

POSSIBILITIES FOR CHRIST-LED ENTERPRISE



Foundational Possibilities

VOLUME 1

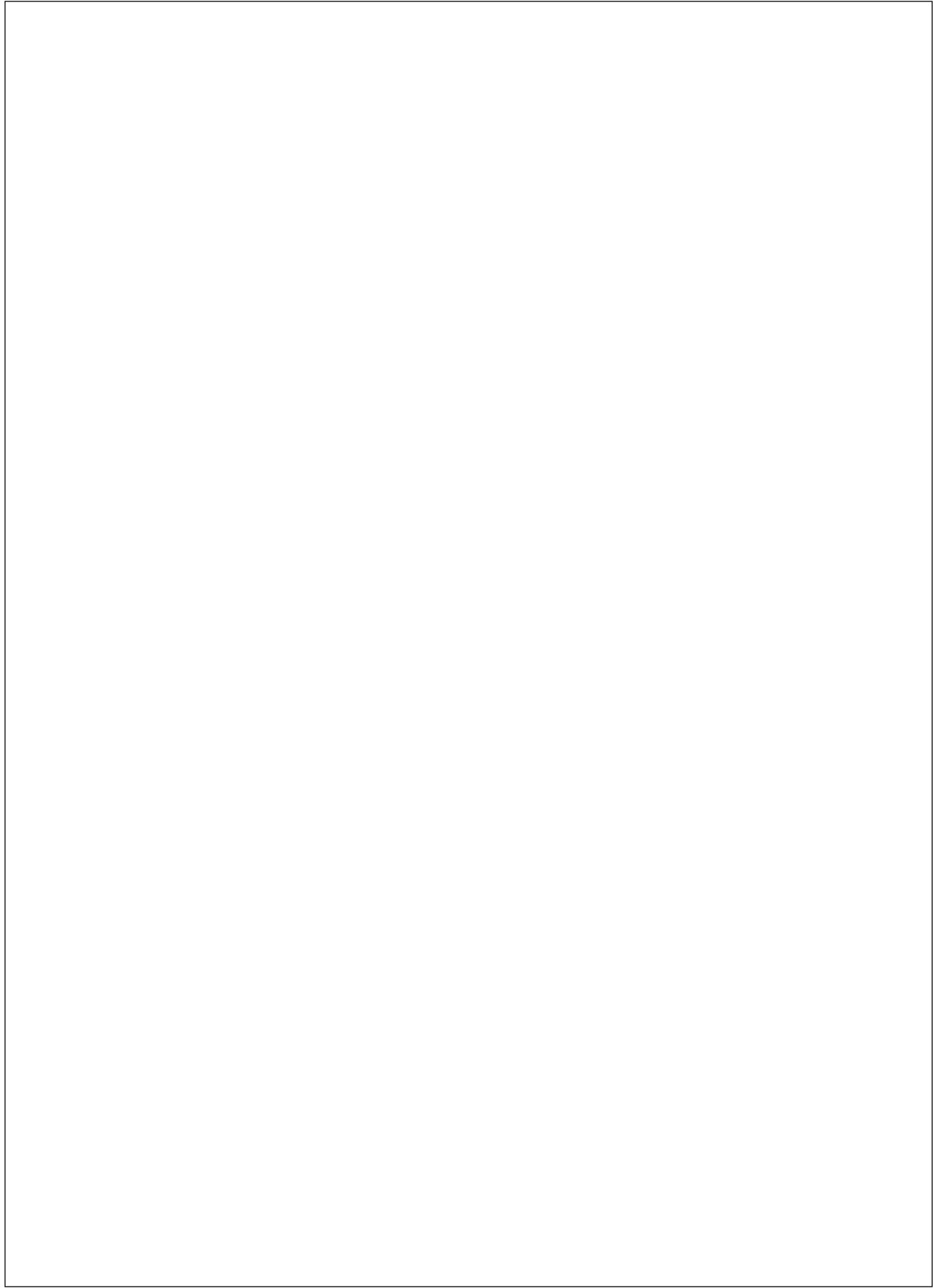


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Possibilities for Christ-Led Enterprise

