

Unconditional Surrender & Obedience



Preparing Workers for the Harvest
Matthew 9:37-38

LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST SESSIONS 1-8

DR. BRUCE WILKINSON

For best results:

- 1. Watch the session with your group. Do not take notes or attempt to follow the speaker with the study guide. The study guide is not intended as a transcript for the video.**
- 2. Use discussion questions provided at the end of the video for each session during the group meeting.**
- 3. During the following week, review the session using the study guide, read and pray about the applicable Scriptures (be a "Berean"), and complete the applicable homework questions for discussion at the following meeting.**

LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST - INTRODUCTION

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson



Let's begin to think through what it means to be a Christian who leads a company. What are the Biblical passages that I am to apply and what are the distinctives? Those questions brought us to the realization that we have not been talking to each other, nor have we been preached to about what happens during 80% of our lives (Monday – Friday), which means that most of the sermons we hear and think through are “church related.” But if we were to count the hours that we spend in church it is very small.



I lived on a farm in Georgia for about a year. Sections of that farm were covered with kudzu. You have to live in the south to know about kudzu. It's a vine that overtakes everything. It will grow up your leg if you stand still for five minutes. I remember attaching a brush hog to my Ford tractor and coming home from work relishing the time of attacking vines. One day I was chopping away at those vines on this pretty good size tractor. I was roaring ahead into the woods just having a ball when the front wheel got hooked on a vine. I was driving in second gear, too fast obviously. As I pushed through a vine wrapped around the front wheel and picked the front of the tractor straight up... one vine. From then on, I used first gear with kudzu. I realized just how strong the vines can be. Initially you don't pay much attention to them. But here it is a vine, a weed, picking up a tractor. I thought about how the devices of Satan are never lightning. They're almost always a kudzu that you don't pay attention to. If you don't pay attention to it, pretty soon it takes over and you don't even know you were taken over.

I really feel the Christian marketplace (you and me) has lost a battle that we never knew we were fighting. If I had known it was a fight, I would have gotten my arms up, gotten frustrated and involved. But I was never aware that the church wasn't communicating to business. Yet, that's where we live. We have taken Christ and put Him in stained glass buildings with soft pews. It's almost as if in our culture today, Christianity is church. But when you study the Scriptures, you find Jesus in the marketplace with the people, living out His Christianity more outside the church than in the church. This separation has caused, I believe, the greatest platform of Christianity to just basically sit there unused.

THE PROCESS

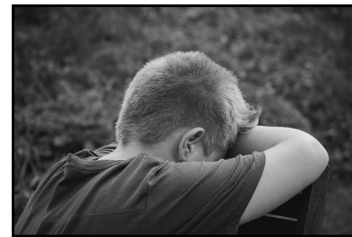
So, in a sense we've tried to hack our way out of the woods, and it's pretty rough. We don't have four points all illiterated. You are going to find yourself leaving our time together having more questions than answers. That's because we have more questions than answers. I remember one of my graduate school teachers consistently saying to us, “The process is more important than the product. The process of wrestling through something and thinking it through is more valuable to you than the product you come away with.” I don't know if you make marketing plans or business plans in your own work, but the process of making an extensive marketing plan is more valuable than the plan. It's the process you go through. And we, as men and women who speak to you as leaders, have to be clearly heard so your expectations don't get beyond where reality is. Reality means we are at the beginning of this and we've been in a process. When we get together in a room and begin to speak and share and finally become transparent, we recognize afresh that none of us around the table have the answers. So, if your expectations are that when you leave these sessions, you will have a nice, neat package, you're not going to have a nice, neat package. But we're going to share the process with you. It is really important that you don't think that any of us, including the speaker today, has any more answers than you do. I struggle with the same questions of personnel and profit and of competition in the marketplace and making some really good, wrong decisions. We're all in this together. It's important that you recognize that from the beginning.



THE DEEPER MY COMMITMENT BECOMES

I think another thing that we would say as a basic underlying truth is the deeper my commitment becomes, the harder it becomes. My wife and I are learning some exciting lessons right now in our own marriage and our own stage of being parents. One of the things that we are learning is that we parent the opposite way God parents. God parents us by making life hard. He brings mountains sometimes, but valleys most frequently. And He puts deserts in our way. Because it is out of those times that the greatest growth of integrity, dependence, and spiritual vitality come.

We notice in our parenting, much to our chagrin and disappointment, that we do the opposite for our children. That is, we take away the hurdles that we can and make life easier. How unlike God we are in that way. You're going to find that God's ways are not man's ways. If you're a normal parent, unless you have been very wise, you probably made it easier for your kids too and sometimes wish you hadn't. God makes it harder.



One of the most interesting Bible studies you can do is to study some of the significant leaders in Scripture (like Moses and David), charting the stress factors of their lives with one question in the back of your mind. That question being: As they grew older did their lives become more stressful, or less stressful? If you take Moses, his stress goes straight up because he murdered a man, that was a sin. Then it goes down, not much stress. Later on, it went straight up again.

Consider the life of David, I don't know of a part that wasn't full of stress. When he was anointed the stress began... "You're going to be king." "Me? I didn't ask to be king." "Yes, go see Saul." He goes to see Saul and for the next two years he runs in the wilderness and hides in caves, stress. The anointing of God means hiding in a cave. I told Darlene that I sometimes crawl into the cave. Do you ever feel that way? You're not alone. However, that is what makes greatness of spirit and it's in the curriculum God.

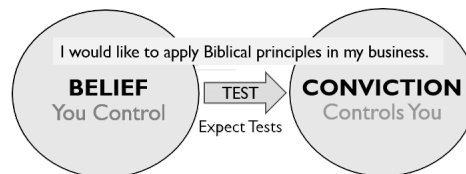
DISCIPLESHIP IS HOLISTIC

So seldom do we really present the way of God upfront, honestly, one with another. That is, there is a call of discipleship that God gives to us. The call of discipleship from His point of view is holistic, it's all of our lives. Typically, we divide His call upon our lives to two different factors, that is, my personal life and my business life. We find many of us have grown personally and spiritually as individuals. We have had those challenging times all the way along. We then realize, "As I become a disciple in my own walk with God, that He wants to invade my work life just as significantly and radically as my personal life." It's a whole new thought. We find as we have the courage in our walk with God to trust Him more, then God eventually plants a thought, "What about this next area of your life?" As that next area comes, our expectation is that it will get easier. But, in reality it oftentimes gets easier for a little bit to encourage you, and then it will surprisingly, not work. Because that's where you will build a conviction.

BELIEF TO CONVICTION

I was in Portland recently speaking at a conference. I spent a very interesting lunch with an 18-year-old young man who just graduated from college and went to Germany to work for the summer with the armed forces children. There are whole cities of American forces out there.

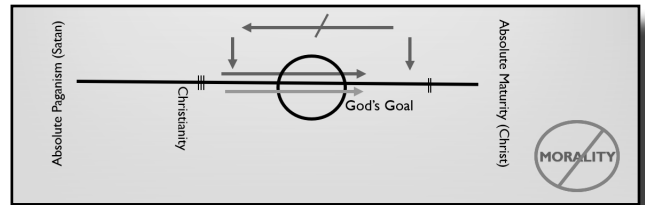
He said, "All that's there on those bases are people, Americans, who basically don't venture out of the area. There's a gym, a movie theater and a game room. That's all there is." He said that over 90% of all the seniors in high school are not virgins by the time they get there, well over 80% of them regularly use drugs, and over 50% of them are close to being alcoholics. So I said to him, "In other words, there's a much different lifestyle than you were used to growing up in a religious home." He said, "Yes." I said, "You must have been tempted, were you?" He replied, "Yes, I really was." I asked, "How did you handle it?" We had a great conversation. Do you know what happened to that young man this summer? What happened this summer was a tremendously exciting transition where his beliefs (that really came from his parents and his church) were tested. And those beliefs, in my opinion, made the exciting transition to convictions. A belief is something you can control according to the circumstance. A conviction controls you.



I don't know how God builds conviction except through tests. When you come to new area of your life such as "I would like to apply Biblical principles in my business" you probably don't have many convictions in that area, because you haven't been thinking about it. You may have some beliefs but not convictions. God's desire is that those beliefs become convictions. Therefore, tests will come. Some of the tests will be severe because conviction is so important in God's eyes to your wellbeing in the future.

FROM NEW BELIEVER TO MATURITY

None of us are at the same place spiritually, are we? There's almost a long line from absolute maturity, which is Christ, and absolute paganism, which is Satan. If you try to insert morality on the line, you'd be asking the wrong question because there can be very moral non-believers. Somewhere on the line you become a Christian. For the rest of your life you will be struggling to move toward absolute Christian maturity. All of us, who claim Christ as our personal Savior, are somewhere on the line, aren't we? I'm sure some of us are more mature than others. Most of us are probably in the middle somewhere. The information that will be shared in these sessions will be relevant all across the line. In some parts you may begin saying, "Oh, that's exactly right!" Some of you will be saying, "I didn't get much out of that," while the person right next to you could be saying, "Oh, that's where I'm at!" If you realize that God has one goal in mind, which is to move all of us toward maturity, you will leave room for it.



If you are new to Christianity, some of the things that will be shared are inappropriate. They are not wrong, you're just not ready for them. Some things that will be presented are for younger believers. If you are already more mature and I'm sharing on a less mature level, you better not start doing it, because that's inappropriate.

WHERE TO BEGIN

First of all, I want to talk about the PROBLEM. In a sense, I've been talking about the problem a little bit, that is, what areas are there that cause us to have this issue that we're talking about? Why do we even need this teaching? The second area is the PHILOSOPHY, that is, "Why do we believe the way we do? How does it all fit together?" The third area is the PRIORITIES and the fourth one is the PLAN.

Typically, when you are around business men and women, they are results-oriented people. They want to know, "How, tell me how." If you study Scripture at all, and I think many of you do, you already know that God never starts with the PLAN. The plan is the "how," the priorities are the "what" (what am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to do what I'm supposed to do?) and the philosophy and the problem together are the "why." Why to what to how. Typically our desires are, "Tell me what to do and how to do it." That is, hurry up and give me the three steps to do something. If you've studied the way we have, you'll find that many times when you communicate how to do something without the reasons behind it, people get excited emotionally with the how, but no life change takes place.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

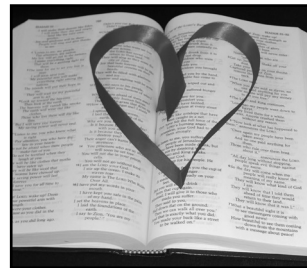
Consider the book of Romans. Romans basically has two parts, chapters 1-11 and 12-16. The first eleven chapters are all about the "why." The last chapters are basically about the "what" with a little bit of "how." These are the reasons why I ought to give myself to God. Romans 12, "Therefore, because of these things, give your bodies to Christ because this is your reasonable..." Why is it reasonable? It's reasonable, because I just gave you 11 chapters of reasons. We find that chapters 12-16 are about behavior. Chapters 1-11 are the belief. Most the time we try to work on our behavior without fixing our belief. If your beliefs don't change, your behavior will never change. That's why in Scripture, it is always belief followed by behavior.

