

Profiting through Purpose

Session

8

This session
explores a Biblical
approach to profiting
through purpose.

8.1 Our attitude to money matters



Prayer

Open the session with a short time of prayer.



Teaching

Before we consider profit, we need a godly attitude to money. The ability to handle money without compromise is essential for anyone engaging in Kingdom Business. During the industrial revolution in Britain, when wealth was increasing across the country, the great preacher John Wesley recognised the need for Christians to engage with the subject of money. He wrote:

John
Wesley

The right use of money - a subject largely spoken of, after their manner, by men of the world; but not sufficiently considered by those whom God hath chosen out of the world. These, generally, do not consider, as the importance of the subject requires, the use of this excellent talent. Neither do they understand how to employ it to the greatest advantage; the introduction of which into the world is one admirable instance of the wise and gracious providence of God. It has, indeed, been the manner of poets, orators, and philosophers, in almost all ages and nations, to rail at this, as the grand corrupter of the world, the bane of virtue, the pest of human society.



Discussion

Discuss where on the scale below you feel your attitude to money sits. Money is a...





Activity

The Bible provides clear warnings about the dangers of money. Take a moment to review these well known verses on the subject of money.



Matthew
6:24

'No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.'

Matthew
19:23

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.'

Mark
4:19

'...but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.'

1 Timothy
6:9-10

Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Before we consider profiting through purpose, we need to understand why money is a hazard. What do these verses indicate are the potential dangers of money?

With a healthy attitude towards money we can pursue a profit.

Paul
Bulkeley

The use of money to love overcomes all kinds of evil.

**As Christians in business we need a mature attitude to money.
We need to begin by recognising the dangers of money.**

8.2 The pursuit of profit



Teaching

If a business is to function for long it must actively pursue a profit. This can create a tension for Christians. In 1 Timothy 6:1, the Apostle Paul warns Timothy about those *'who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.'* Beware... our motives matter. Money can all too easily become the goal for those who are called to business. The King James translation places a subtle but important difference and notes the error in *'supposing that gain is godliness.'* Wealth does not necessarily equate to godliness; neither is godliness necessarily a means to financial gain. The active pursuit of profit is, however, central to business. How then should a Kingdom Business actively pursue profit; a primary objective for any sustainable business?



Matthew
25:14-21

*'Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, **each according to his ability.** Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and **put his money to work** and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, **dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.***

*'**After a long time** the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more." His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! **You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!**"'*



Matthew
25:22-30

*“The man with two bags of gold also came. “Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with two bags of gold: see, I have gained two more.” His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! **You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!**”*

*Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. “Master,” he said, “I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So **I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground.** See, here is what belongs to you.” His master replied, “You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, **you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.** So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*



Discussion

What were the first two servants commended for? What was their reward?

.....

.....

What mistake did the third servant make?

.....

Do you agree that the passage affirms the pursuit of profit? If so, broadly what rate of return does the passage affirm?

.....



Activity

There are five ways to make profit. Think of modern examples for each.

Slavery

.....
.....

Steal & cheat

.....
.....

Work harder

.....
.....

Work smarter

.....
.....

Blessing & favour

.....
.....

How is your business seeking to pursue a profit?

.....
.....

Why is your business pursuing a profit?

.....
.....

8.3 The pursuit of purpose



Teaching

The focus of a Kingdom Business should be on the pursuit of **profit through purpose**. This approach has served some great companies well.

The American drugs company, Merck, is a good example of this. They explicitly state that they are primarily in the business of preserving and improving human life, and it is against this purpose that they measure their success. The company's website states its mission is *'to discover, develop and provide innovative products and services that save and improve lives around the world'*. This is a clear purpose which guides and motivates the ethical basis to their strategic decision-making.

In the early years following World War II, tuberculosis was eating away at Japanese society. Merck brought Streptomycin to Japan to eliminate the disease. They kept it affordable and didn't make any profit. In effect, they chose to reduce their financial success in order to ensure more people could receive the drug and, by doing so, delivered on their purpose as defined by their company manifesto.

Today, Merck is the largest American pharmaceutical company in Japan and is making a lot of money. The Merck Company Foundation has also distributed more than \$480 million to educational and non-profit organisations since it was founded in 1957. However, making money was not Merck's primary objective. It was a by-product of pursuing a higher and altogether more worthwhile purpose.