Volume I

Foundational Possibilities

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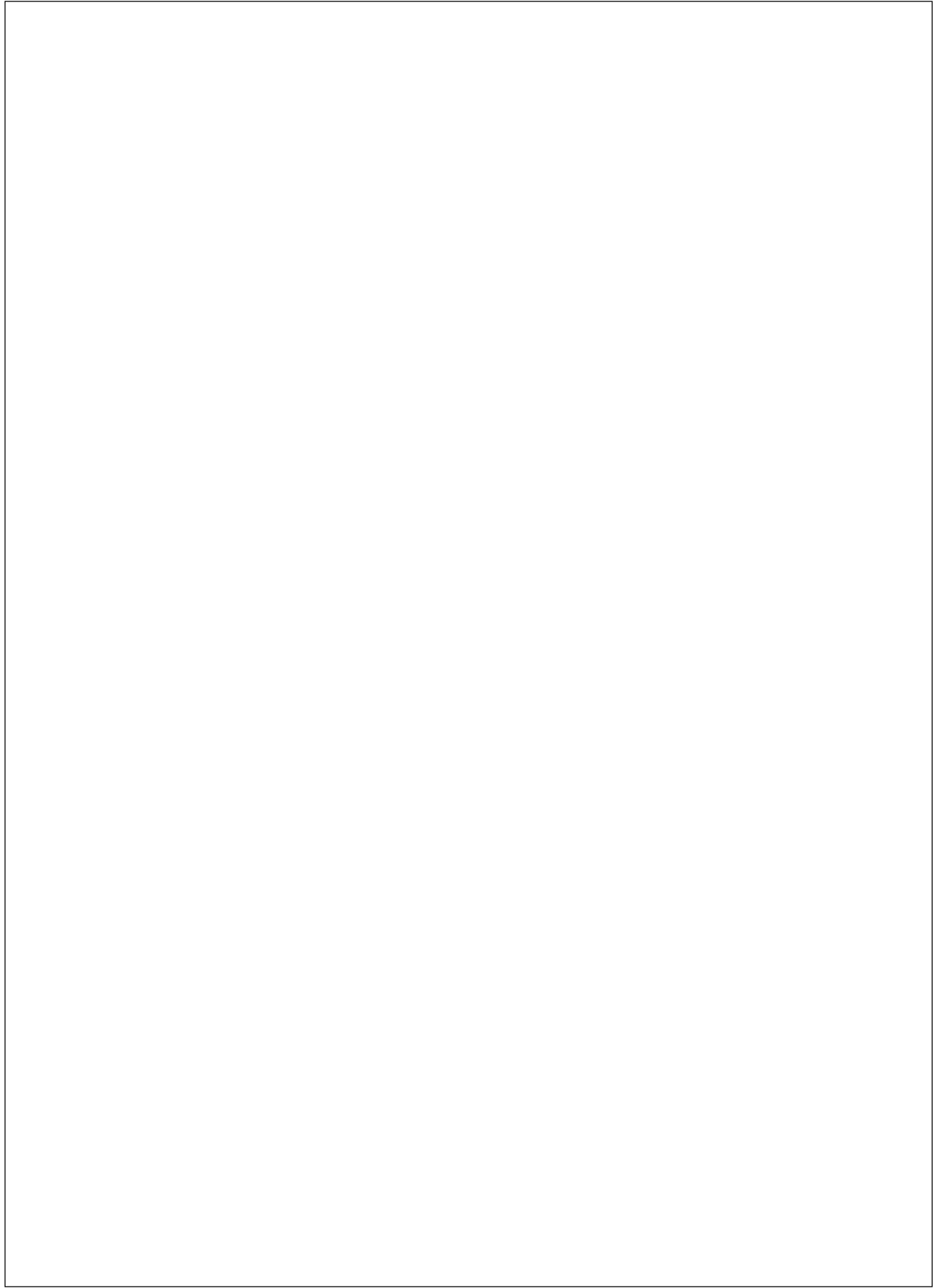


FOUNDATIONAL POSSIBILITIES



Foundational Possibility #1 Complementary Advantage





Foundational Possibility I - Complementary Advantage

The Possibility

Christians have a special ability to work within God's economic realities and enjoy the marketplace benefits of doing so.

*"The horse is made ready
for the day of battle, but
victory rests with the LORD"
– Proverbs 21:31*

The Concept

An economic reality exists that is unseen by most. Just as God has provided physical laws such as gravity, He also established economic realities that are connected to faith in Him. These faith-led business actions are easier for the Christian than they are for the world. This provides the Christ follower with a complementary advantage in the workplace.

Is There a Faith-Prosperity Connection?

What might the top five answers be if business people were asked, "What are the most important factors leading to company or career success?"

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What percentage of Christians in business do you think would accept the idea that there is a connection between faith and economic return?

Reasons for questioning a connection would be the following words of Jesus or Jeremiah's question.

"He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45b)

"You are always righteous, O LORD, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?" (Jeremiah 12:1)

What is your application of these verses in regard to the tension that exists in the marketplace between 'doing the right thing' vs. 'doing what it takes'?

