with us as individuals. All of us – not just a select few – have the ability to strengthen the spiritual and economic fibers of our nation through our individual actions.

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Understand that the marketplace is full of corruption, and the just actions of Christians shine like a light in darkness. Never feel discouraged when others are acting unjustly. Often, people do not expect excellence or order because they believe that their culture will never change. This is the type of negative thinking that prevents transformation and perpetuates a problem rather than presenting a solution. Do not wait for a change in governmental leadership or the system of government to produce lasting cultural transformation.

Our ideas, attitudes, beliefs and values must align with God's word – not cultural norms – for true transformation to take place. This requires that we constantly bring our thoughts into alignment with the Word of God, renewing our minds daily. We do this by reflecting on God's Word and equipping ourselves to become cultural agents for change. This brings about a

transformation in our thinking, generating new beliefs, values and attitudes that bear great influence on economic and political systems, and ultimately culture as a collective whole.

Romans 12:2

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

6. A Kingdom Business is Full of Opportunity

Businesses operating on a Kingdom-based foundation are brimming with ministry opportunities. Examples include opportunities to provide:

- Life-improving products and services
- God's love through all interactions
- Jobs through which employees can provide for their families and fulfill God's call
- Truth and Godly wisdom into difficult situations
- Encouragement for all to fulfill God's destiny in their lives

Christian business leaders recognize that their businesses are their field of ministry. As hundreds or even thousands of customers, vendors, employees and other associates filter through the business, there is an opportunity to minister the Gospel and impact their lives for the better. But it's easy to miss these opportunities without the daily leading of the Holy Spirit. That's why the Christian business owner must seek God daily for guidance, expecting to witness supernatural results in the form of changed lives and the favor of non-believers in positions of power and authority.

The Bible talks about God giving direction, confusing powerful enemies, repairing damaged relationships, and turning the heart of the king (powerful people) in favor of God's people. Since Romans 8:28 tells us that He makes "all things work together for the good of those who love Him and have been called to His purpose," the Christian business owner can have faith that God will work on his behalf in business too – especially a Kingdom-based business with God at the center.

7. Guiding Principles for Kingdom Business

Strive to be profitable for long-term sustainability

Any business must be profitable to grow and flourish; but profitability is also pertinent to the long-term success of a business and its ability to fulfill its purposes. Profit cannot be the only motivation. It is merely a bi-product of enacting Biblical principles throughout a business and a tool to be used for long-term growth.

Strive for excellence, integrity and accountability

A Kingdom business should have a good name and reputation for excellence and integrity. It's not enough to put a Christian emblem on advertising materials; instead leaders and employees should commit to honest business practices, never cheating, lying, or stealing. The infrastructure of the business should be transparent, with leaders available for input and constructive criticism from employees, stakeholders, and the community.

Strive for the transformation of individuals and communities

Leaders of a Kingdom business are motivated to bless communities and nations spiritually, socially, and economically. They should seek to bless leaders of the communities they serve, as well as their own employees and stakeholders. All those who come into contact with the leaders of a Kingdom business should encounter the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Strive to see God’s Kingdom extended

Leaders of a Kingdom business have a core desire to see God’s Kingdom extended on the Earth by doing business and serving others. The business should be viewed as God’s property and ministry – not merely an asset that facilitates personal gain.

Strive to fund Kingdom work

God wants to display His presence within the marketplace, which makes business itself a ministry. However, as God extends His blessings to a business, so should the business become a blessing to others. Many times leaders of Kingdom businesses actively help support missions efforts, the local church, community needs, and individual needs. Leaders should be sensitive to what God speaks to them about blessing others, acting without hesitation as the Holy Spirit leads. The company mission statement may include a statement indicating the intentions of the business to be used as a means of blessing God’s work in the world financially.

8. Kingdom Business Are Fundamentally Different:

The world sees business as a means for self-driven individuals to participate in a free market economy with the purpose of controlling resources and creating wealth for themselves without concern for anyone or anything else. This view dominates today’s business environment and helps highlight the business perspectives that are fundamentally different for Christian business owners.

Kingdom Business	Secular Business
Uses spiritual gifts/skills	Uses only natural skills
Business Steward	Business Owner
Biblical Profit	Worldly profit
Ideas inspired by God	Self-motivated
Directed by the Holy Spirit	Self-driven
Confidence in God	Confidence in Self
Motivated by Love	Motivated by money
Enjoys serving others	Enjoys commanding
Follows God’s methods	Originates own methods

Proverbs 3:31

31 Do not envy the oppressor, and choose none of his ways

A Christian who is in business without fully understanding *Kingdom* business may have erroneous perceptions about work, perhaps viewing it as a neutral device used only to generate profits that will fund ministry outside the marketplace. Despite their honesty and generosity, many Christian business leaders may not consider God's hand at work within and through the business itself – not just their personal lives. They learn to rely on their own 'good' personal business strategy, but they miss God's direction entirely in specific situations.

Don't be fooled into believing that your role as a business leader is somehow inferior to that of another leader, such as a pastor. Don't be the Christian who decides to leave your business and go into 'full-time ministry' in an attempt to better serve God. If God has called you to business, then Kingdom business is your full-time ministry. It is, after all, about learning to steward God's resources and serve others for the benefit of God.