

THE BUSINESS OF SERVICE
By Dennis Peacocke

Why do some business owners and managers multiply leaders while others merely direct employees? The difference often lies in how they define success. The marketplace focuses on productivity, profit, and personal advancement, whereas biblical servant leadership aims at something much greater: developing people and helping them realize their full potential.

Servant leaders cultivate a spirit of ownership and responsibility in others, helping them discover their purpose and grow into the fullness of what God has called them to become. Here are some principles from the Bible regarding the importance of giving service a priority in our work:

Servant leaders produce a spirit of proprietorial ownership in others. Proverbs 20:5 says, "The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out." To be aligned with God the Father, our goal must be to enable others to grow, advance, and excel in their gifting. This is the heart of the difference between someone who builds a business on Christian principles and someone who does not.

One builds a business for personal gain; the other seeks to develop people who think and act like owners – to take responsibility, multiply value, and contribute to the whole. In other words, Christian leaders are committed to making others successful. Multiplying proprietors, people with a sense of ownership, is the focus while profit is the by-product. This is the pattern God sets for us.

Service is the foundation of all lasting growth. Most Christians are familiar with Jesus Christ's saying that whoever wants to be great in the Kingdom must learn to be the servant of all. Few, however, have a biblical understanding of servant leadership. All too common is the notion that we must do everything for everyone else; to the contrary, real servant leaders follow Christ's example of enabling others to fulfill their own destinies in God's plan. "But they were silent, because on the way they had been arguing with one another about who was the greatest. Sitting down, he called the Twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all" (Mark 9:34-35).

Profit is a fruit, not a goal. Your primary job in your business is to help others discover their roles and draw out their skills so they can work more effectively. This implies an ethic for business that is servant-driven rather than profit-driven. When everyone in an organization is doing what they are designed to do, they will not only be happy and fulfilled but very productive – and it is precisely this sort of business that will become profitable in the long run.

We are not to seek profit as an end in itself; we are to seek to serve those with whom we work, trusting that sustainable profit emerges as the fruit of that service. “A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed” (Proverbs 11:25).

Jesus invites us in Matthew 10:39 to lose our life for His sake: “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” Seldom is this message preached in places preoccupied with popularity and growth. But it is in dying to my own agenda that I become fruitful and multiply. Life and growth are fueled by death and sacrifice. This is a master law of economic increase, and it is every bit as real and operable as the law of supply and demand.

© 2026. Dennis Peacocke is the founder of GoStrategic, a ministry dedicated to equipping leaders to apply biblical truth to every sphere of life. Dennis is a former business owner, pastor, and international speaker with more than 55 years of experience teaching on biblical worldview, leadership, economics, and public policy. He is the author of four books, including the bestselling *Doing Business God's Way*, visit www.gostrategic.org/business.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. When you hear the term “servant leadership,” what comes to mind?
2. Some might argue that leading and serving are contradictory, that leaders should be served by those who are being led. How would you respond to this?
3. Have you ever experienced a working environment in which the development and growth of people have been placed ahead of the push for profits? If so, what have been the results that you observed?
4. How can we resolve to promote and demonstrate servant leadership when so much emphasis is placed on the bottom line – making and increasing profits?

Challenge for This Week

How would you rate yourself in terms of being a servant leader? Has this week's Monday Manna impressed on you the need to become more effective in serving others and building them up?

Take time this week to pray about this. Also, spend some time with a mentor, advisor or trusted friends to discuss this and invite their feedback.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Matthew 20:28, 25:21; John 10:26, 13:14-15; Galatians 5:13-14; Colossians 3:23-24;

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