What other reasons might exist in a believer's mind causing him or her to question whether or not there was a marketplace advantage to following Christ?

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 representing complete agreement, to what level do you personally agree with the following statement.

While understanding that God's sovereign will can at any time override normal economic results, there is a connection between righteousness and prosperity.

Your answer _____

Explain your answer and/or record any questions you might have?

The Biblical Connection

Following are some Scriptures that indicate God's willingness and desire to give us prosperity. Record your insights in the table on the next page.

The Verse	Your Insight
<p>“Then Jacob prayed, ‘O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, “Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper.”’” (Genesis 32:9)</p>	
<p>“Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.” (Deuteronomy 5:33)</p>	
<p>“Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do.” (Deuteronomy 29:9)</p>	
<p>“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)</p>	
<p>“In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem.” (Psalm 51:18)</p>	
<p>“A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.” (Proverbs 11:25)</p>	
<p>“A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.” (Proverbs 28:25)</p>	
<p>“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)</p>	
<p>“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.” (2 Corinthians 9:10)</p>	

A Promise, But Not a Guarantee

God is willing to provide financial blessing. And He is certainly able. Years ago an elderly man shared the following to a large gathering following a Bible study. His belief encouraged me in my hope for God's blessings.

"I have always figured that if God owned the cattle on a thousand hills, there must be a beefsteak in there for me somewhere."

However, the blessings of abundance are not a guarantee. We are not entitled to prosperity. The full outflowing of God's provision is, in part, dependant upon our obedience to His will. The following verse instructs us quite clearly.

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)

According to this and the verses we looked at earlier, God's economic system responds to our:

- Confession
- Repentance
- Obedience
- Humility
- Prayer
- Generosity
- Trust
- Faith

The following verse provides critical strategic input for our marketplace tactics.

"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. {5} We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

For the workplace we can make the following application of the above verse:

The way we conduct ourselves in the marketplace is not to be determined by popular management fads of the day or self-serving attitudes. On the contrary, the tools that our Father gives us have divine power to resist temptation and break down ungodly arguments and presentations. Rather than yield to ideas that harm others, we have the choice, The Possibility, to have our every thought molded by and for Christ.

What is most meaningful to you about the above statement?

The War

Consider the following.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. {2} “Honor your father and mother”-which is the first commandment with a promise-- {3} “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” {4} Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. {5} Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. {6} Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. {7} Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, {8} because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. {9} And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. {10} Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. {11} Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” (Ephesians 6:1-11)

Immediately following instructions about our family and work lives, Paul encourages us to be strong in the Lord and to put on the full armor of God. It is as though he knows that when we attempt to follow God we will be attacked. We need the kind of armor and weapons that will withstand a very potent enemy - an enemy that does not want us to succeed.

What kind of attacks have you experienced at work, following your steps of faith?

The Complementary Advantage

We cannot:

- be confident that our business plans will work out.
- be certain that a competitive advantage will last for a long period of time.
- be guaranteed that a well designed marketing campaign will produce the needed results.
- know that our market niche will be there tomorrow.

We can be certain that God's ways will work, regardless of

- the economic climate of the time.
- the changing technology we face.
- the company culture we find ourselves in.
- the fierceness of the competition.
- the political competitiveness of the office.

We can be confident that when conforming to God's will, we will always enjoy a Complementary Advantage. The business outcome is entirely up to God but He wants us to know that indeed His ways win!

In your own words write a statement declaring the Complementary Advantage the Lord provides you in your work.

