

MONDAY MANNA
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DOES YOUR BUSINESS HAVE A PRAYER?

By Robert J. Tamasy

“That business does not have a prayer!” Have you ever heard someone say that? Have you said or thought that yourself? Usually, a statement like this predicts the success – even survival – of a business enterprise is unlikely at best. Even prayers, it suggests, would not help.

However, I would like to propose looking at the question from a very different perspective. Because from my experience, many companies large and small fail precisely because they fail to involve prayer. Rather than seeking God’s wisdom and turning to Him for direction, owners and managers determine to set their own course. There is no room to consider what God might be thinking about their intentions.

I have known a number of people who came up with what they considered to be fail-proof ideas. They developed business plans, managed to gather start-up financing, recruited partners, and put together impressive marketing strategies. But one thing was lacking: They did not pray about what they were about to do, presuming upon God’s blessing.

One friend in industrial real estate development, for example, was presented by what seemed to be a can’t-miss opportunity. He obtained the necessary funding, brought excited partners on board, and did everything that a typical businessperson should do. Except pray. Years later, his “can’t miss” project was nearing bankruptcy, leaving my friend scrambling to disentangle himself from his dilemma.

Nevertheless, the idea of putting prayer into one’s business planning process often is met with a shrug, even skepticism. Why bother to pray about what we aim to do in the marketplace? What does God have to do with a business, anyway? If we believe the Scriptures, in reality, He has a lot to do with whether a business survives and thrives or fails. Consider just a few important principles:

God’s direction is far superior to ours. Where did we get the intellect, experience, passion, and innate talents for undertaking a major business endeavor? We might have worked hard to develop and refine our skills, but the “raw material” we started with came from God. When we involve Him in our planning, we acknowledge all He has already done and what He can do. “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps” (Proverbs 16:9). “A man’s steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand his own way?” (Proverbs 20:24).

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God's thinking far surpasses ours. Two attitudes toward God are dangerous for business planning: to ignore Him altogether, or to assume that whatever we do is acceptable to Him as long as it is legal. In our readiness to proceed, we decide not to consult with the Lord beforehand. Which is unfortunate, because factors we have not considered could be revealed through prayer, or He might point us to a better plan. "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed" (Proverbs 16:3). "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails" (Proverbs 19:21).

God's timing is much better than ours. In our own minds, we often feel a need to act immediately, fearful that a perfect opportunity could be lost. The Scriptures teach we would be wise to proceed with caution and prayerful expectation. "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.... Wait for the Lord and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land..." (Psalm 37:7,34).

© 2022. Robert J. Tamasy has written Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship; Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Pursuing Life with a Shepherd's Heart, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and The Heart of Mentoring, coauthored with David A. Stoddard. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How often – if ever – have you heard of business leaders taking the time and making the commitment to pray to God, asking for His wisdom and guidance before proceeding? Why do you think this is the case?
2. Can you think of a time when you prayed earnestly about an important business or career decision, consciously being willing to submit if the the Lord changed your plans or direction? If so, explain the circumstances and the outcome.
3. What do you think it means when the proverb says, "a man (or woman) plans their own course, but the Lord determines their steps"?
4. Why is it so difficult to follow the admonition from Psalms to "be still before the Lord and wait for Him"? Do you think an unwillingness to be still and wait on Him represents a lack of faith? Why or why not?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Proverbs 11:14, 12:15, 15:22, 16:4, 19:20, 21:30-31, 27:1

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