

Core Values for Business Owners – Kevin Pate

The basis of a Christian business person's success stems from personal core values that underscore our commitment priorities, balance, character and responsibility. These core values are a biblical prescription for victory in the marketplace as business leaders and ambassadors of Christ. What are these values?

1. My Daily Time with God

Exodus 33:9-11 9 And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses... 11 So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

Nothing is more important than having a living, growing, vibrant relationship with God. It is the very pulse of our lives, establishing the source of our successes. It is what makes us feel alive and can only deepen with daily time along with God and His word. God is constantly searching for consecrated men and women who lead from a strong relationship with God. In the same way that God came to meet with Moses as Moses sought God, our own relationship with the Father will deepen through our mutual desire. When we long for Him, we meet with Him; and He never fails to meet with us.

In John, we can witness the most compelling example of divine and human intimacy as Jesus prays a prayer of intimacy from a Son to His Father. But Jesus also prays that we would know the same experience:

John 17:21-22

21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one.

We must learn to engage God and tune our spiritual ears to hear the voice of the Lord. In 1 Kings 19:12, we are told that God communicates to us in a “still, small voice.” With daily lives that are tumultuous and full of noise, we must seek to hear God's voice rather than allow it to be drowned out by the hustle and bustle of everyday life. It is in the stillness – not the business – that we can hear the Father speaking.

Psalms 46:10

10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

In the stillness, we can hear the Lord speaking – not only in words, but also in thoughts and impressions. The Lord loves you and desperately yearns for a relationship with you. He longs to commune with you and connect with you in a uniquely personal way.

15-Minute Plan for Fellowship with God

In the same way we set aside time for the ones we love in our lives, so should we set aside moments in our day to close the door, turn off the phone, and share a few minutes with the Lord. But if we know the importance of fellowship with God, why do so many of us struggle to set time aside to pray and seek God on a consistent basis? The following three-part plan is a

simple way to help cultivate the discipline of daily devotions and alone-time with God. Starting with just 15 minutes each day, we can learn how to start a meaningful relationship that grows deeper and becomes a regular part of our lives.

Psalm 27:8

8 When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, Lord, I will seek."

Psalm 5:3

3 My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up.

Step One – Prepare Your Heart

Before you can enter into fellowship with God, prepare your heart to hear from the Lord. Start by thanking Him for the opportunities of this new day. Ask Him to speak to you through His Word and surround you with His presence during your time of fellowship. Take these first moments of your devotional to open your heart and mind for an encounter with God. Dwell on the Lord deeply, clearing up any matters that are bothering your conscience.

Step Two – Take 10 Minutes to Read the Bible

The most important factor in your prayer time is not what you have to say to God, but rather what He has to say to you. The Bible tells in Romans 10:17 the "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Start by reading a Gospel, such as Mark. Read a single chapter per day in succession, reading each verse and chapter consecutively.

Don't race through the scriptures, but avoid stopping to do a Bible study on some word, thought, or theological problem that may present itself. Instead, read for the pure joy of reading and allowing God to speak. Remember, this is God actually speaking to you – just read a little bit, and then meditate. Once you have reached the end of Mark, move on to the Gospel of John and eventually the entire New Testament.

Step Three – Spend Five Minutes in Fellowship with Him and These Important Ingredients:

Adoration – Spend time worshiping Him for who He is. This is the purest kind of prayer because it's all for God, and there's nothing in it for you. You don't barge into the presence of royalty – you begin with the proper salutation. So worship Him, tell the Lord that you love Him, and reflect on His greatness, power, majesty, and sovereignty!

Confession – Be sure that every sin is cleansed by confessing your iniquities – even those you may not have considered 'sin'. The word 'confession' comes from a root word meaning "to agree together with." Applying this to prayer, it means to agree with God. If you said something yesterday that you considered a slight exaggeration - God calls it a lie! You call it strong language - God calls it swearing. You call it telling the truth about somebody in the church - God calls it gossip.