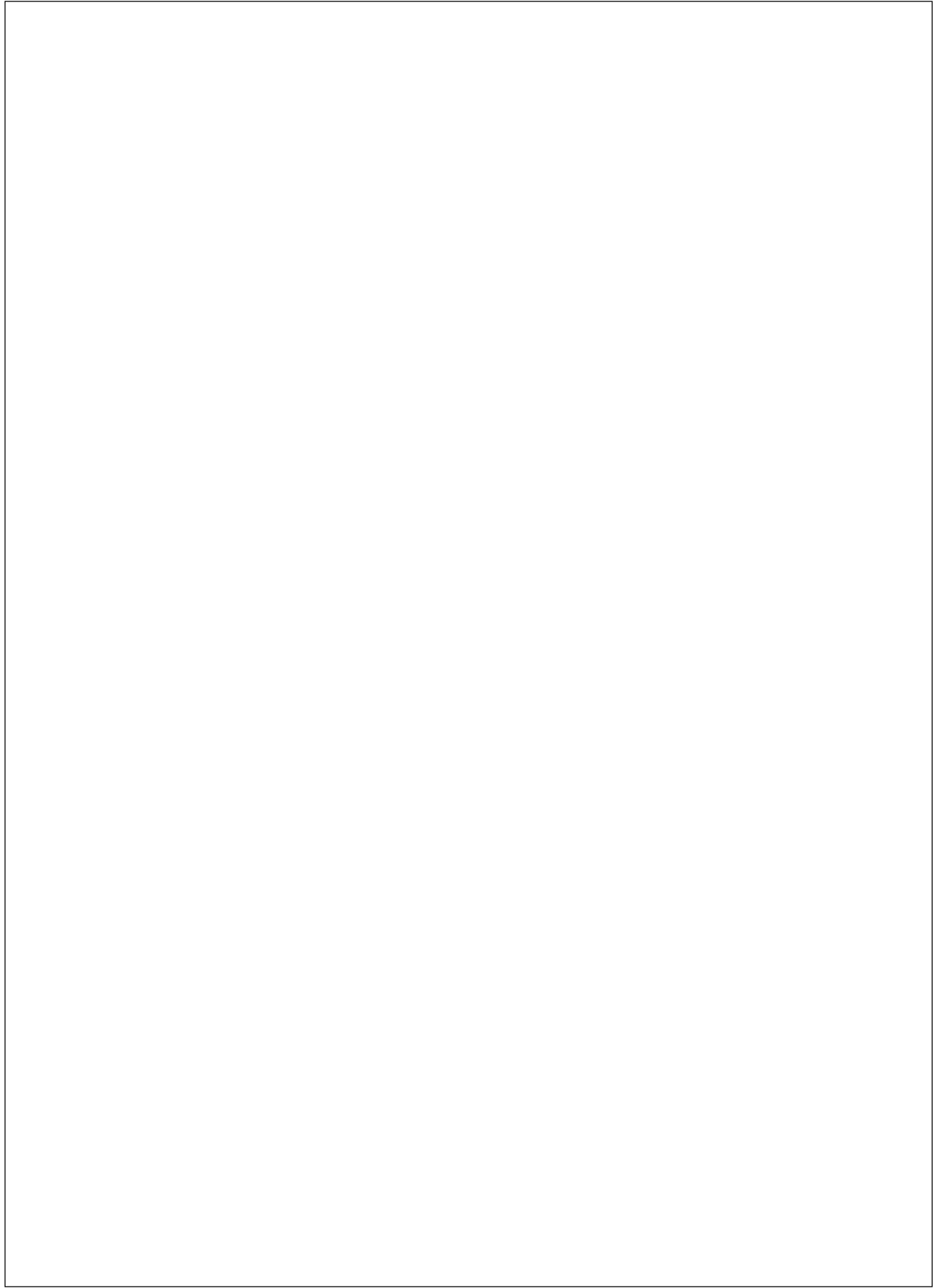
Application of Foundational Possibility # 1: Complementary Advantage

Review this lesson and record the key points and/or your personal insights.

Record a personal action and/or application that God has lead you to through this study.

Blessing

May your workday attitudes and decisions please God so that you may enjoy the advantage He desires to provide for you.

