

THE VALUE OF CONTINUAL TRAINING AND LEARNING**By Rick Boxx**

When I was a young professional, I was blessed to work for companies that valued training. Whether I worked for a CPA firm or a large bank, I was allowed to participate in various forms of training in business practices. The learning was valuable and needed, but at times it also included business fads – popular, short-term trends within the professions – that were of little value and soon forgotten. Sometimes these gimmicky ideas even ran counter to the wisdom of God.

Why did this matter? Because ideas and philosophies that guide business practices may change with the times as well as with technology. However, the truths and principles the Lord presents in the Scriptures are timeless and not subject to the winds of change. This is especially true in terms of ethics, values, and our relationships with each other – and with God.

In the Bible's Old Testament, the Lord teaches through the prophet Hosea, "Who is wise? Let them realize these things. Who is discerning? Let them understand. The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them" (Hosea 14:9).

Knowledge and experience are beneficial, but they are not the same as wisdom. In the New Testament we are instructed, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously without finding fault, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). The 'wisdom' of the marketplace can change from day to day, but the timeless wisdom of God is unchanging and always reliable.

The same holds true for education. Throughout my career, I have believed education was important for my advancement. I pursued advanced degrees, including enrolling in a graduate school of banking, to do my job better and demonstrate to the executives to whom I reported how committed I was to my work.

After becoming a follower of Jesus Christ, I pursued my faith in the same way, continually reading and studying to build my biblical knowledge. But I soon realized that simply trying to get smarter has its limits. As the apostle James wrote, "If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and does not do it, it is sin for them" (James 4:17).

Learning God's Word is important, but we cannot stop with acquiring knowledge. It is not merely a matter of accumulating information. We serve God best when we act upon what we know, putting it into practice – and that includes striving to live out our faith every day as we carry out our job responsibilities.

We have the assurance that, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped

香港工商基督徒協會 (CBMC Hong Kong Ltd)

地址：香港上環禧利街2號東寧大廈11樓1102室 Tel: (852) 2805-1923

Email: enquiry@cbmc.org.hk Web: www.cbmc.org.hk

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for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Knowing and applying truth from the Scriptures enhances our ability to do our jobs well and in the right way.

Practical training and education in your profession, whatever it may be, can be very valuable. However, being trained in the ways of the Lord – as He has revealed them in the Scriptures – will enhance your business career to a far greater extent. As Ephesians 2:10 tells us, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. When was the last time you participated in a training program related to your work? What were the benefits you received from that, if any?
2. Can you think of any training or things you learned that seemed useful at that time but with the passage of time are no longer beneficial? Does that mean the time you spent being trained or studying was wasted? Why or why not?
3. If someone were to ask you to give an example of how “the ways of the Lord” apply to the workplace, how would you answer?
4. Passages like 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Ephesians 2:10 assert that teachings from the Bible are intended to equip us for doing good work. Do you believe this? Explain your answer.

Challenge for This Week

Take some time to consider ways in which you might improve your work skills and capacity. Is there any additional training you could pursue that might be helpful?

In a similar way, consider how you might grow in your understanding of how to apply the truths and principles of the Bible to how you perform your work and interact with your colleagues, supervisors and customers. Discuss this with a friend who shares your convictions or a small group – perhaps your CBMC team.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 22:29; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:17,23-24, 4:5-6; 1 Peter 3:15-17

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