George
Merck

We try to remember that medicine is for the patient. It is not for the profits. The profits follow, and if we have remembered that, they have never failed to appear. The better we have remembered it the larger they have been.

From 1946-2000 Merck grew to \$6 billion annual profits and beat the stock market by 1,000%. The more successful and profitable they have been, the more they have been able to serve their purpose. They have achieved, rather than pursued, a profit. It is a subtle but important distinction.



James
4:13-17

Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

This verse identifies a subtle but essential difference between the pursuit of money and the doing of good. A Kingdom Entrepreneur must be focused on identifying and pursuing 'the good they ought to do.' This is the 'Lord's will' for their business.



Reflection

Are you more motivated by the pursuit of purpose or profit?

.....

.....

.....

Mark on the scale below where your business is currently focussing its attention.





Discussion

Why is the pursuit of purpose more powerful than the pursuit of profit?

You and your business have a God-given purpose.



Ephesians
2:10

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Phil.
3:12

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

You were created primarily for the pursuit of a purpose rather than a profit. Do you agree?

A Kingdom Business' ultimate focus should be on the pursuit of our God-given purpose. The profits follow.

8.4 Multiple bottom lines



Teaching

As Kingdom Entrepreneurs, we must recognise that a good and godly business does not need to see the pursuit of money as its primary objective. It was a focus on service, over and above the making of money that seems to have motivated the great car manufacturer, Henry Ford. In 1916 he was taken to court by two of the company's stockholders for reducing dividend payments in order that company profits could be reinvested into the expansion of the company's facilities. Ford also reduced the price of their ground breaking car, the Model T, adding insult to injury as far as the stockholders were concerned. He is quoted in an interview with the Detroit News; *'I don't believe we should make such an awful profit on our cars. A reasonable profit is right, but not too much. I hold that it is better to sell a large number of cars at a reasonably small profit...I hold this because it enables a large number of people to buy and enjoy the use of a car and because it gives a large number of men employment at good wages. Those are the two aims I have in life.'* Ford lost the court case but won the market and the Ford Motor Company prospered. It is well worth quoting an extract from the court exchange that captures his approach.

"Now," said Elliott G. Stevenson, the Dodges' truculent attorney, "I will ask you again, do you still think that those profits were 'awful profits'?"

"Well, I guess I do, yes," replied Ford.

"And for that reason you were not satisfied to continue to make such awful profits?" the lawyer inquired.

"We don't seem to be able to keep the profits down," apologised Ford.

"...Are you trying to keep them down? What is the Ford Motor Company organized for except profits, will you tell me, Mr. Ford?" "Organised to do as much good as we can, everywhere, for everybody concerned," said Ford.

The dumbfounded attorney quit for the day. However, in his need to prove that a business' primary responsibility is to its stockholders, he returned to the attack.

"What," he asked Ford, "is the purpose of the [Ford] company?" "To do as much as possible for everybody concerned," responded Ford, "to make money and use it, to give employment, and send out the car where the people can use it... and incidentally to make money... Business is a service not a bonanza."

"Incidentally make money?" queried the attorney.

"Yes, sir."

"But your controlling feature... is to employ a great army of men at high wages, to reduce the selling price of your car, so that a lot of people can buy it at a cheap price, and give everybody a car that wants one."

"If you give all that," replied Ford, who must have felt that Stevenson had admirably stated his policies, "the money will fall into your hands; you can't get out of it."

Henry Ford understood the utility of his business. When a business is a ministry, it delivers more than financial value. Its purpose is to deliver utility to society for the common good. It is therefore important to understand how your business is useful to society. This is its utility.



Reflection

What is the utility of your business?



Activity

A Kingdom Business should add value across multiple bottom lines. Listed below are a range of areas in which business can add value. Consider how your business is adding value in each of these areas. Mark on the scales the level to which your business is delivering value in each area.