Psalm 66:18

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

Thanksgiving - Thank Him for specific things, consciously expressing your gratitude to God. Ponder on several specific things to thank Him for: your family, your business, your church and ministry responsibilities -- even your hardships.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Supplication - This is the part of your prayer life where you make your petitions known to Him. Ask earnestly and humbly for others; then ask for yourself. In addition to those you know personally, why not include others around the world who could benefit you're your prayers? Pray for missionaries, students studying abroad, friends in distant places, and above all the people of many lands who have yet to hear about Jesus Christ.

2. My Walk with God by His Spirit throughout the Day

The most important and practical thing any human can ever learn is how to be in touch with God moment by moment throughout each day. When we walk with God by His Spirit, we are connected to him in ways that affect both us and those around us. It allows us to:

- Experience God
- Hear and obey God
- Be led by God
- Make decisions inspired by God
- Affect others through our relationship with God

3. My Priority of Relationships

Our lives are made up by relationships. But all relationships are not of equal importance; rather, some hold greater priority over the rest. Placing value on the priority order of your relationships is of utmost importance for the Christian business person.

First Priority – Relationship and Devotion to God

Your relationship with God must become your primary focus in life. It comes far and above anything else. The greatest joy, experience, reward, and purpose in life is to have fellowship with the God of the universe – to be close to Him and to know Him well. Jesus Himself said that this is the true meaning of life.

Matthew 22:36-39

36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” 37 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

John 17:3

3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Second Priority – Relationship and Role with Spouse, Children and Family

Your family is next in priority order and should never come second to anyone other than God. Work and your relationship with others should never supersede the connection you maintain and protect with your spouse, children, and other family members. God even provides us with a guideline for prioritizing relationships within our families.

Ephesians 5:25 tells us that our *spouse* comes first when it says that a married man is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. Therefore since Christ's first priority – after obeying and glorifying the Father was the church, a man's first priority aside from obeying and glorifying God should be his wife. Likewise, Ephesians 5:22 tells wives to submit to their husbands "as unto the Lord," indicating that a woman's husband is second only to God in her priorities.

If spouses are second only to God, we can gather from scripture that *children* are the next priority. Ephesians 5:31 tells us that husband and wife are of one flesh. It makes sense that the relationship we have with our children – the fruit of the marriage relationship – is next in importance. In Proverbs 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4, parents are encouraged to raise godly children who will become the next generation of those who love the Lord with all their hearts, showing once again that God comes first.

After God, spouses and children, we value our relationship to others. Matthew 22:39 says to "love your neighbor as yourself." One of the simplest and most effective ways of loving others is by developing genuine concern for them, wishing them good and going out of your way to ensure they are taken care of. We abide by the golden rule, doing unto others as we would have done unto us. This responsibility goes beyond our friends – it also extends to our enemies. We bring glory to God when we share what we have with others and treat them in the same ways we wish to be treated, regardless of whether we think they deserve it.

Matthew 5:44

44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you

4. My Personal Life Balance

We are called to arrange our priorities in a way that brings balance to our personal lives. We cannot emphasize one and deprive another. Instead we must commit to developing all areas of our lives, whether spiritual, familial, career-related, educational, social, or physical. The following are the 'keys' to achieving a healthy balance in your life:

- Be led by the Holy Spirit
- Learn to say "no" to unnecessary demands on your time
- Work hard and take breaks
- Live within a margin, being careful not to over-schedule
- Use technology appropriately versus being controlled by technology
- Learn your limits and live within boundaries
- Take personal retreats to reflect and refresh

Life is just too short and but a vapor. We are called to steward all that we have been given – including our time. It is a precious asset that requires wisdom and strength to properly distribute. If we don't manage our time, our lack of time will manage us.

Ephesians 5:15-16

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

5. My Personal Character and Qualities

Psalm 139:23-24

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

There are certain qualities and character traits that serve as foundational values for the Christian business person. Ask God to examine your heart, revealing areas that could benefit from further character development. In 2 Peter 1:1-11, we see a list of specific qualities that are the foundation of good character:

Faith (2 Peter 1:5)

“Add to your **faith**...”

