

Values and Business

Introduction

1. What does the study of this topic show us about God?

God is creative and just. He is keen to see that the means and motives of seeking profit are based on integrity and not exploitation and deception.

2. Which scripture passages illustrate this aspect of God?

God is just and fair

Luke 19:1-10 - Zacchaeus changed from being greedy and deceitful in money matters, to someone who was repentant and generous.

Matthew 17:24-27 - Money from a fish. Jesus saw that it was important to pay taxes.

Matt 18:23-25 - The parable of the king's servant tells us about someone who was mean and ungenerous concerning money owed to him.

God is Lord – not money

John 13:26 -30 & Matt 27:3 -4 - Judas was greedy and deceitful. Money became his god.

Mark 10:25 -The eye of a needle. This parable speaks of regarding money as more important than God.

1 Kings 3:10-11 & 1 Kings 4:29-20 - King Solomon asked God for wisdom above riches.

God is resourceful and creative

Matthew 25:14-29 - The parable of the talents teaches us the importance of using what we have to increase God's kingdom. This lesson is usually applied to our personal gifts, but can equally apply to our use of money.

2 Cor 9:6 - We reap what we sow. When we sow generously with money, God will reward us.

3. How does understanding God in this way change our lives, or make us more like Jesus?

God is very interested in commerce, industry and enterprise. The Christian ethic, while not universally accepted, provides a guide in business dealings so that all participants get a fair deal and both the investor and worker gain profit.

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1. In our society is it more true that “the economy and business exist for the person” or that “the person exists for the economy and business”? Why? Which perspective better respects our God-given dignity as human persons?
2. All economic life should be shaped by moral principles. Business choices and corporations must be judged by how they protect or undermine the life and dignity of the human person, support the family and serve the common good within the nation and internationally. Who are the poor and vulnerable in our city and nation? Which of God’s children are hardest hit when economic times are rough? Where do these people exist in your community? What response can businesses make to assist?
3. All people have the right to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent and safe working conditions as well as to organize and join unions or other associations. Why is work a human right? What can be done to re-affirm the dignity of unemployed persons ?
4. All people, to the extent they are able, have a corresponding duty to work, a responsibility to provide for the needs of their families, pay taxes for the upkeep of the community, and an obligation to contribute to the broader society. How do work and business pressures undermine families? How can we support families during this economic recession and cutbacks?
5. Workers, owners, managers, shareholders and consumers are moral agents in business life. By exercise of choices, initiative, creativity and investment, citizens enhance or diminish business opportunity, community life and social justice. What are the moral responsibilities of workers, owners, managers, shareholders and consumers in ensuring the health and well-being of our economy? How can we help each recognize the moral responsibilities they have?
6. The global economy has moral dimensions and human consequences. Decisions on investment and trade should protect human life and promote human rights, especially for those most in need wherever they might live on this globe. All of business life should recognize the fact

that we all are God's children and members of one human family, called to exercise a clear priority for "the least among us." It is cheaper to produce many things outside our nation. Labour costs are lower as are safety requirements in the workplace. This is good for profits but can exploit others. Some workers are mere children and bound into a form of slavery. We benefit from this. What can be done to make justice possible in these nations where we do business?

7. Should we do business with nations where the government is oppressive but keen to deal on favourable terms with our business organisation? Why? Why not?

8. The Global Business Oath is a method to try to keep corporations and countries working in a just manner.
<http://www.globalbusinessoath.org/businessoath.php>

Would you take such an oath? Why? Why not?

9. Pledge 4 is one relating to green politics and the environment. Being respectful to the environment adds to costs and can diminish profits. Give some reasons why this pledge should be taken out of the oath and some reasons for keeping it in.

I will respect and protect the right of future generations to enjoy a clean and resourceful planet.

10. Advertisers are selective about the values and attitudes to be fostered and encouraged, promoting some while ignoring others. This selectivity gives the lie to the notion that advertising does no more than reflect the surrounding culture. For example, the absence from advertising of certain racial and ethnic, or age groups in some societies can help to create problems of image and identity, especially among those neglected. The main impression in commercial advertising is that an abundance of possessions leads to happiness and fulfilment. Discuss ways in which businesses can advertise ethically.

References

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