Consider the book of Ephesians, it's the same way, all of them are. Chapters 1-3 and 4-6. There's not one command in chapters 1-3. There are dozens of commands in 4-6. One to three is all doctrine. Four to six are all duty. Take the book of Hebrews, its doctrine, practice, doctrine, practice, (doctrine is called warnings in Hebrews), always what to think about first.



That's why we're not going to jump to the practical, we're going to start with the problem and the philosophy first. In a sense, if your heart gets changed, your life will change. Because when you decide something is true in

your life, and you deeply believe it, you don't honestly need somebody to tell you how to do it. You will just do it. If you deeply believe something, you will do it. The degree in which we have the problem and the philosophy in our hearts, the priorities and the plan will take place.



It's almost like going to a playground at an elementary school. If you sit on the side and watch you will eventually see a younger adolescent becoming the bully in the playground, pushing kids around. Your initial reaction is to run down and say, "Shape up son, stop pushing." That is, let's fix the behavior. But wait a minute, why is that young boy pushing others around? What does he think about himself that is wrong? Once the belief is corrected, the behavior changes.

Let me give you an illustration. If I were to say, "Write down the 10 underlying truths about business in Scripture, from most important to the least important." Can you think of what they are? Are they clear in your mind? Or is it all fuzzy? You might say, "I've never thought of that question before." You see the problem is our belief system is not clear and not thought through, it's hazy. Guess what is also hazy? Our behavior is hazy.

I came back from Chicago where I was speaking at the Moody's Founders week. One of the rides I got was with a taxi cab driver that helped us make a close plane connection. I gave a pretty good tip to him and said, "May I have a receipt?" He said, "Yeah." Then he added \$10 to the total. I said, "This is more than I paid." He responded, "I know, but you gave me a good tip and now you can have your tip." I asked, "Do you do this often?" He replied, "Yeah, it works great!" At dinnertime I said to my son, "David, what do you think I should have done because nobody would ever know?" You see its deceit, which brings us back to our belief.

Because we have been talking over these past seven years with men and women like yourselves, we have all come to realize that our belief system is really hazy. And if our belief system is hazy, our behavior is hazy. We don't even know when we're stepping outside the boundaries because the boundaries haven't been clearly set up. That's what we will be talking about in the next sessions.

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

- 1.** As your commitment to Christ grows, are you more or less satisfied that your business is being operated God's way?
() More Satisfied () Less Satisfied
- 2.** Have you struggled with certain beliefs that don't seem to align with your business practices? _____ What growth and/or frustration has resulted? _____

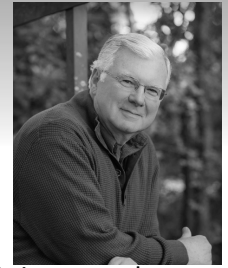
- 3.** Dr. Wilkinson suggests that through testing or trials our beliefs (which are under our control) become convictions that will control us. List some beliefs that have become convictions for you. How did this process take place in your life?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- 4.** What beliefs do you now hold that need to become convictions? _____

- 5.** Do unclear beliefs produce inconsistent behavior in your life? Can you pinpoint these? _____

- 6.** Have unclear beliefs compromised your Christian witness in your business? _____ How? _____

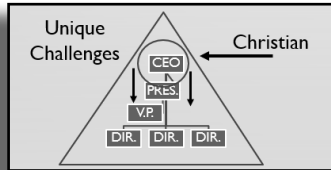
LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST - THE PROBLEM

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson



Matthew 6:24

Sunday is God's day. Saturday is my day. Monday – Friday is the thing we're talking about. Literally, this is my work.



In a company, anyway you want to draw your organizational chart (depending upon how big your company is), it looks something like this. You are supposedly unique in that you are the top. Because of that fact, you have some unique challenges. You have more influence on what the employees do than anyone else.

THE PROBLEM

From God's perspective, what is the biggest problem Christian business leaders face? [Note: the conference attendees created the following list and voted to determine the collective response to the question.]

Business Leader's Problem from God's Perspective	
Lack of Love for Others	1
Lack of Obedience	2
Lack of Trust	7
Purpose of Work/Business	2
Pride	2
Dedication to the Company	1
Lust	1
No Gospel	2
Covetousness	4

You agree that the Purpose of Work/Business is the most critical problem we face. [That is, we don't understand what God says the purpose of our work/business is supposed to be.] I think you're absolutely right. I'm glad to see that we agree.

THE PURPOSE OF BUSINESS IS TO MAXIMIZE PROFITS

If we were to ask 100 leaders of secular businesses to define, in one sentence, the purpose of their business/work, how would the majority of them respond? They would say, "To make a profit." "What kind of profit? How would they say it?" They would say, "Maximum return on my investment or maximum profit."



What's your purpose for being in business? Let's say that last week, Monday through Friday, you became tiny and sat on the shoulder of the person sitting next to you. If you watched everything they did at work and you then tabulated it (e.g., how many minutes they did this and that, how passionate they got about this, when they got excited, when they got mad, who they got mad at, why they got mad, why they got excited, what they day-dreamed about, conversations with the door shut, etc.). Based on your assessment, what would be the answer to the question, "What is his/her purpose of business/work?" What would we conclude if we were to look at you from the same external perspective (because that's all we had, we can't hear your comments at Sunday School, we didn't listen to you pray in front of your kids, we just watched you from Monday to Friday during the 60 hours you work, and we tabulated what you did during that week)?



As James says, "Don't give me your talk. Show me what you do. And I'll tell you what you believe." Behavior always reflects belief. So, rather than asking your belief, because you're going

to say nice things like “for the glory of God,” let’s go back to your behavior. Your behavior is the only real test, isn’t it? I could say to you, “Be ethical.” But if you sat on my shoulder and saw me keep that false taxicab receipt you’d say, “That’s smoke, Wilkinson.”

If we all sat on each other’s shoulders this past week what might we come to grips with? Do you think your purpose of business/work is profit or do you think your purpose of work is something other than profit? For most Christian business leaders (in general) do you think their purpose of work is to make a profit? [Conference audience votes by a show of hands.] Basically, what you are saying is (from a behavioral point of view) the purpose of business for a believer-led business and a non-believer led business is identical. I think that is an astute and proper observation.

INTEGRITY

I recently visited with a very large publisher (well over \$100 million in sales). One of the books they publish is a very, very good seller. The person who is the writer of the book and the subject of the book is a well-known person. This well-known person has completely gone off the deep end. I said to the publisher, “What are you going to do with the book?” What was in tension, what was in conflict at that moment? Money Vs. Integrity.

Have you ever considered what the word integrity means? It comes from the word integral. When you write the number one, that’s where the word integrity started. One. The idea is that if you have integrity, you are one (the same) person in every circumstance. That is, who you appear to us to be as a gentle, sincere woman who walks with God, when you’re alone and taxi cab driver offers a false receipt, you say, “No, thank you.” That is, you have integrity. Integrity means that when you bring your fruit to market, you don’t put the bad side of the apple at the bottom of the carton. Integrity means when you bring your cattle to market you do not start putting salt in the grain the week before so they drink an extra 12 pounds of water. Integrity means you say, “If this does not work out to your pleasure, we will work it out to your satisfaction” after the deal has been signed. Integrity.

WHY IS MAXIMIZING PROFIT AS OUR PURPOSE OF WORK A PROBLEM?

Why do you think we struggle identically to the non-believer on that subject (maximizing profit)? Why do we struggle there? Why is that? We have just come to the conclusion that the thing we wrestle with the most in our business is its purpose.

The second thing that we’ve said is that we, as a group of believing men and women some of us Christians for a long time, find our purpose of work (from our actions) to be identical to a totally non-believing community - that is to make a profit. Why do you think that’s our number one problem? Why would it be a problem at all? Is there anything wrong with profit? None at all, right? Does God like profit?

I notice the older I get, the less black and white things become. I know certain things are black and white. “Don’t take the false receipt Wilkinson, that’s cheating.” That’s easy. But I find that the older I get, the grayer some things become, not the absolutes of Scripture, but some things. And I’ve noticed that Christ loves to turn the light on so there’s no more gray. Sometimes He turns a light on entirely too bright for me and I basically rationalize what He had to say. I want to read a verse that I’ve rationalized and continue to rationalize to this moment. It is a passage that I think explains the reason why each one of us struggle with the question, “Should profit be the purpose of our business?”



WE CANNOT SERVE TWO MASTERS

“No man can serve two masters.” I don’t believe that, I believe in you can acceptably get along with them. Do you sometimes think that? I do, I try awfully hard and you know, I carry my Bible...

He then says something that sheds more light than I would prefer. This continues to convict me. This morning at 7:45 I was sharing with a close friend. We were wrestling with this very verse for the hundredth time. Maybe one of these days I’ll start obeying it.

“For either...” When you do that, you’re getting out the grays, aren’t you? You’re saying it’s either this or that. I want to

say, "No, no, no. It's somewhere in the middle here. Let's not go overboard."

"For either he will hate the one and love the other." That's absolute, isn't it? In my own translation I would say it this way, "You have to be careful how you handle money in your life, and don't get carried away with being covetous." How would you state it? That's how you might state it too. The last of that verse says, "or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other." This is a classic passage.

He then gives a closing sentence, "You cannot serve God and money." Just in case you might not know, the word mammon is the Aramaic word for money. Don't ever confuse it again, it's money. It's not mammon, it's money. It helped buy a Big Mac about two hours ago, and much to my wife's chagrin, an apple pie. Ladies and gentlemen, that is the biggest problem we have. And until we come to grips with Christ's way, we might chop off our branches, but the root will grow them again.

You might remember that in the last session we talked about a continuum once you become a Christian, from being a baby believer to being very mature. You cannot do this passage as a baby believer, you grow into it.

ATTITUDE

The house, the car, the position, the clothes, the money in the bank, these are the things that give us satisfaction. It's all the things that are anti-God. We, in the Christian community have basically said, "These passages aren't literal. He's not really meaning what He says." *ATTITUDE*

Here's the collective phrase we have developed to help us sin. "It's all ATTITUDE." The only problem is, that's not what He said. You see, attitudes come out in behavior. I don't have one attitude that you won't eventually see in my life. You don't have one attitude in your life that someday won't poke out. You're not going to see in yourself any behavior that's not sourced within a belief within you.

#1 PROBLEM

The number one problem today is the purpose of work. We have assumed the same purpose of work as the non-believing communities around us, that is, to make maximum profit as the goal of work. Maximizing profit is supposed to be the purpose of work for a non-believer. For a believer, there is a whole other purpose or goal.

Which one are you loyal to? And which one do you despise? You can't serve two masters. It is interesting that in the Greek the word master is the same word for Lord. You can't serve two lords. This goes back to another commandment this Person's Father gave us. What was the commandment? Thou shall have no other gods before me.

No other, you can't serve two masters. Ladies and gentlemen, the other master is not our company. The other master is not our desire for our company to grow. The other master is not to be innovative. The other master is not to help our people grow. It's none of those lines we give to one another. The other master is the direct contradiction to the way of God. I don't know about you, but I find kudzu all over my heart regarding this issue. It needs to be our regular prayer, unless you have already gone through this, that God would clean out the kudzu with a Ford tractor, slowly, not all at once.