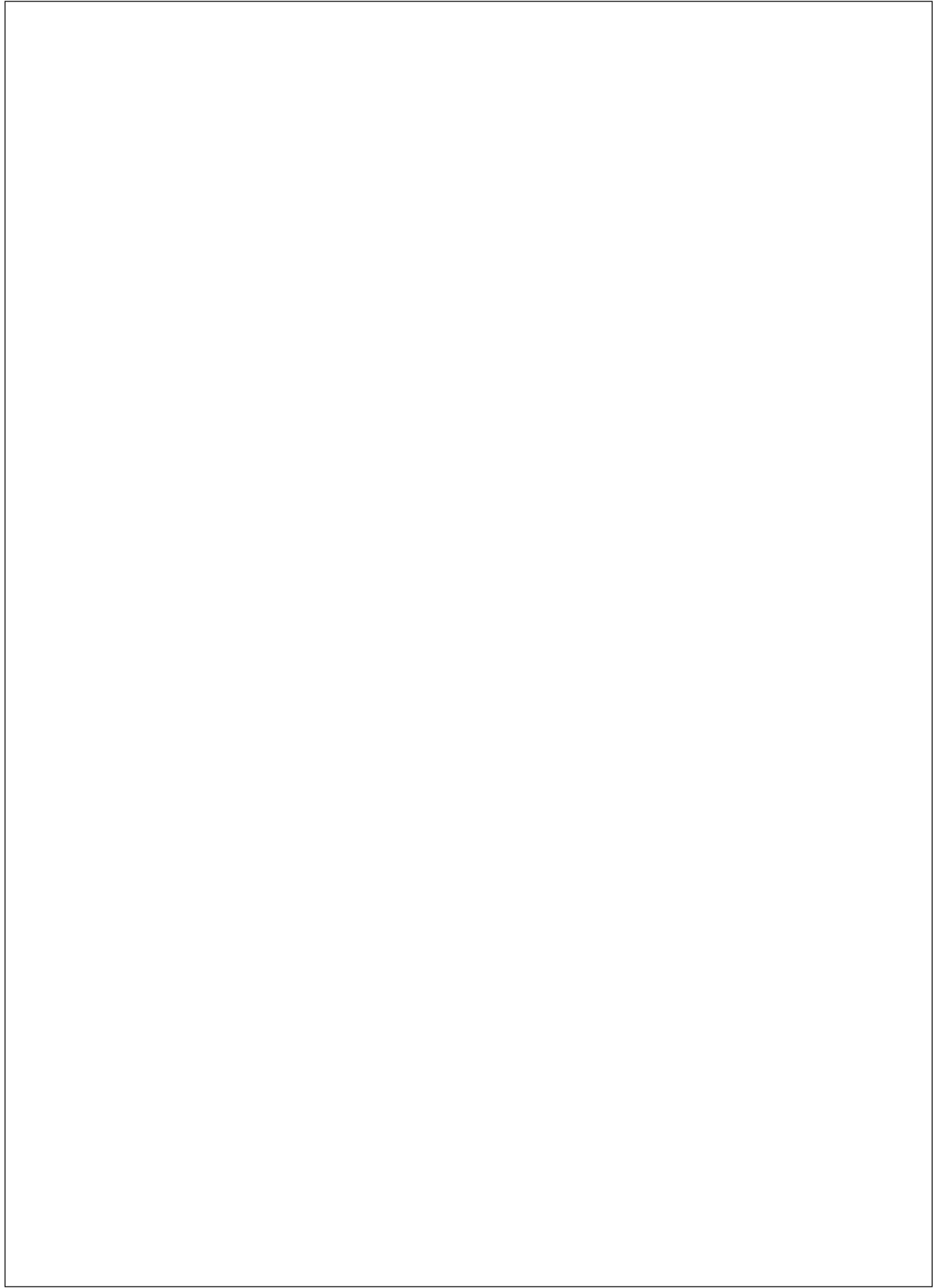


FOUNDATIONAL POSSIBILITIES



Foundational Possibility #2 Trust





Foundational Possibility #2 – Trust

The Possibility

Trust in God rather than self-reliance is modeled resulting in an open and caring work environment.

The Concept

Trust is to have confidence in, to rely upon.
Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary used these words.

A reliance or resting of the mind on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship, or other sound principle of another person.

Think of someone you trust – someone in your life who would fit the above description. How has that trust developed?

*“Trust in the LORD
with all your heart and
lean not on your own
understanding;
in all your ways
acknowledge him,
and he will make
your paths straight.”
– Proverbs 3:5-6*

It is interesting to note that in Webster's 1828 dictionary he used Proverb 29:25b as an example of the word.

“Whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.”

Such use of Scripture in our public discourse is no longer common. While as a culture we drift to more and more of a secular humanistic world view, it is important for Christ followers to put their trust in God. In Christ we have a heart that makes it possible for us to proclaim:

- “The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him” (Psalm 28:7a)
- “I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” (Psalm 91:2)

According to:

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; {6} in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:4-6)

All of our heart should be trusting in the Lord and not on what we understand – what we think we can control. The openness of our trust in the Lord will impact those around us. Our confidence in the face of trial, will give them courage. Our trust in the Lord will create a trustworthiness in us that people will respond to.

Trust In the Wrong Things

Although all of our trust is to be in the Lord, we tend to put our trust elsewhere. Below is a chart listing some verses that identify things besides the Lord that we put our trust in. From the verses, fill in the first column with those things where we misplace our trust.

Misplaced Trust	Verse
	"Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf." (Proverbs 11:28)
	"He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe." (Proverbs 28:26)
	"Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe." (Proverbs 29:25)
	"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God." (Psalm 20:7)
	"Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods." (Psalm 40:4)
	"I do not trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory." (Psalm 44:6)
	"Those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches." (Psalm 49:6)
	"This is the fate of those who trust in themselves, and of their followers, who approve their sayings." (Psalm 49:13)
	"Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them." (Psalm 62:10)
	"It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man." (Psalm 118:8)
	"It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes." (Psalm 118:9)

Review the list and circle one or two that you are most vulnerable to in your work. Pray for the Lord's help.