Faith is the bedrock of character, because faith is simply believing God and His promises. Never give in to thought patterns of unbelief.

Virtue and Goodness (2 Peter 1:5)

“Add to your faith **virtue** . . .”

The meaning of the word ‘virtue’ is *moral excellence*. Be above reproach, and do not fall victim to the abuse of money, sex or power.

Knowledge (2 Peter 1:5)

“Add . . . to virtue **knowledge**...”

In Matthew 22:27, Jesus said we are to love God with all of our minds. God encourages us to keep growing in body, mind and spirit. (Further reading: Colossians 2:2, 3.)

Self-Control (2 Peter 1:6)

“...to knowledge **self-control**...”

Many people today are overcome with rage and anger. Though anger itself is not a sin, anger that is out of control is never acceptable. (Further reading: 2 Timothy 2:24) By the power of the Holy Spirit we can keep our emotions and actions under control and not take part in destructive thinking or actions.

Perseverance (2 Peter 1:6)

“...to self control **perseverance**”

According to the Word, it is *always* too soon to become discouraged. Galatians 6:9 tells us to “not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” So no matter how difficult your circumstances may be, never, never, NEVER lose your faith! To win the race, you must *stay* in the race! (Further reading: Hebrews 12:1– 7)

Godliness (2 Peter 1:6)

“...to perseverance **godliness**”

Godliness means cultivating God’s life in us and drawing upon the power of His Spirit. You can experience the “exchanged life”—exchanging all that you are not for all that Jesus Christ is. As you yield to Him, you are literally being conformed into the likeness of Christ. (Further reading: Romans 8:28, 29)

Brotherly Kindness (2 Peter 1:7)

“...to godliness brotherly **kindness**”

God calls on us to exhibit a quality that people are starved to receive—kindness. Your compassionate touch, word or note of encouragement, and the prayers you offer for someone in need may seem like simple acts. But in God’s eyes and from the perspective of those you help, they may be the most important things you do all day.

Love (2 Peter 1:7)

“...and to brotherly kindness **love**”

Love should be the compelling force behind all ministry. It is, after all, the greatest of all Christian virtues. In Galatians we read that the love of Christ is part of the fruit of the Spirit that God will develop in us as we learn to trust Him:

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Romans 5:5

5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

6. My Responsibility/Accountability Relationship:

Hebrews 10:25

25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Christians are called to edify one another through relationships and accountability. When we have a responsibility relationship with a friend or small group, we make ourselves vulnerable and answerable to one another with the goal of maturity, growth, and character. We share with each other in confidence, discussing our walk with Christ in an atmosphere of trust. It is through these relationships that God can work in us and allow us to work our faith out with one another – ultimately becoming more Christ-like.

James 5:16

16 Confess your trespasses[a] to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

As we answer for our actions, we can better understand our weaknesses and struggles, as well as gain encouragement and prayer from those we confide in. This model helps us to stay on

track, as well as acquire prayer, care, and support when we fail. We can also model guideposts for one another in order to keep going.

Psalm 27:7

7 Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

There is no single best way to “do” responsibility. It can be a “one-on-one” mentorship or a small group of 3-4; it can meet for one hour or two, once a week or every other week. The important thing is just to do it, remain committed, and follow Christ – not yourself. If you do not “click” with the people in your group or feel you can trust them, that is OK; this may not be the group or person for you. Look for or start another one.

Proverbs 11:14

14 Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

7. God’s “Personal” Plan For Me:

Know my life Bible verse(s)

(Write Bible verse(s) here)

Develop my personal mission statement to help guide you and make decisions

(Write mission statement here)

Set short and long term personal goals based on mission statement

(Write personal goal(s) here)

Create an action plan to reach personal goals

(Write action plan here)

Periodically reevaluate how you are doing in following your life verse(s), personal mission statement, and personal goals. Make corrections as needed.