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

- 1.** Do you have integrity in what you do? _____

- 2.** Are your beliefs and behaviors consistent in your home, business and church relationships? _____

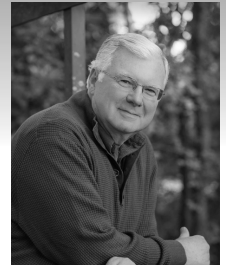
- 3.** Do your spouse, children, employees, and pastor see the same person in you in all situations and circumstances? _____

- 4.** Can you track a lack of integrity back to beliefs that are not truly convictions in your life? _____

- 5.** Do you genuinely desire integrity in your life? _____ If you answer yes, what price are you willing to pay to have it? _____
- _____
- 6.** Are there situations in your business life within the last several weeks where you recall making decisions based on money first with little (or deferred) consideration of God's will in that situation? Explain _____
- _____
- 7.** Have there been situations in your business life where you can clearly recall making a major decision based on God's will first? _____ What happened? _____
-

LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST - THE PHILOSOPHY-BETTER OR DIFFERENT?

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson



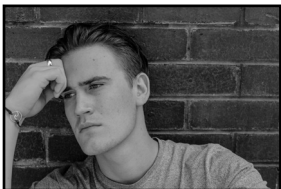
It's interesting how we came upon the conclusion that the most foundational of all the issues we're dealing with is: **The purpose of business, the purpose of work.** As I've been meditating upon that I think it is the same way we handle most of the problems in our life. **We try to improve rather than change.** One of our early statements was, "We're not trying to help you to become better than, we're trying to help you to become different than."

We begin by attempting to answer this question: If an ethical, non-believing leader walks in from one door and another leader, who is a believer, walks in from another door, what is the difference between the two of them? For many, many decades now, in fact, I believe generations, we have said, "The difference between these two is that the believer is more ethical than the non-believer. So, it's better than. If this is an apple, this is a better apple. Like someone said, "I treat my employees more fairly, I guarantee my product more thoroughly, provide better working conditions, etc.." So, the difference between a Christian company and a non-Christian company is a matter of degree.



IMPROVING THE "SELF"

That breeds frustration, because I don't believe that is what Christ taught us. I think, however, we do the same kind of thought process in our personal Christian walks. That is, when you become a believer, a born-again Christian, if you don't watch out for the first couple decades of your Christian experience, you will be trying to improve yourself. You will try to be more loving. You will try to be more honest. You will try to be less selfish. You will try, degree-by-degree, to improve yourself. After multiple defeats you will finally come to the question, "What on earth is the matter?"



Most Christians I find don't come to the correct answer. They basically move into mediocrity thinking, "That's where I'm supposed to be, I guess. I try." Christianity, however, is not better than it's different than. It's different in this way: A non-believer can be loving, can be patient, can be kind, can be gentle, can be gracious, can have perseverance, can be giving, can be self-sacrificing. Those are the same challenges that Christianity gives to us who name the name of Christ. Most Christians think, on a philosophical basis (that's what this whole section is about), that Christianity means I work on my love, my goodness, and I, through careful determination, become better.

That's not Scripture, that's worldly thinking. Instead of trying to improve yourself, you must come to grips with the fact that your "self" cannot be improved. That is a shattering experience. Most believers never come to understand this fact. You must come to the understanding that your "self" is deceitful and wicked and will always be that way until the day you die. Period. It is the fallen part of you, and we can't pick up it off the floor and make it un-fallen. The reason why so many of us are defeated so much of the time is we're trying to improve something that can't be improved. We need the realization that the "self" is evil and is wicked and is against God. Even all the improvement that you will try to do to "self" (to be more loving, to be more kind, etc.) is really rooted in "self." I am more loving, because I like myself more when I'm more loving.

GETTING YOUR "SELF" OUT OF THE WAY

All the activities we do when we try to work on our Christianity from the philosophy that Christianity means I'm going to become a better person by sharpening up my walk with other people is fatal. It does not work. Consequently, it's only when you realize that way of doing business as a believer is wrong as well that you began to look for a different way. It is really different. Instead of the "self" that you are trying to improve, you have the Spirit that you're trying to get out of His way. You are trying to get the "self" broken to the point that the Spirit can come out. When the "self" is out of the way,



that is you're no longer trying to improve it you're trying to get it out of the way, the Holy Spirit will come out with love that's not based upon your "self." It's very opposite, isn't it? It's very opposite. That's what Christ came to do. That's a rare thing in people's lives today.

As I meditated upon this subject, I realized afresh that's the same identical problem we have in Christian work, Christian business, isn't it? That is, we have been deceived into thinking that a Christian business is better than a non-Christian business, by degree. It is more moral, more ethical, more fair. It should be, but that's not the point. Should you be more loving? You should have a different kind of love. When you come to the philosophy of being a person who leads a company and you want to think about it from God's point of view, don't think of this way (better than), think of something totally different. We tease one another saying that we're not trying to invent a better mousetrap, we have invented a cat, not a mousetrap, not a better one, a different one.



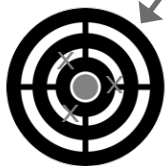
BIBLE INTERPRETATION AND PRACTICE

It's so interesting that when Christ was here, and He spoke to a large group of people, He (in the great Sermon on the Mount) took how they had been interpreting Scripture saying, "You've taken it so when it says, 'Thou shalt not kill' as long as you don't stab somebody, you haven't broken the commandment, that's your interpretation." I say to you, "If you have hate in your heart, you've already killed." He took the Scripture that came out of the Old Testament and said, "You've interpreted it externally. And I'm telling you, you've missed the interpretation of the Bible. You say, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' And as long as you don't go to bed with another person, you feel like you haven't broken it. I say to you..." (He is ripping blinders off their eyes) ...If you have lust in your heart, you've already done that."

In essence He said, "You've made it comfortable so you don't think you're ever sinning, but you are." That ripping of the blinders made those people identify things that they've never before realized. We are going to be doing that more and more as the sessions go on, that is, realizing we have been trying to be **better than** rather than **different than**. The problem is, as we begin to identify different than we begin to realize, maybe for the first time, that we've been way off the mark, not even close.

Jesus, in that great sermon, dealt first with their interpretation of the Bible, He then went to their practices of godliness, that is "walking the talk." He said, "Don't be like these men who go to the street corner and pray wonderful prayers so people who see them are awed by their prayer life. But when you pray, go into your closet. And don't be like the people who give money so that everybody sees how much they've given, instead be discreet. Don't give it so that you are rewarded." We don't have time to go further into the Sermon on the Mount, but clearly what Christ did was to take their doctrine and say, "You have taken the Bible and made it so you're never sinning. I show you that same truth means this..." and everyone was self-condemned. Then He took a practice, that is how their godliness came out and said, "The things you were counting on, the things that you felt good about, the things that you've said, 'Here's how my Christianity comes out: my prayers, my alms (the way I give money), my fasts' (those externals that you do that make you feel comfortable that your walk with God is okay) are wrong. Instead, it's this way."

MISSING THE TARGET



The reaction was an utter realization that we thought the target was here. We know we weren't always hitting the bullseye, but we thought we were somewhere in the middle and we were doing okay. Christ said, "Well, the problem is, here's the target. You've been aiming at the wrong target. Here's the target and you haven't been hitting it. You've been missing it in how you understand the Bible. You've been missing it in how you live out what you believe. Your beliefs are wrong, therefore, your life is wrong."



The problem is, we are aiming at the wrong target.

It's obvious that when we began to hammer at these things, conviction of sin was thick on the floor. I can remember in so many meetings we were all coming to understand some of the things you're beginning to think about today, that is, we've been aiming at this target - I want to be more compassionate. Sure, you do. I want to be less selfish. Sure. But Christ said, "Fine, but that's not that's not the issue. This is the issue." **What is the issue?**

THOUGHTS, BELIEFS, BEHAVIOR

In a sense, what we're trying to do is to help change our minds. When your mind is thoroughly changed through Scripture, your behavior will take care of itself. Do you know that? When your heart is changed your behavior will

change, you will not have to change it. When you're struggling with a behavior it's always tied to the fact that your heart belief is wrong. What we're trying to point out is that when it comes to business, the Christian business place has been saying, "I know God wants me to live like this and I'm trying to. I used to be over here, but you know, I'm getting better, I'm becoming 'more good'." And Christ says, "Oh no, here is the target, here." What that does to a person who really grips it (it takes a while to really grip what we're talking about) it knocks the slats right out from underneath you. Because you then have to reevaluate, "Why on earth am I in business – if not for profit?"

YOU WERE BOUGHT

The Scriptures so clearly repeat throughout Hebrews and Romans that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He bought you. He didn't merge with you, He bought you. He bought everything about you. In the Greek, it talks about the concept that you were in the slave market of sin, you had no control over yourself, and you had no hope of the future. You were damned. When Christ died, He shed His blood and purchased you. You must follow this closely. This is something we know in our head that is not practiced. You have been bought, you haven't been hired, you have been bought. In a sense, believe it or not, in the Greek it says, "You came in, you put your ear right next to the door post. They took an awl (a nail) and put



it through your earlobe. That meant you were bought for life, but it was your choice. There are two kinds of slaves. One kind of slave a man buys you from someone else. You don't have any choice about it. The other kind is when you have a choice and you, by your own freewill say, "I want to be your slave for the rest of my life." You put your ear against the door post and punch a hole through it. You're a freeman slave for the rest of your life. When you accepted Christ as your personal Savior you said to Him, "Will you be my Savior and my Lord? I want heaven and I want you to be my Savior."

And He bought you at that time. He paid His blood to purchase you.

DOING OUR OWN THING

The problem is that the next thing that happens is we begin to play the role of Lucifer. That is, we begin to think. "We will do our own thing!" But Christ never said, "You can do your own thing." Christ didn't hire you, He bought you, all of you. That is why the New Testament says, "You are not your own." I am no longer my own man, and neither are you.

What has taken place is we have become like Lucifer in the way we live as believers. That is, we think that we are born again but as far as God having any influence or any control over what we do, and who we are, and how we spend our days is completely divorced from God. It is, "I go to church to understand what the Bible says and to be around Christians." But as far as understanding that I am a slave of what God has willed, it's lost. It's lost today. It's lost for us. And that's the root of the problem. The root of the problem is that we have put up our fist in God's face and, by our practical living, have said, "We will do what we want to do, regardless of what You have said we are to do!"