Trusting God Has Many Benefits

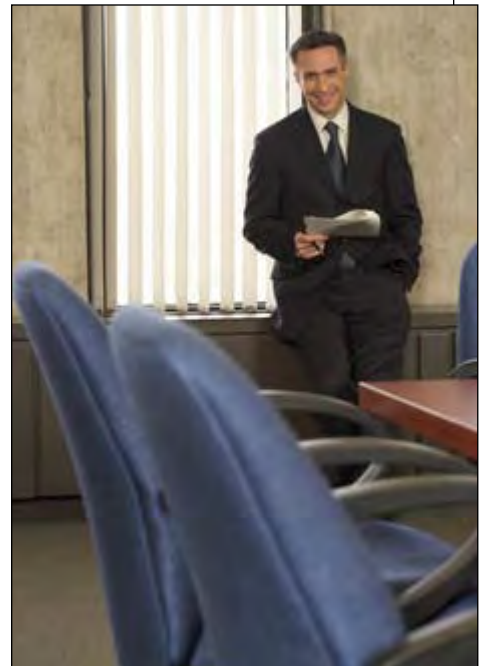
The Scriptures also speak clearly about the benefits of trusting in God. Fill in the chart below with those benefits.

Benefit of Trusting God	Verse
	"He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him." (Psalm 22:8)
	"Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you." (Psalm 86:2)

Benefit of Trusting God	Verse
	"Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD." (Proverbs 16:20)
	"A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper." (Proverbs 28:25)
	"Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him. " (Psalm 32:10)
	"Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture." (Psalm 37:3)
	"Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun." (Psalm 37:5-6)
	"...then I will answer the one who taunts me, for I trust in your word." (Psalm 119:42)
	"Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save." (Psalm 146:3)
	"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Which benefit is most important to you at this point in your life?

Explain your answer.



Trusting the Lord Impacts Business Relationships

Trusting in the Lord is not just for the disadvantaged or for times of great need. The following shows that trust is for you in your marketplace leadership role.

“For the king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken.” (Psalm 21:7)

Describe a time when your trust in the Lord gave you the confidence you needed to perform your work.

How might your trust in the Lord impact those working around you in the following ways?

- Suspicion and turf protection

- Information being closely guarded and used as a tool to gain power

- The desire to work together and share information

- Open and trusting communication

- Dependence upon one another

In Scripture, some of the words translated as “trust” are also translated as “confidence.” One of those words is *hupostasis*. Literally, “a standing under (hupo) that which stands, or is set, under a foundation;” hence the quality of confidence which leads one to stand under, endure, or undertake anything.

Confidence and trust in the Lord can provide us with great strength as we face our workplace challenges. In the spaces below, describe some challenges you may now be facing.

A trust issue you currently face

An unpleasant person you are 'standing under'

A trial you are enduring

A task to undertake that is beyond your comfort level

How might trusting the Lord impact the tension you are feeling, the fear you are dealing with or the uncertainty that is gnawing at you?

Look back through the Scriptures in this lesson and pick out one that you can hide in your heart so that your trust will be in the Lord rather than placed somewhere else.

