



ROUND
TABLE

A Life and Business Changing Experience



Curriculum:

Making Biblically Based Decisions

APPLYING GOD'S WORD IN THE MARKETPLACE

Making Biblically Based Decisions

In the following pages, we're going to look at the practical implications of integrating one's faith into the marketplace. This is an ongoing topic in our Truth At Work groups, and one that is not always filled with easy, clear-cut answers. It is an issue that requires life-long study and learning.

The purpose of our Truth At Work groups is to equip and encourage each of our participants to wrestle through the issues of owning and operating a business to the glory of our Lord Jesus. These issues are tough, and it is often not clear what to do in a given situation.

It is a misnomer to think that just because one is attempting to follow the Lord and apply the Scriptures in life and business, the answers will always be clear, easily understood, and straightforward.





We often see people with their “WWJD?” bracelets and T-shirts. It’s a great question, but difficult to answer. When we read the Scriptures, we sometimes find what appear on the surface to be opposing or contradictory statements:

How do I handle an employee who is failing to perform?

What would Jesus Do? Would He forgive seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21-22) or give him only one chance and then show him the door (Luke 9:5)?

Do I tell people when God has done something great in my business or life?

Am I to run out and tell everyone about it like the woman at the well (John 4:28-30), or keep quiet and tell no one (Matthew 9:30)?

Has God called me to live in peace in all circumstances (1 Corinthians 7:15)?

Jesus Himself said He did not come to bring peace to the world, but a sword, turning family members against each other (Luke 12:49-53).

When I do good deeds or work, am I to keep it private or let others know?

(Matthew 6:1-4 vs. Matthew 5:14-16)

It is important to remember that it is unwise and often dangerous to draw conclusions or make decisions based on one isolated verse or passage of Scripture. The Bible is written as an overall story, a love letter that tells us about God.

To consider only one passage when making a decision or determining a policy can lead to short-sightedness, because it does not take into context the entire message God is trying to communicate to us throughout Scripture.





This is the difference between being culturally Christian and being biblically Christian.

When a cultural Christian has a decision to make, he goes to the reference section of his Bible and looks for one verse that supports what he already knows he wants to do. He then states, "the Bible says..." He only takes that verse into account, often overlooking other cases in Scripture where God tells us to do things differently.

A biblical Christian takes the entire Word of God into account when making a decision or forming a principle for living. He considers the context of a situation, the underlying motives and agendas of those involved, and then applies a general understanding of what God's Word teaches in relation to that specific situation.

If we study the Scriptures in overall context of the entire story God is telling us, we can often gain clarity and understanding even in the midst of what appear to be conflicting statements. For example, in the case of forgiving the employee and the verses sighted earlier, a simple look at the context of those verses would demonstrate the true principles that are being communicated and how they should be applied.

**Take into
account
the entire
Word of
God.**

With this understanding in mind, let's look at practical ways we can integrate our Christian faith into our day-to-day working lives. Often times it's not going to be black and white; there may be gray areas in our decision-making process. We have the Bible as a guide to help us in making decisions and determining our course of action, and we know that God's Word is always true (Psalm 119:160).

Consider one or two important business decisions that you are facing right now, or that you anticipate having to make in the coming days, weeks, or months. In the space provided on page 7, write out a description of the issue or decision you are facing.

Then describe the potential decisions that you could make, and offer at least one or two biblical references that could be used to support each decision. You may find that you have quite different or even apparently opposing options at your disposal, and that you could make a solid biblical case for either of those decisions.

Make copies of your sheet for your group and bring them to your next Truth At Work meeting. We will spend considerable time discussing each other's sheets. In the process, each member will have 10-11 other sheets with biblically based decisions; a small library of verses that can serve as a reference point for the future.

Example:

Issue:

I have a customer that I have been doing business with for nearly 4 years. Over time, this customer has become a good personal friend as well. He is a brother in Christ and has been a faithful customer, who for the most part, has paid his bills (although usually a little slower than I would prefer). In the last 3 months, however, he has failed to pay for any of the products he has purchased from me. Business is tough for him, and his cash flow is obviously hindered. I want to help him through this tough time, but also need to consider that I cannot continue down this path forever.

One thing that is really bothering me is that the last couple of times we got together, he has not mentioned anything about his plan to pay me what he owes. What is worse, last week when I invited him to lunch, he said he could not join me because he was leaving town that afternoon to take his family on a ski trip for 5 days. It upset me that he had the financial ability to take his family on an expensive vacation when he has not had the ability to pay me. What should I do?

Potential options:

1. Let the situation alone for now. Pray for him, and don't worry about it. The Lord will work things out.
2. Confront him. Tell him how I am offended that he is not honoring his obligation to pay me, and yet has the ability to spend a lot of money on a vacation. I think this is a sin. Remind him of his biblical obligation to honor his responsibilities.
3. Other...





Biblical reference for decisions:

1. *"But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content."*

- 1 Timothy 6:6-8

"And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?"

- Luke 12:22-26

"If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount."

- Luke 6:34

2. *"Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted."*

- Galatians 6:1

"Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law."

- Romans 13:8

"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity."

- Ephesians 4:25-27



ASSIGNMENT



Issue:



Potential options:



Biblical reference for options:

All Scripture taken from the New American Standard Version.



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