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

1. In what ways are you different from an unbeliever? _____

2. From your own experience, are these differences real or merely theological or conceptual? How? _____

3. Read the following Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5:17; 3:18; 4:2; Romans 7:18 ; 12:1-3. How can we change? Man tries to improve his behavior, the self, but what is God's way? _____

4. In your own words explain what it means to say, "Jesus bought you." _____

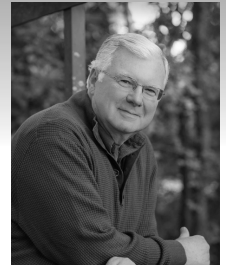
5. How should your answer affect the relationship you have to time, money, possessions, and other people? _____

6. How do you make the distinction between God's responsibility and your responsibility in Kingdom work? _____

LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST - THE PHILOSOPHY - GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MAN

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

Genesis 1:1-9 & 6:1-5



If you go back before the creation of the world, way back in eternity you would come to a time when only the Godhead was there, three people in one. Somewhere in eternity past there was a creation of some angels. The angels aren't like us. They are somewhat like us, but not exactly like us. The angels were given tremendous authority and power. They were organized, believe it or not, on a hierarchy just like business today. There is one key person, followed by another set of key people, etc. There are principalities and powers in order, just like General Motors.

DOWNFALL OF LUCIFER

As God's Kingdom grew the "second in command/the executive VP" attempted a buyout. He said in effect, "I will take over and I will build my own kingdom. I will be like the Most High God. I'm going to rebel. I don't want to be the #2 man anymore." Scripture teaches that up to that point the angels and God had a tremendous freewill relationship, where the angels freely chose to work with God and to adore Him for who He was. In the middle of that rebellion, a number of angels (millions of them it seems) decided to follow Lucifer, the son of light, to begin the second kingdom against God. According to the New Testament, God threw Lucifer and the angels that were with him out of heaven. Some of those angels He put directly into hell. Some of them are in hell today.



At that time, God made a change in the angels. He locked in their belief system and their freewill so that an angel that stayed in heaven could never change his mind and follow Lucifer. And an angel that chose Lucifer couldn't realize he blew it, change his mind and decide to go back home to heaven. The power to decide was locked in. Therefore, when the angels freewill was locked in, there was no more freewill in the universe. There were no beings that could choose to follow or not follow God, to love God with their whole heart.

The problem is that when freewill is no longer available to His created beings, there's a lack of enjoyment from God's point-of-view. Let me give an example: If I went home this evening and said to my daughter, "Jennifer, get over here. Give me a hug and tell me you love me, right now. Do it!" Jennifer might look at me oddly but, if she was obedient that day, she would come over and hug me, kiss me and say, "Daddy, I love you. Can I go play now?" Would that mean much to me? It wouldn't mean much. But what if when I came home from this trip Jennifer voluntarily came over and sat on my lap, hugged me, and said, "Daddy, I missed you, I love you." How would I feel then? The difference between freewill as an expression of love and affection to almost anything else in our experience is rare, it's special.

ADAM AND EVE

When the freewill relationship with the angels was gone, God begin strategizing for a replacement. He made that replacement in the persons of Adam and Eve. He gave them freewill. In order to ensure their freewill, He had to give them the choice not to love and obey Him. That's where the tree came in. He could have said, "Don't sit on the stump, don't throw that rock." The tree was irrelevant in a sense, it was just "the matter." They enjoyed their relationship together. I don't think you and I can imagine what it was like then, or how much God enjoyed the relationship. In the middle of that relationship sin came, in a sense, breaking the freewill of man, marring it.



CAIN AND ABEL

After that, you remember, Cain and Abel came along. God said, "In spite of sin, if you're going to come to me here is a way." The sacrificial system was put in place. You recall Cain and Abel, one of them brought a blood sacrifice,

and one of them brought a grain sacrifice. God said, "You need to bring blood, so that instead of me killing you for that sin -- remember I said, if you eat of the tree, you're going die on the spot. So, if you don't die for your sin, you must kill something to take your place. Therefore, come to me by blood or I won't accept it." Well, one brought blood (Abel), and one brought grain (Cain). Cain was very



angry at God. And God said to him, "You have no reason to be angry, you know what I want you to do. Why are you angry?" Cain was angry because he was identically following Lucifer. In effect he said, "I will do what I want to do. You will not be my authority. And to make sure there's no competition in my kingdom, I'm killing my brother." He kills his brother, Abel.

SETH'S CLAN AND THE CANAANITE CLAN

Now Adam and Eve were there, but within the prodigy (the children that followed) there was nobody there to follow after God. So Adam and Eve had another child. Because of that child, the Scripture says in Genesis, *then the people began to call upon God*. I think there were many, many years that underneath Cain people didn't call upon God. Then through this child, they had another child and that person began to call upon the name of the Lord and there was that relationship with God again that hadn't been there for a while.

In time, Genesis records, that the Godly seed began to build a whole generation, a whole world in a sense. Cain and the Canaanite clan also began to build a whole society. Seth's clan called upon God and Cain's clan did not. Genesis chapter 6 is one of the most controversial chapters in the Bible in that it talks about giants in the land, remember? The sons of God intermarried the daughters of men. What I believe took place there is that the Godly seed and the ungodly seed intermarried... *the sons of God married the daughters of men*. Now follow this, when they intermarried in Chapter 6 it then says, *"from that point, all men did evil continuously."* There was no godly seed left. It then says, *"God repented in his heart that He had made man."* Why? Because there was no man walking with God.

NOAH

Then God found Noah. Noah must have had something in his heart that called out for God. And God said, "I'm starting all over. I'm starting a new seed."

Lucifer

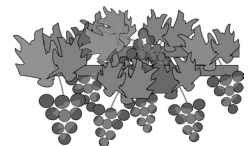
Adam and Eve

Cain and Abel

Seth and Enosh

Now Noah, I'll do it again.

God starts again with Noah. Noah remains firm. After the flood Noah gets off the boat. God says two things, *"Noah, have children and fill the earth."* But Noah plants vineyards, gets drunk and commits gross immorality. Noah's children began to grow and multiply. Many people came about. As the story in Genesis progresses, Noah's children and their offspring decide they're going to stay together, they are not going to do the one thing God said to do which was to spread out. They stayed together. The Bible teaches that they wanted so much to stay together that they built the Tower of Babel. They said (the same as Lucifer and the same as Cain), "No, I will do what I want to do." God's great plan, for the fifth time, was destroyed by the sin of man. It surprises me that God didn't wipe out the earth at that time.



ABRAM/ABRAHAM



After that, God found someone who was a moon worshiper named Abram. God said, "Abram, believe it or not, I'm going to start all over with you. You are going to be my man for the world and you're going to bear my message. Through you all mankind will be blessed. I'm going to give you a child through your loins that the Messiah will come from." Abraham goes to bed with a servant woman. God's mercy continues to shock me.

First ~~Adam and Eve~~

then ~~Abel~~

then ~~Seth~~

then ~~Noah~~

Then Abraham. Every time God came to a new place, man's sin thwarted His goal. Makes you wonder why God didn't throw up his hands in utter disgust and end it all.

God said to Abraham, "I'm going to make you a special nation." God takes the Jews to Egypt for 400 years. The Egyptians would never marry a Jew, so they were kept pure. When they came out of Egypt God said, "You are a kingdom of priests. All of you are going to be my representatives in the world, to tell the world about Me, and about salvation, and about the solution to the sin problem with the tree."

MOSES

Moses and the Jews leave Egypt and go to Mount Sinai where they make a covenant with God. They promise to God, "We are going to be your people, and you will be our God." And God says, "You are my most prized possession, you will be a kingdom of priests to me. Do you understand those words ... A Kingdom of Priests? All of you, in the nation of Israel, will be priests, everybody!" And they made a covenant with God and said, "Everything you have said we will do, we will be priests. I will be a priest. All of us will be priests." Then Moses went back up on the mountain to get the law of God. While he was there, they made the golden calf and worshiped it as an idol. And God was furious. He wanted to kill them all on the spot.

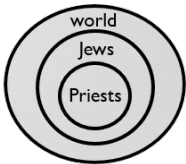


You may remember that God said to Moses, "I'm going to kill them all. I'm going to make a great and mighty nation out of you." Do you see what God was going to do? He was going to start over again, this time with Moses. But Moses replied, "No, you've made this promise." God replied, "Okay, right."

LEVITES

Because of worshiping the golden calf, instead of there being a whole kingdom of priests guess what happened? That's right, God's best plan was destroyed. God's best plan was: Out of the world, I'm picking Abraham. He's going to become the father of a great and mighty nation. And that whole nation (every single person of that nation) is going to be a priest to all the world. Abraham's grandson, Jacob, has 12 kids. So rather than everyone in the nation being a priest God now says, "Let's try this tribe (Levites). They will be priests." So instead of the world coming to the whole nation of Israel to find the way of God and to find salvation, which is what God wanted, the Jews went to the priests and nobody went to the world.

If you were a Jew, you couldn't ask God for forgiveness in your backyard. He wouldn't accept it (just like He wouldn't accept the sacrifice of grain), you had to go to the priest. If you wanted to thank God, you had to go to the priest. God's great desire was that God and man could be together. That was broken in the fall of man. Every time God tried to bring a new man to have the relationship with, they blew it. There's a whole slew of them. And God starts over again, repeatedly.



Finally, God said, "I'm going to build a nation around me that will take the message to all the world." That whole situation was broken with the issue of the Levites. What took place was, instead of them being a missionary agency to the world to bring the message of salvation, the whole nation became incestuous. It turned in on itself, and the world never heard about God.

JESUS CHRIST

So, God said, "I will do one more new start, just one." And that's why He sent Christ, to make the last new beginning. You see there are no more new beginnings. The only beginning that is left is when the world is destroyed by fire and eternity begins. We are a part of the last new thing. What took place is so surprising. If you can grab a hold of it and understand it in your own walk with God, it will probably change everything you do. God said, "Okay, through Christ, I'm having a new beginning, that is every person who accepts Christ becomes a member of a new kingdom, a new priesthood. Every single person, who becomes a believer becomes a member of the priesthood."



You see God's idea hasn't changed from the Old Testament. It is: I will have a whole entity that will bring my message to all people. In time, the Jews broke that, and what God's offered them was set aside and was given through Jesus Christ so that we (all) may become priests.

ALL CHRISTIANS ARE PRIESTS

Initially, within the Jewish nation if you were born into the Jewish family, you were a priest. Then because of sin you had to be born into the Levite family to become a priest. If you were born in the Rubin family, you could never become a priest. All the sudden, we had a distinction - here are the priests and here's everybody else. You work and we do the ministry. That was never God's plan. God's plan is we all do the ministry. When He started the last time, called the church, He used the same method - you had to be born (a Jew), you were (a priest); you had to be born (a Levite) you were (a priest); now it's being reborn, when you become a Christian, you are a priest. God has never and will never change that. You are a priest.

FOILING THE PLAN, ONCE AGAIN

Satan foiled the plan for all the Jewish nation to be priests. And he foiled the plan for the Levites to be priests. And to a large extent, Satan has foiled the plan for all Christians to be priests. All the same way.

If you watch what takes place in time throughout history in the church, there was an understanding that we all are priests. I am a priest first, what I do second is I happen to work as an accountant or as a newspaper man. But Satan knew that the way to destroy God’s program is to divide it. So, before long the masses of believers began to say to one another, “Listen, we need to have people who know the Bible better. Let’s send them off to school.” We start sending them off to school. Then, we began to think, “You know what, how much better could he do if he didn’t have to work? Let’s pay him. In fact, let’s hire a minister of evangelism, so he can do that. Let’s hire minister of youth so he can do that. Let’s have a paid organist. Let’s have a paid choir director. Let’s pay, so we don’t have to be priests.” Before long, the wedge between the paid “priests/ministers” and the rest of us becomes distinct. We call ourselves the laity, that is the non-clergy. Before long we pay someone so that we are not priests, we’re just payers.