Impact - / +

Use value	<i>Your product or service has utility</i>	
Social value	<i>People's wellbeing is enhanced</i>	
Eco value	<i>The environment is nurtured</i>	
Cultural value	<i>Ethical values are promoted and upheld</i>	
Brand value	<i>Your reputation is respected</i>	
Spiritual value	<i>You store up treasure in heaven</i>	
Monetary value	<i>You make financial profit</i>	

This is a true overview of the value of your business. Overall, how profitable is your business?

A Kingdom Business should profit across multiple bottom lines.

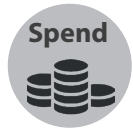
8.4 The purpose of profit



Activity

Is your business financially profitable?

Give examples of how your business uses its profit in the following areas:



Spend

%	Examples
.....
.....



Store

.....
.....



Share

.....
.....



Sow

.....
.....



Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on the largest donation you have ever made.

.....

.....



Teaching

Warren Buffet reportedly pledged the largest single donation in history when he gave \$37 Billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. After receiving the inaugural Forbes 400 Lifetime Achievement Award for Philanthropy he is quoted as saying:

Warren
Buffet

"The truth is I have never given a penny away that had any utility to me," Buffett told the 150-plus billionaires and near-billionaires, who gathered at the United Nations Delegates Dining Room. "I am very grateful for this award, I accept this award. But I'd like to accept it not only for myself but for those millions of people who really give away money that's important to them because they see somebody else where they think they can do more good."



Reflection

How much did your 'largest donation' really cost you?

A Kingdom Business needs a mature attitude to the use of money. God challenges us to honour Him with our profit and steward our money wisely. He wants joyful givers who honour Him with their profits.



Malachi
3:8-12

*"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, "How are we robbing you?" In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – your whole nation – because you are robbing me. **Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse**, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw **open the floodgates** of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will **prevent pests from devouring your crops**, and the vines in **your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe**,' says the Lord Almighty. **'Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land**,' says the Lord Almighty.*



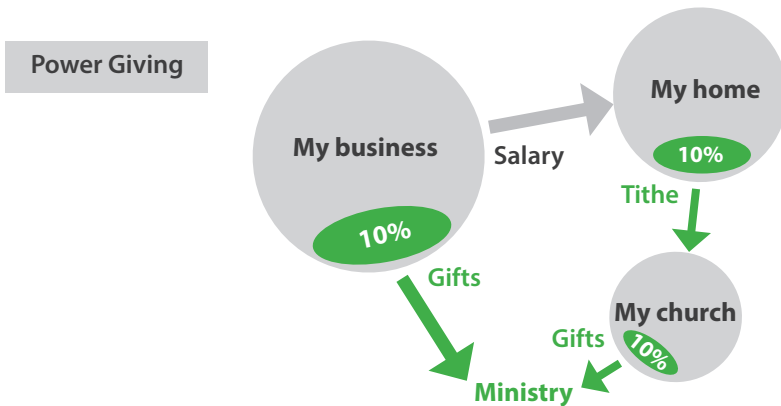
Discussion

What is God asking us to test Him in?

What does God promise the three outcomes will be if we test Him in this? Reflect on how they directly address common business concerns.

What does the passage say is the long term outcome of this behaviour?

When a Kingdom Business tithes, it has the opportunity to channel significant amounts of money to good causes through what we call 'Power Giving'. This is illustrated below.



Has your business made a commitment to 'Power Giving'? Discuss how this approach might have a positive impact on both society and the ministries of the Church.



Teaching

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the passage in Malachi promises that those who honour God through these actions will be recognised as blessed and distinct, creating the foundation for a Christian witness both at home and abroad. Malachi 3:18 says; *'And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.'* Ultimately, this approach to the use of profit brings a blessing to all nations, *'until there is no more need'*.



Acts
20:34-35

'You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."'

Mark
8:36

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

To be effective in doing business as ministry, the use of money must be right. It requires correct priorities. Above all, we must guard our souls. When we pursue good works and a God-given higher purpose before profit, we will achieve meaningful and lasting impact. The profits will likely follow. This approach and priority is essential if we are to do business as ministry.

When we have mastered our attitude to money we will be ready to pursue profit through purpose.



Prayer

Close the session with a short time of prayer. Ask God to help you master money and help your company's purpose so that it profits through good works.

Pledge

8

**I will profit through purpose
and will be extravagantly
generous with all that I
receive.**