Application of Foundational Possibility #2: Trust

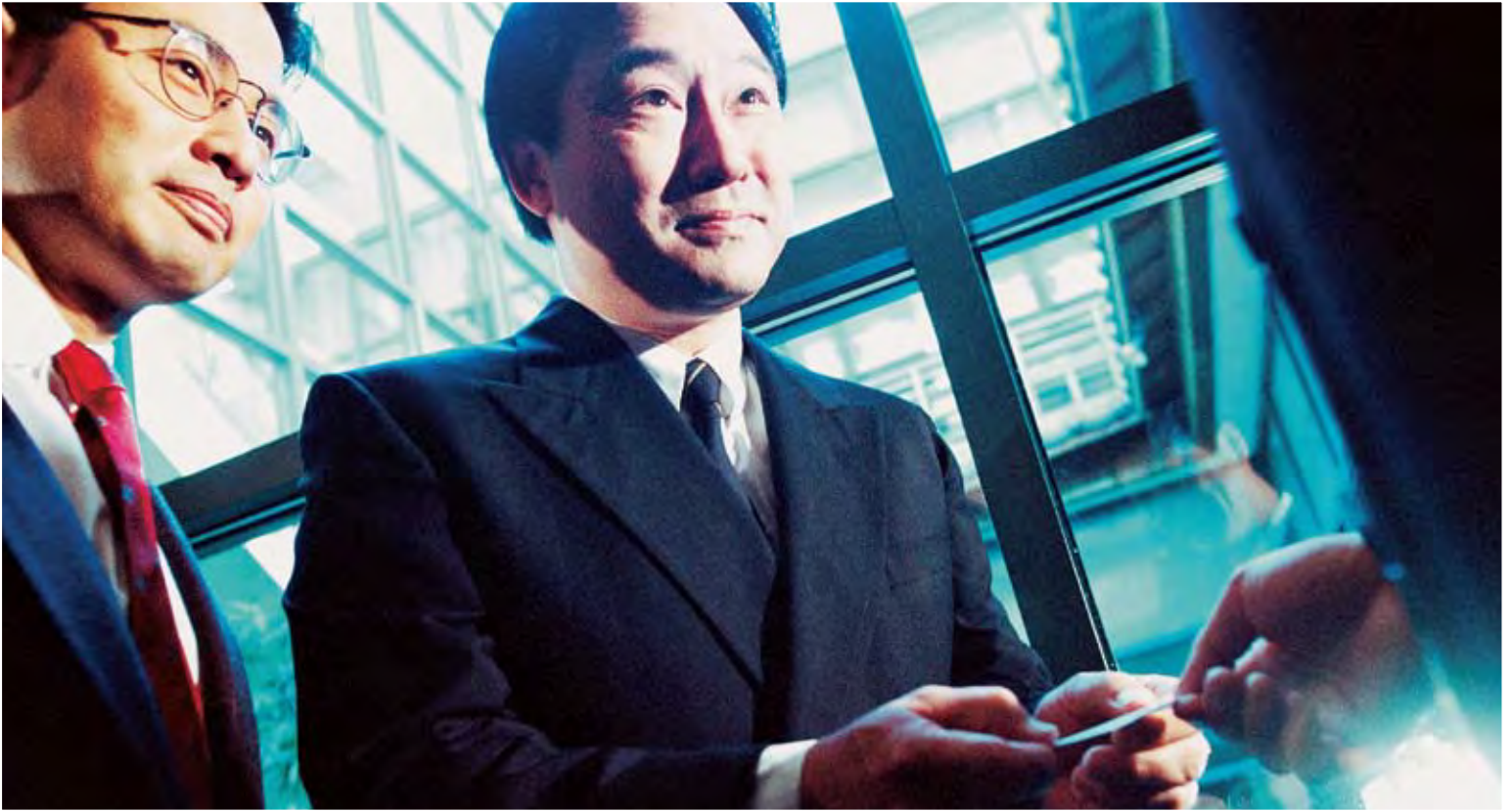
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Blessing