**WE’RE NOT PRIESTS,
WE’RE JUST
PAYERS.**

But God’s rules for us is simply to be the priesthood, it has never changed. God’s position is: We are here to fulfill His purposes on the earth. That’s why I’m here. And His purposes are to bring the good news of Christ to people and to share in His purposes in my life.

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

- 1. Why is your freewill necessary to the relationship that you enjoy with God? _____

- 2. Explain your understanding of the risk in the freedom to reject or receive God’s love? _____

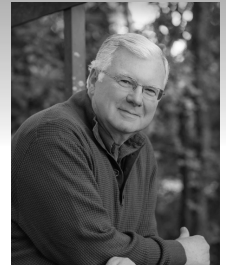
- 3. What do you believe is God’s ultimate purpose for man and for you? _____

- 4. Does this make a difference in the way you live? _____ How does it impact your business? _____

- 5. What are some things you have left for “the church staff” to do that you were gifted to do? _____

LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST - THE PLAN - OUR PRIESTHOOD

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson



Ephesians 4:11-12

As we begin to think through the universal priesthood of believers we come to this realization: I now work for a new person, I don't work for myself, I work for God. And I have to thoroughly uncover what God wants me to do. Because what God wants me to do is not the same thing as what I want to do. I want one thing, the Spirit of God in me wants other things. To the degree in which my "self" is strong it overpowers the Spirit and the Spirit gets so settled away that we lose sight of the fact that this separation is right from the pit. It's right from the pit.

THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

Satan bought it so far that in the period of the Reformation the clergy became so corrupt they kept the Bible in Latin so ordinary people couldn't read it. The clergy said, "We control how you think about God." The first reformation occurred because for the first time ordinary people were reading the Bible themselves. They said, "No kidding, look at that! Why are you making me pay for sins? How come you're making me come to you to ask for forgiveness? There are no more priests. What is this?" And there was a great reforming (a reformation, a going back to the correct form, a form that had always been there but had been lost). They reformed back to the method of God.



Another thing Satan has unbelievably manipulated is that it used to be believed and understood (from the Scriptures) that the work of God was to be done by all believers. Instead, we have separated it. We heard some clear frustration about this point from another conference speaker this morning. On one hand I could understand and agree with what was said. But on the other hand, I was screaming bloody murder. Why are we pointing our finger at the clergy? No! We point fingers at ourselves! Why are we continuing to hire more professionals?

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

The role God gave to the leaders/elders of the church is found in Ephesians 4:11-12... *"to equip all of us to do the work of the ministry"* W-O-R-K takes T-I-M-E. So, the responsibility of the clergy, whether they're full time or not, is to teach us how to do the work of the ministry. We have redefined the work as being their responsibility, not mine. Today church is being defined as: A star who gets behind the pulpit and does a performance that is as close to TV quality as possible. It includes fancy music, pretty robes, fancy organs and a well-executed address. As a result, you haven't been equipped to work. Do you know why you haven't been equipped to work? Because you're not demanding to be equipped to work and it's your own fault. It's your own fault. I don't think you want to work. Because you don't understand that you've been bought. Do you have a clear understanding in your own heart exactly what God expects of you, and are you doing it?

THE LOVE OF MONEY

If you were to evaluate the hours you worked at your job this past week, were they God's purposes or were they your purposes? They are not the same. Our purposes are for money. Don't ever argue that point, that's right out of Scripture. His purposes are for the Kingdom of God. In a sense nothing that money buys helps the Kingdom of God. Money buys clothes, but God says, "Don't worry about your clothes." It buys big houses. God says, "Don't worry about your houses." It buys food, "Don't worry about your food." I mean we're supposed to work and all that, but God says, *"Seek the kingdom of God first and all those things will be (passive tense) piled on you."* You see, when you are a slave who has a hole in your ear like all of us have, we think we have to live like the world because our belief system isn't right. God says, "No, it's my kingdom. And don't forget, I made everything you see. You work for Me first. And I will take care of all these things." It takes a leap of faith to believe that, doesn't it? Most of us are unable to believe what He says in this regard. We are unable to trust God to provide for us. Therefore, we do not. The people who lived in Christ's day weren't able to do it either, some were, most weren't. The vast majority of us won't do it either. Because we lose control. We want

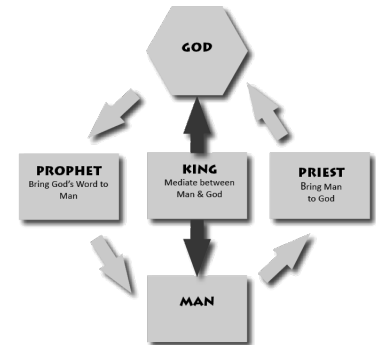


control. We want our security. But God says, "Oh no, I am your security. I am your CEO. And if you do what I want, I will take care of all of your needs." Either that's true or false.

As we work for money as our motive and our purpose, we are building our own kingdom which protects us from allowing God to take care of us. It builds walls, doesn't it? So, there's no need left in which God can intervene. We are, therefore, so similar by nature, by how we live, by how we think, by what excites us, by the profits we make, and the ways we scratch around that the next-door neighbor really can't discern that we are priests, because we have a love of money. When you rub shoulders with a person who doesn't have a love of money, you're amazed at them, because they have no pull for it. It's almost irrelevant to them. In effect they say, "God will take care of me. What am I worried about? I just need to be obedient to Him and He can be trusted."

THE PURPOSE OF A PRIEST

The philosophy, therefore, it is built upon a very bedrock theme. That bedrock theme is basically this: **You have been purchased by God's Son through His blood. You are His and His best name for you is a priest.** The purpose of a priest is clear in Scripture. There is God, there is man. God has built some people in the middle: there's a prophet, a priest, and a king. The purpose of prophets and priests are directly opposite. The Word of God goes from God through the prophet to man. A priest brings man to God. A king does both directions. We are priests. Therefore, our job is to bring men to God. Everything we do needs to be focused on that. Do you remember Paul saying, "*This one thing I do.*" That's not just for Paul, that's for us. That's how we're supposed to live. That's what a slave does, I obey my owner. My owner wants 'this'... therefore, I will give my whole effort to do it.



Therefore, the evaluation of business on a philosophical basis is: **the business has been given to me by God to priest more effectively. That's the purpose of business.** The real difference between the world's purpose of business and God's purpose of business is 180° different. The world's purpose of business is profit, the Scriptural purpose of God is to priest.

WAYS TO PRIEST

Priesting is done one of two ways. It's either tent-making or it's a platform. Tent-making is when you work for the purpose of having enough money to pay your bills. Paul did that with making tents. That is, as long as he had money he didn't make tents and when he ran out of money, it was God's will for him to make tents to pay his bills. We have some friends in Atlanta who, in my opinion, are a beautiful illustration of tent-makers. One of them is a dentist. He works three days a week. That's all he needs to work to pay his overhead, his staff, and himself. The other days of the week guess what he does? He priests. He doesn't sit at home, he priests. Some other people that are close friends use their business as a platform to priest. That is, they realize that if they seek God's Kingdom (to priest) first, profit is God's responsibility. There's balance here. You are still to work hard, have an excellent reputation, have a dependable product, and treat your people fairly. But the magnificent difference is your business becomes a means to something else rather than it becomes the end and you do your ministry when you teach Sunday school class.

THE NEXT REFORMATION

I happen to believe that the next reformation is nudging its way over the top of the hill. I don't believe the next reformation will come from the young people, it might but I don't think so this time. I don't think the next reformation will come from the clergy, the religious leaders. I think the next reformation will come from the business community. To be honest with you, as I travel around the country, the most sensitive-to-God group of people that I meet anywhere are you folks. That's the honest truth.



I regularly speak in colleges and universities and am just back from two large pastor's conferences. I also speak quite a bit to business people like yourself. I find that the Spirit of God is moving more among the business community than anywhere today. The second reformation isn't when we get the Bible in the hands of the laypeople, it's already there. The second reformation is **when the work of God gets in the hands of the laypeople.**

LIVING LIKE A PRIEST

If you begin to live like a priest, your life will radically change. You will begin to make decisions in business that do not, at times, make logical sense. That’s a promise. You will have more hard times of thought as you try to change the way you think from worshipping money to serving God. You will struggle every time you make one swing. You don’t do this all at one time. God realizes that change is traumatic, it is a trauma to us. One step at a time you begin to go in that direction. Then God says, “Oh, here’s another one.” Then you think you are finished, but God says, “Oh, you think you’re done? Here’s another one.”

You will find that when you begin to make some of those changes, you will go through some of the most exhilarating and freeing and fulfilling changes that you could have ever anticipated. The change is agony. The changed is wonderful. Freedom is at the cross. Bondage is money.

You cannot serve two masters at one time, you cannot. You will either serve the world’s master or God’s master, but you can’t serve two. You will either love the one and, in comparison, hate the other. You will be loyal (I love that word) to one and despise the other. No man can serve God and money at the same time. May each one of us come to grips in our heart with the fact that these are true statements. Until the love of money is rooted out of our hearts, we will never serve God.

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

- 1.** Describe three practical ways in which you are able to express your “priestly” function in your business. _____

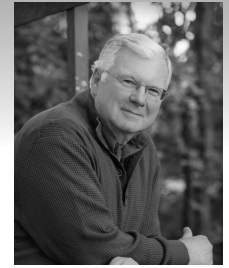
- 2.** How do you see your role as “priest” affecting specific areas of your business such as human resources, marketing and customer service? _____

- 3.** Based on this, how much “priesting” have you done in your business during the last month? _____

- 4.** Write your current company vision statement. How does it look like a “platform” for ministry? _____

LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST - PRIORITIES - THE ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson



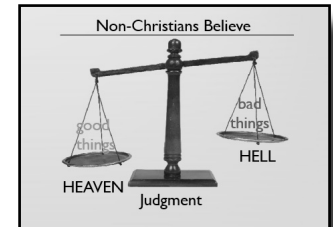
Matthew 6:19-21

James 3:13-18

THE FIRST DIVIDING LINE

Scripture indicates that all people will come to a dividing place. That dividing place will either send them to heaven or hell. All people will come to this division. There isn't a third, there isn't a fourth and there isn't one, there are two. Scripture teaches that, originally, hell wasn't made for man, it was made for angels. But man rebelled like angels, now man who treats God like the angel will go to hell also.

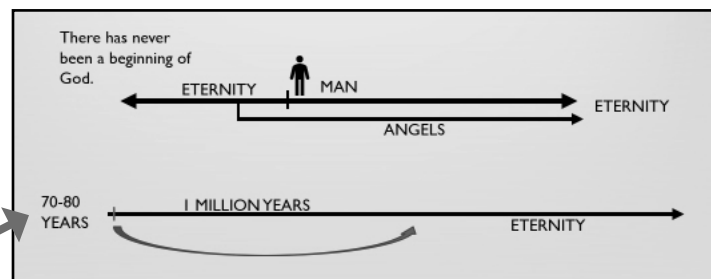
The world believes that the determining factor for whether someone goes to heaven or hell is the ratio or balance between the number of good things they do Vs. the number of bad things they do. They believe that God is fair and just and, therefore, if you have done more good than bad, God will say, "You could have done better, but come on in."



Christianity says that salvation has nothing to do with works (good Vs. bad). In the Garden of Eden, God said, "If you sin, you have to die. You have to pay for your sin by your death. The cost of a sin is death." Therefore, when you come before the judgment seat you either have to pay for your sin by dying and going to hell, or you have to have another way out. The only other way out is to have someone else pay for your sins. That is, obviously, Jesus Christ. So if someone accepts Jesus' death on the cross for them, they will be saved from hell and be given heaven.

DIVISIONS IN HEAVEN AND HELL

The next question is, "When I get to heaven or hell, is it the same for everybody?" It is clear that there are divisions in heaven and divisions in hell. There are 20 different passages in the New Testament that talk about these divisions. All believers are in heaven, but are not all equal. There are different positions and different rewards in heaven. Some will be rulers of thousands, and hundreds of thousands and some will have different rewards. It is clear that there are differences in hell as well. A person who rejected Christ, but didn't live an immoral life, will be treated very differently than a person who rejected Christ and raped, murdered, stole, and so forth. God judges according to works. Ephesians and Colossians teaches that He will reward people according to the good that they have done and the evil they have done. There are gradations within Heaven and Hell, according to your works. That is a sobering thought.



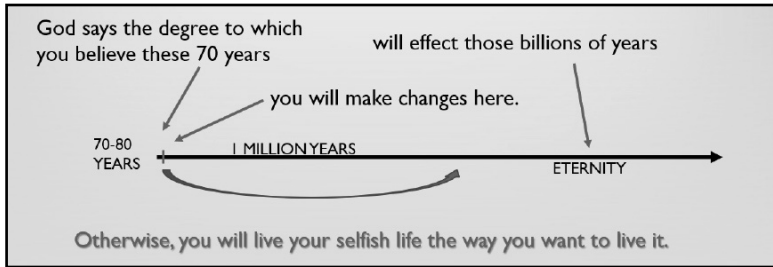
It is clear from Scripture, that what we do in that tiny slot of time (70-80 years, or however long you live on the earth) has everything to do with eternity. Scripture seems to indicate that nothing you do after you have gotten to Heaven will change who you are in Heaven. We can't change our position nor our rewards once we get to Heaven. That means we only have these 70-80 years to affect our eternity - forever.

IS IT WORTH IT?



What if you were promised that you would receive \$10,000 for every lap you ran around a track. What would you do? How many times would you run around the track? You would probably say, "I can endure this little bit of suffering to get all that reward, because I will have the rest of my life to spend it."

We make present changes on the basis of future benefit. That is the definition of maturity: The postponement of immediate gratification for something of greater value in the future. God calls it FAITH.



On a practical basis, most of us do not believe that what we do during our lifetime will effect us forever (in eternity). It would be great if we could see and understand what eternity means. How, then would we live? We would become fanatics.

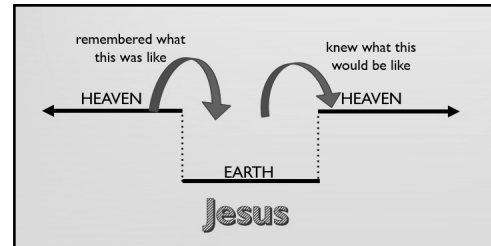
The Apostle Peter says:

- I saw Christ
- I heard Christ
- I touched Christ
- and I walked with Him.

And I am sure. But, we have a more sure Word.

What is it?

It is the Scriptures.



Of all the people who understood and had the one lifetime opportunity to convince us of how we should live on earth to affect heaven, it was Jesus. Jesus said, *"You didn't choose me, I chose you ... and I have appointed you that you should go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit remains."* Remains where? Remains so there is a difference in Heaven.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GET TO HEAVEN?

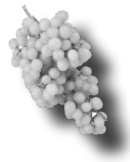
When believers die, we go to Heaven. The first thing we will be overwhelmed with is that we got into Heaven in the first place. We will recognize that we have earned hell in its fullest sense. We will thank Jesus for giving us Heaven, when we deserve hell.

The next thing we never get over is that everything we did in our lives on earth had an impact in heaven.

Christ's actions now are to constantly:

- Nurture us
- Encourage us
- Strategize our lives

So that we bear more fruit.



The second thing that we will thank Jesus for is the fruit that remains.

We currently thank God when things go right. But not much fruit gets borne when things go right. On the whole, significant things do not come through when things go particularly right or easy. There are no promises in the New Testament that Christians will be affluent. He said that He would take care of our food, drink, clothes, and shelter.

FOCUSING ON THE FRUIT THAT REMAINS

The fruit that remains is the part that we must center our lives upon. It is that issue that impacts all of eternity. We either live now in light of eternity or we live like most people today who say, "I only go around once, I'd better live with all the gusto I've got." Therefore, there is no thought of tomorrow and there is no thought that says, "God will repay me for the good that I do and for the evil I do."

There are priorities that come out of the philosophy that says I am a priest. The more I priest, the more eternity is changed in my case. The more I bring people to Christ, the more I influence them for good, the more I do not live for money, all of eternity will be changed.

If the philosophy is deeply believed that I am a priest, 100% of the time, I will rearrange my priorities to that belief system and I do those priorities, they are the same priorities that define a fruit that remains.

What are God's priorities? A fruit that remains.

What are our priorities? A fruit that does not remain.

Remember, you can't serve two masters. You will either love the one and in comparison, you will hate the other. You will be loyal to the one, and you will despise the other.



How do you know when you love something?
By your actions - your behavior
Love is not gushy feelings, it's what you do.
How do you know if you love money? By what you do.

SUMMARY

GOD OWNS IT ALL! The company is His, therefore, the money it earns is His as well.
You are a priest! You should spend some of the money earned by the company in your own priesting!
You are a priest **1st** A businessman or business woman **2nd**

Bottom Line: If your business is not allowing you to bear fruit that remains - then get out of that business!

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

1. If we have no problems with being fanatical about sports, hobbies or other interests, why do we have so much difficulty being fanatical about Jesus Christ? _____

In your opinion, what would being fanatical about Jesus Christ 'look' like? _____

2. Does your business wisdom come from Fortune, Forbes, Wall Street Journal, or from the Bible? _____
(read James 3:3-18) What advice does this offer a Christian businessman/woman? _____

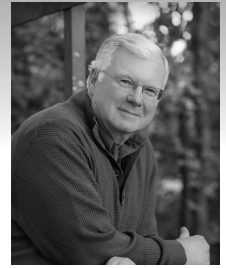
How is this applied to the business decision-making process? _____

3. How well have you used your own "threescore and ten" so far in Kingdom work? _____

What are things you could begin to do tomorrow to build fruit that remains? _____

LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST - PRIORITIES - SETTING YOUR OWN

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson



Matthew 6:19-34



We are on the issue of priorities. Let's bring it down much closer to home, be more practical. Let's study the Scriptures asking the question, "What are God's priorities for me as a priest?" If I were to toss the Bible into the air and let its words come down through a sifter, sifting out the biggest idea of God regarding priesting, one thing would be clear as the number one priority of a priest. It's going to surprise you.

PRIORITY #1 – YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The first priority is your own spiritual growth, that is who you are in Christ. It is the most important part of this whole thing, you'll not priest for long if your walk with God is not strong and growing. This is the determining factor. Let me give you an illustration of this: when I went to teach college, I went to Oregon to a Bible college. The man who was the Chairman of that Board was in his 80s then, he's now in his 90s. I remember him coming to the graduate school I attended a few years earlier. He spoke for 27 minutes, quoting Scripture non-stop adding a sentence between them. He didn't even prepare. He spoke for a week and every day it was the same. I don't even know if he had a subject in mind. He would say, "Okay young men..." Then he began to talk about something on his heart at that moment. He'd quote verses about it, then come to another subject that was like it. He'd be talking and he'd quote verse after verse. He ministered like crazy. I couldn't believe all the verses. I didn't know any of them. They weren't Romans 3:23, John, none of those verses. They were out of Ezekiel and Chronicles.

On the second day I counted the verses he quoted. There were over 30 in 27 minutes. I lusted after that. I thought, "I'd love to know the Word like that." Well, lo and behold, I went to the school to teach where he was the Chairman of the Board. After I was there for a while, I went to his office. I said to him, "Dr. Mitchell, can I come in and just gab with you for a while?" He replied, "Sure." I guess I'm old enough to be his great grandson. He said, "On one condition, you fill my dirty coffee cup with coffee." The coffee pot was at the other end of the hallway. So, we began to have a ritual, we never set up a meeting, but it was always at the same thing. I'd stick my head in the door and say, "You want more coffee?" He would almost always agree. It was never the same day or time, but he would push back his Bible or his dictation, sit back and we began to talk. We did the same thing every time, we never admitted it to each other. He would start talking, he'd quote a verse on the subject, quote another verse on the subject, and usually the third or fourth verse he was on he would stumble in the middle of the verse and say, "Now, Bruce, how does the rest of that go again?" And in three years, I never finished the verse once. He would laugh and say, "They don't teach the Bible the way they used to at Dallas Seminary, do they?" (They were not "normal" verses, they were crazy verses.)

As we began to talk, he began to minister to me. At the end, he would pray. I never prayed, I didn't want to waste time hearing myself pray. Numerous times as he began to pray he would forget that I was in the room. I can remember becoming embarrassed a couple times. I remember a few times just crying because the presence of Christ was so clear, so overpowering. After a while of this, one day I said to him, "Dr. Mitchell, we, at Walk through the Bible are teaching seminars all over the country and someday it will be all over the world." I said, "I have a question, would you please teach me the Bible the way you know it? And then I'll take that truth, and teach it to my men, and they'll take it to the people. That way you will reach hundreds of thousands of people and expand the ministry God given to you. Will you do that?" He replied, "No, I won't." I couldn't believe it. That question expected a "yes" answer. He said, "No, I won't do that." I asked, "Dr. Mitchell, why not?" I thought I had offended him or something. He said, "I'll tell you what I will do, I'll help you fall more in love with Jesus, and the rest will take care of itself." The priest understood.

*I'll help you fall more
in love with Jesus...
and the rest will take
care of itself.
- Dr. John Mitchell*



We miss it all the time, we clip off our branches, we trim up our leaves, and we don't work on the roots. It looks alright, but then it begins to wither and we don't understand why it's withering and why it doesn't seem to work anymore and why the joy of the Lord goes away. Why? We stop



working on our own spiritual growth – that’s why. We stop feeding the roots, that’s priority one. If you don’t keep growing with Christ and stay at the foot of the cross, if you don’t stay with God, and continue to go through the process He plans for you, it’ll all go bankrupt. The reason why you drop out and go back to money is because you don’t stay at the foot of the cross and pay the ongoing price of cleansing in the inner man. Because that’s where it is. We have idols on our heart’s altar that we don’t even know about. God’s goal is to take them off, one at a time. Every idol that comes off breaks a part of that altar with it. It’s glued there, it’s been there, it’s got vines in it, holding it.

WARNING

If you are not walking with God, don’t try to lead your company for Christ. Don’t ever try to do it, you’ll defame the name of Christ. And when God reveals a blatant sin in your life and you’re in the middle of fixing it, you’d better shut up for a while. Don’t go speaking that which you not live, just be quiet, let God work it out. Then the message will be clean and clear again, and the anointing of God will be in your words no matter who it’s with.

PRIORITY #2 – LEAD OTHERS TO CHRIST

Now we say, “Okay, I understand that, and I agree with it. What’s the next issue in God’s priorities for me as a priest? What am supposed to do? First, I am supposed to be a priest who’s rightly related with God on a regular basis, I’m in the Word, I’m praying, that’s a real part of me.” The second part is that we are to lead people to Christ and to share the gospel. We’ve called this the issue of salvation. That is, we are to help a non-believer, hear the gospel and receive the gospel. Obviously, you cannot make a person become a believer, that’s the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of another person. But you can be used by God to do that. We need to be a proclaimer, a talker, a speaker, a one-on-one person, a person who writes notes, a person who uses the telephone if you’re afraid to do it in person, but a person who does it.

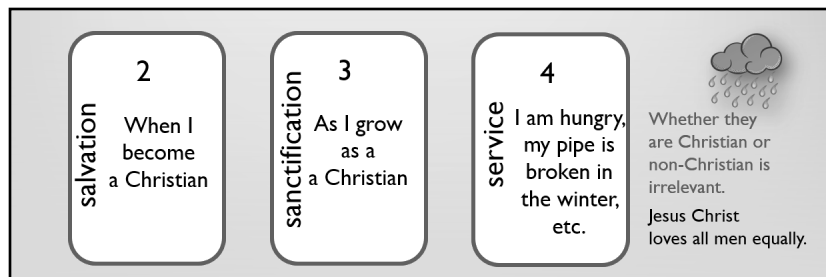
PRIORITY #3 – HELP BELIEVERS GROW SPIRITUALLY

The third issue of priority as a priest is the issue of sanctification. That word sanctification means: How do I help a believer grow spiritually? There’s a difference, salvation is to the non-believing community, sanctification is to the believing community.

PRIORITY #4 – SERVICE TO OTHERS

The fourth stage (the last one we found in Scripture as a goal or priority) is the issue we call service, that is to all men who have need. That is usually physical or emotional. Priority #2 (salvation) is the issue when someone becomes a Christian. Priority #3 (sanctification) is the issue when someone grows as a Christian. Priority #4 (service) is when someone is hungry, or their pipes break during the winter and they don’t have enough money to fix it. If you see somebody who doesn’t have enough clothing, you buy them clothes. You notice that somebody who works for you is having a tough time financially, you call them, find out the issue and give them a hunk of money. You help them, whether they’re Christian or non-Christian is irrelevant. It rains on all men. The grace of God is shed abroad to all men. Jesus Christ loves all men equally.

GOALS OR PRIORITIES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD



TREASURES

Jesus said, "SEEK FIRST the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." To see for yourself what the "all things" are, open your Bibles to Matthew 6:19. It contains a pretty direct command. It says, "*Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth.*" Let me ask you a very interesting question. Is this dollar bill a small treasure? Is this a small treasure? It's not an attitude is it? Don't ever read that verse and say, it's attitude. Don't ever again say to yourself, "I can hold things lightly and they won't be a treasure."



Don't lay up for yourselves assets, that's how we say it in business. Skip down to verse 22. *The lamp of the body is the eye, if your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.* That's tied to not having treasures. But if your eye is bad, it's still tied to building treasures, you can't take out of this context. If your eye wants to have treasure, your whole body will be full of darkness. And how great is that darkness? Why is it so great? Why do you say it's so great to have treasures? Because no man can serve two masters. That's why it's so bad ... *for either he will hate the one and love the other as we talked about, or else he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You can't serve God and mammon.*

Right after the last session Darlene and I walked around the loop outside the hotel. I said to her, "I don't have the courage to do this verse, because I don't trust God enough." Can you identify with that? Sure you can, we're no different. Therefore, Christ needs to answer our fear. He does that in verse 25. He says, "*Therefore, I say to you, don't worry about your life.*" But that's the first thing I want to do. I want to worry about it. If I'm going to trust you and not have any treasures, then how am I going to handle the future? He says, "Don't worry about it." What am I going to eat? Don't worry about what you're going to eat. What am I going to drink? Don't worry about what you are going to drink. What about what I'm going to wear, clothes are expensive. Don't worry about your body, what you're going to put on. Is not life more than food and the body more...? No, it's not really. We really think that's what it is.

PROOF OF HIS TRUSTWORTHINESS

Want some proof about how I can handle your physical needs? Here's a good proof that you can rely on Me because you're worried. Look at the birds. That's proof that I'm trustworthy for they don't sow or reap or gather into barns.



What's the point of the barns? That's a treasure, isn't it? If you're a normal believer, you want to scream right now. You want to say this guy is off the mark somewhere. And so do I say that about the speaker, but His name is Jesus and I'm just reading it.

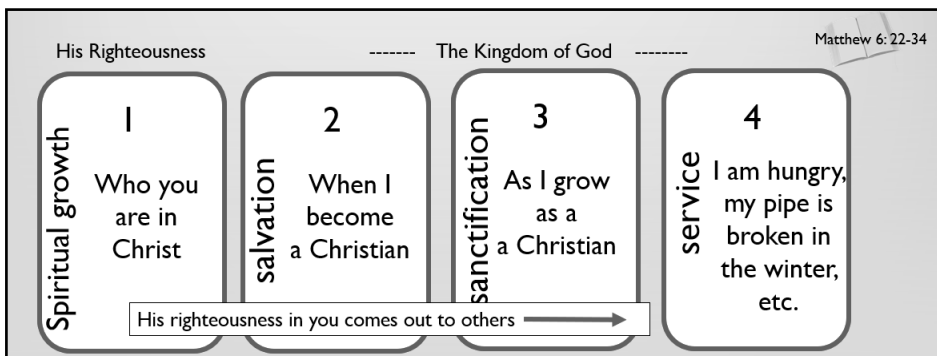
Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Yeah, but can You handle us? *Are you not of more value than they are?* Answer, of course. But I still can't believe that. Verse 27: *Which of you worrying can add one cubit to your stature?* The point of this, can you make yourself bigger? No, I can't. So why are you worried about clothing? Don't worry about it.

Want another proof? *Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they neither toil nor spin, they don't take care of themselves. And yet I say to you, even Solomon, (that is, the wealthiest person of their lifetime, who had it all, Jesus took the clearest example of someone who had everything), in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. So, if God clothes the grass of the field which is today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, which means, God even takes care of something as fleeting as a day and as lacking value as a bird, will He not more clothe you?* Then He puts the nail on the head, *Oh, ye of little faith,* that's the root isn't it? If love of money is the sin, faith is the answer, isn't it? The one thing that allows us as people to have the thoughts of Lucifer which are, "I will build my own kingdom, I will be independent of needing God or insecure about the future" is money. It is the method by which Satan destroys this relationship in you and in me.

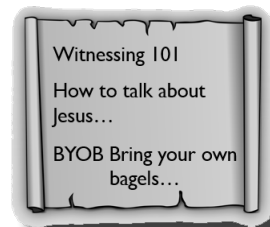
Verse 31, *Therefore, do not worry (because you're going to be tempted to worry) saying, "What are we going to eat, what are we going to drink? Or What shall we wear?"* Why shouldn't we worry? Why? *"For all these things the Gentiles seek, your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."* Notice it doesn't say, **seek only** the kingdom of God.

HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IN YOU COMES OUT TO OTHERS

Are you supposed to leave your business? Only if it's immoral. I don't think it's probably immoral for you. You're supposed to seek God **in your business**, first, above profit, way above profit. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Look at this, here's the Kingdom of God:



His righteousness in you comes out to others. If it is not there, it can't come out. If you're not sharing your faith in Christ with other people, I can almost guarantee you're not a growing Christian. This has nothing to do with courses. You say, "I don't know how..." That's a modern thought. Do you think they had witnessing courses in the early church? I could see it now, "Come for some bagels Thursday afternoon. We're having an evangelism course on how to talk about Jesus." It's amazing. You and I have no trouble talking about anything else. If you walk with God, you will talk about it. You're no exception to that, and neither am I.



Abide in Me, and you will bear fruit. Without me you can do nothing (but bear profit). You can do that without God, sometimes easily. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. What are "all these things"? Food, drink, clothing. They are the things that we have fears about. ...all these things shall be added to you. That's a critical comment. It's added to you. Seeking His kingdom and His righteousness is your part, and the boss' part is to pay you. If I work for someone and I do my part, what's his part? His part is to pay me. God says if we seek His kingdom first, in priority, it's His job to take care of food, clothing and shelter. Now either He's a boss that can be trusted or He's boss that cannot be trusted.

Verse 34, therefore do not worry about tomorrow. That's my fear. If I don't have any more securities for tomorrow, I'm scared to death. How am I going to eat? ... *therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will take care of itself, sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*"

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

1. Are you falling more or less in love with Jesus as time goes by? _____
 How do you know this is true (what evidence exists)? _____

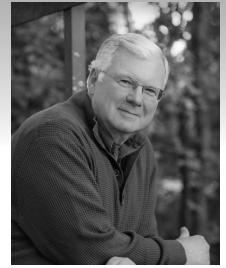
2. Is your business life a help or a hindrance in your relationship with Jesus? _____

 Do you have a problem reaching out to non-believers? _____
 How often do you pray for them? _____
 Are you actively building relationships with them in order to share Christ? _____
 In what way? _____

3. Do you take an active part in the spiritual growth of believers who are your employees? _____ If so, how? _____
 If not, why not? _____

LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST - THE PLAN

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson



Acts 1:8



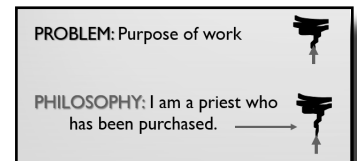
As Christian leaders, we have many problems. Actually, we have the same problems as non-believers. We have problems in communication, in personnel, in product development, in market research, in cash flow, problems of a downturn in the economy, of a major account who doesn't handle it properly, etc. We have all those problems and, in addition to everything else, we have a new set of problems that come when we belong to God. We don't get less problems, we get a whole second set of them.

THE PROBLEM – THE PURPOSE OF BUSINESS

The biggest problem we find ourselves challenged by is the issue of “How do we decide the purpose of business/work?” We decided that the purpose of business, from a secular perspective, is the generation of profit. We talked about the fact that most Christian business leaders view their purpose to be the generation of profit as well. When you visit a Christian college and ask the young people, “What is your major?” They say, “We’re majoring this...” When asked why they selected that major they usually reply, “Because that’s where I can make the most money.” It shows the utter root of ungodliness that our kids are going up learning, that the purpose of work is maximum profitability. No wonder we have no godliness around.

THE PHILOSOPHY – I AM A PRIEST

The next issue we dealt with is the issue of philosophy. That is, how do we think about things? As with the discussion about “The Problem”, we started talking about all the surface issues then narrowed it down to the biggest problem which impacts all above it. We did the same with the philosophy, we started swirling around in the mud together, then boiled it down to the biggest priority which is: I am a priest. I’ve been purchased, and for the rest of my life I am to live to serve my Owner’s goals. Any day that I live my life not meeting His goals I am mocking the philosophy that I espouse to be true in my life. The disappointing thing and the reason we leave these sessions a bit solemn is because we realize afresh and anew that most of the time we’re living our own lives, not for the purposes of God.



We reflected again on the thought that is the principle of man against God. God calls it pride, whereby man builds his own kingdom, doing whatever he ever desires. As believers our rebellion against God is usually not so obvious. We don't murder, we don't commit adultery, we don't commit robbery, we don't tell great big lies. We just do what we want. And that is the biggest sin there is. It is rebellion because we have been purchased, and God didn't hide what He wants us to do in a corner. He made it blatantly open. He wrote our job description and put it in the book.” All we have to do is read it and follow it.

OUR DISAPPOINTMENT

The reason we leave these meetings in a bit of a daze at times is because we try to clarify one issue each time, then we have to face that issue. The issue is: My purpose is money, and it ought not to be. I know that, but it is. The issue is, I know I should be a priest on a regular basis, in fact, all my life, but I don't, I do what I want to do. Wednesday of this past week, how much did you priest? If you're the average Christian, nothing. That's why we leave so disappointed and a little bit depressed, because we're brought face-to-face with the claims of Christ. We find ourselves not near what we ought to be. But that should not in any way discourage us to the point that says, “I don't want to even try the mountain.”

MAKING A CHOICE: OBEDIENCE OR DISOBEDIENCE

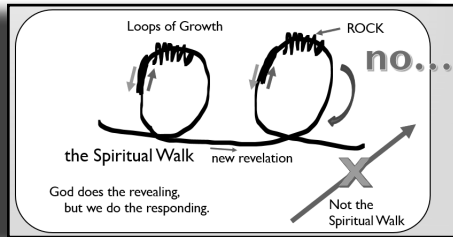
One of the things God repeatedly teaches in Scripture is a principle by which He works with us. That principle is: revelation demands a response. That is, when God reveals truth from His word to me (that I clearly understand) it demands (it doesn't request, it demands) a response. We have one of two possible responses. We think there are three. One response is obedience, “I will



do that which I know.” The second response is, “I’ll think about it.” The third response is to disobey. “I’ll think about it” is not a response. It will lead either to obedience or disobedience. “I’ll think about it” is not a choice that will breed an answer. You will not forever think about it. You will either come to obedience, or you’ll come to disobedience.

THE LOOPS OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

In the middle of revelation (which demands a response) if obedience is given, we go through a revelation of a new understanding, followed by a time of confusion and uncertainty. You will waiver a bit, then finally obey. If you obey, another loop will come. That looping is called Christian growth. You hit another revelation. That same pattern is repeated. These are the loops of Christian growth. The spiritual walk is not smooth and straight up. Loops of trial and error are the spiritual walk.



We sometimes hit a rock on the loop and because our emotions, our lack of faith, or our flat-out cardinality, we say “NO!” How many of you have ever said, “NO!”? If our response stays no, we begin to go backward. And that which we’ve already decided would be true about us, we begin to unravel. That which we thought we had already gone through and learned, we find ourselves back in the same spot. That movement of spiritual growth will give us a new revelation. It’s our choice, God never forces us. When we truly face the question, He will never force us. He will bring us to the decision because He does the revealing, but we do the responding. Depending upon how we handle it, the whole future is decided.

THE PRIORITIES

If the “problem” is my purpose for being in business, and the philosophy is I’m a priest, that’s my purpose. Then what are my priorities? My priorities are the same as God’s priorities. We discussed four priorities: my spiritual growth first, the salvation of other people second, the sanctification or the growth of other believers third, and then the service of other people who have needs. Those are the goals that come out of this philosophy that solves the problem. Most Christian leaders do all of that outside of their business, even the ones that we hold up as illustrations from the past. They use their business to make money. Then they go somewhere else to do ministry. Your business is your platform, it is the multiplier of your ministry. It is not supposed to be a hindrance to your ministry or that which you hurry up and get out of the way (unless you’re tent-making) so you can “do ministry” in the neighborhood or on Wednesday night.

YOUR CHURCH

Your business is your church. That’s where you are head priest. You are responsible, as head priest, to priest in your business. Acts 1:8 says, “You shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.” That provides a critical progression of thought. Look at a map at the time of Christ, here’s Jerusalem, you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, here’s Judea, and Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. It’s this direction, from the middle out. Typically, Satan gets us to think the opposite way is right. It’s always the same, if God’s says, “Do it this way,” Satan says, “Do it this way.” So then we say, “No, not Jerusalem, not Judea, not Samaria, let’s hit the uttermost parts of the earth first.”

Who is your Jerusalem? It’s your employees. Judea is your employee’s families. You ought to be focusing your attention on those two groups of people first. You ought to be using your own gifts and personality and others in your company, to bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ, and to help them grow - first. Don’t go putting on great big rallies in the community.



Next, start working on your customers. They are what I call your church visitors, they come to you. And if they’re coming to buy, they’ll listen a little bit. Then talk to your vendors, they’ll listen. They’ll listen to you all day because they want you to buy something from them. Always from the center out.

DO IT YOUR WAY

Now, money, let’s go back to it. The purpose of business is to reach God’s goals (through my business) of salvation, sanctification, and service, seemingly in that order. Do it your way, share the gospel in all kinds of ways. You ought to take a portion of the money God has entrusted to you and use it for the purpose of ministering in your company. Don’t give it away to a different priest. Keep it yourself to implement your own priesting. Priest to your own people: pay for

the Christmas banquet, pay for a retreat on marriage. I'll tell you one thing, Christians and non-Christians are going to come from underneath the rocks because everybody has trouble in marriage. Have a retreat about raising kids, pay for it. Use some of your profit, don't give it all over the world. Should you? Sure, but that's your church. Invest in it.

Buy a supply of key books to keep in your closet. When somebody comes to you and says, "Man alive, my youngster is hooked on drugs." You can say, "I've got just the thing for you." Pay attention, if he's a reader, give him a book. If not, give him a CD. Don't make them all the same, they're not. You ought to have 25 books in your closet, not Bibles, books, good stuff, Dobson stuff, Swindoll stuff. Whatever works for you. Be sensitive to that person. If you are smart, you wait until that person leaves the room, go to your closet and write a note on the inside cover. Then walk over and say, "You know, I appreciate you. And I thought this might help, it's a gift." Then walk away. Priest your people, love them, shepherd them. That is a vision that has not yet been achieved. But it is a process by which we are called each one to become.

PROFIT - GOOD OR BAD?

Should we generate profit? Yes? Is it right to generate profit? Of course it is. You'll not be in business long without generating profit. Because, from God's perspective, debt is not the way to grow a business. The only way to truly grow a business is through the generation of profit. Should we be excited about the generation of profit? Yes! It's a reflection that you are doing a service that the community thinks is worthwhile. Should you celebrate when you had a great year? Yes, you'd better. Should you give bonuses from the profits to your people? If you want to be like Christ, yes.



Should you live for your profits? No, but you better keep an eye on the business. Don't say, "I'm going to do all these things and God will take care of my business." No, you have to work your own vineyard, don't you? You have to work your own vineyard. You have to hoe it, you have to sweat, you have to labor, you have to fail, you have to succeed. It's your vineyard. It's your platform. The degree in which you let your platform become sloppy, is the degree in which you cannot reach God's goals from it. But the degree in which you run your business with excellence, is the degree in which that platform will be strong and high to reach other people.

GOD'S DESIRE

You will find as you continue to grow and think about this in the years and decades ahead that God's desire is that our affections get drawn more and more toward these kinds of things (His goals). We used to talk about how the business is doing, now we talk about it later. Before nobody wanted to talk about religious things first, but there's been a wooing over toward the goals of God and it's reflected in activities and people. It's our challenge and wish and prayer for all of us in this community of believers that we can begin to hew out of rock a model that other people can look toward and copy. It's so difficult to be the first model, isn't it? Many of you will be the first in the kind of business you're in to model what it means for the world to see ... "This is what a Christian company looks like."



One of the most interesting books recently published was written by three Jewish men who did a complete survey in the country asking the question, "What are the greatest companies in America to work for, from the employees' point of view?" They published the book called *The Hundred Best Companies in the United States to Work For*, not all of them were big. I read the whole book hoping to find one Christian company. Sadly, I didn't find one. Someday, someday, that book should be 60% Christian companies and the world should be beating down our doors saying, "There's something different in your company. What on earth is it?"

That is within the reach of all of us as we're obedient to the call of Christ. Is there a price to be paid? Always. Is it a significant price? Yes, it's called losing your life for the cause of Christ. Much to be gained? Everything that you value and are hunting to find through money will be found Christ's way.

Christ doesn't give you love joy, peace. He is love joy peace.



And that is our inheritance when we are His.

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

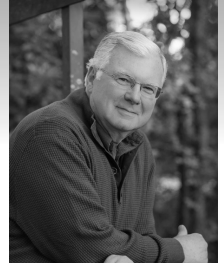
1. Your business is your platform for ministry. Christian business leaders are called to be priests to their employees (beginning at Jerusalem) and then with their families, vendors, customers and competitors. How has your leadership in the company been influenced by this basic principle? _____

2. Identify several places in your company where Salvation, Sanctification and Service can be found. _____

3. Brainstorm some creative ways to priest in your business.

LEADING A COMPANY FOR CHRIST

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson



APPLICATION & COMMITMENT

James 1:22-25 NIV *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-- he will be blessed in what he does.”*

John 15:5 NIV *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

Don't try to do this alone ...

Prayerfully consider what was taught in this series how you could best be used for God's purposes as you apply what you have learned. Select one change in your behavior as a result of your prayer time.

Date Series Began: _____

Date Series Ended: _____

Participant's Name: _____

A Biblical truth (principle) I learned from the lessons was: _____

I intend to apply this truth (principle): _____

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will begin applying this truth immediately. I ask and expect my group to hold me accountable for this and to check with me periodically to determine if I am doing so. Please ask me: _____

Unconditional Surrender & Obedience



Preparing Workers for the Harvest
Matthew 9:37-38

Signature

Date

BEGINNING YOUR MINISTRY ACTION PLAN

Date: _____

EMPLOYEES: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	THEIR FAMILIES: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	CUSTOMERS: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ VENDORS: 1. _____ 2. _____
---	--	--

EMPLOYEES

Prayer: (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____
(5) _____

Service: (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____
(5) _____

THEIR FAMILIES

Prayer: (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____
(5) _____

Service: (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____
(5) _____

CUSTOMERS

Prayer: (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____

Service: (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____

VENDORS

Prayer: (1) _____
Prayer: (2) _____
Service: (1) _____
Service: (2) _____