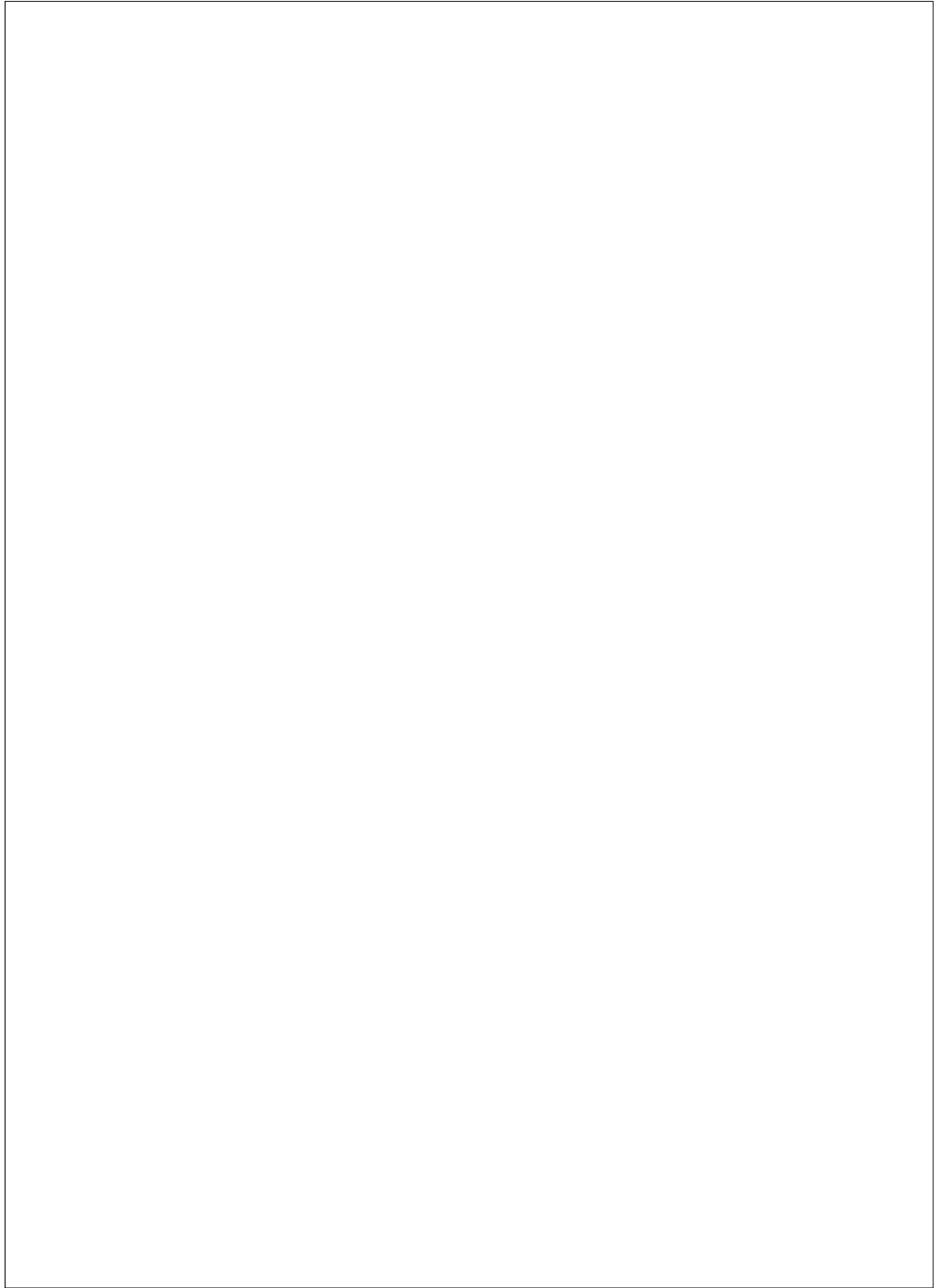
May your trust in the Lord be transparent and impactful in your workplace.

FOUNDATIONAL POSSIBILITIES



Foundational Possibility #3 Reputation





Foundational Possibility #3: Reputation

The Possibility

A good name is maintained within the community of faith and the community at large.

The Concept

God's name is to be exalted and He desires us to also have a good name. However, far too often the reputation of the Christian in the workplace is not positive. Building a good reputation is an honorable and a God-pleasing goal.

What are the marketplace benefits of a good name?

What obstacles does a bad name present in the workplace?

God Desires a Good Name for Us

What insight concerning the value and importance of a name can be drawn from the following verse?

"A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." (Proverbs 22:1)

*"A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold."
– Proverbs 22:1*

Describe your comfort level with the idea of having your name esteemed?

God would not point to being esteemed as a worthy goal, if He objected to the notion. Elsewhere, in Romans 13:7, we are instructed to give honor to others who are worthy of it. Esteem takes many forms and can be received in near term acknowledgement or long term career recognitions.

How might esteem and honor be given to you in your work?

Can you embrace being honored as a worthy, God-honoring calling for your life?

The first commandment tells us clearly what God thinks about His name.

“You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.” (Exodus 20:7)

How can you apply that to your view of your name?

As one who carries the name of Christ, how important is your name?

The Problem

What is the reputation of Christians in the marketplace?

Unfortunately, Christians are not universally esteemed in the workplace. Testimonies such as “The worst beating I took in business was from a Christian” or “Christian workers are some of the worst” are heard far too often. Why is this? Why is our Lord maligned because of our workplace reputation? The answer is complex. The factors that contribute to the problem are:

1. For many there is a disconnect between faith and work. Perhaps one of Satan’s greatest deceptions during our time is the secularization of work. As a result of this lie, many Christians go through their workday with no input from our Lord or application of their faith to the issues they face. As a result, the world receives the same thing from Christians as they receive from anyone else.
2. Unreasonable expectations are ascribed to the Christian. Without an understanding of the Christian life, the world expects perfection from us. The spiritual reality is that we are being perfected. There is a vast difference between what we are becoming and the behavior we often exhibit. It is as though the world knows what is possible for us and holds us accountable to that behavior!
3. A lack of “marketplace maturity” hinders the workplace Christian just as the lack of spiritual formation causes problems in the other areas of our life. Paul spoke of these kinds of Christians with the following words.

“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)
4. As is often said, we tend to “shoot our wounded”. Rather than gently restoring one another (Galatians 6:1), we far too often resort to judgment and condemnation. This judgment leads to a downward spiral of the Christian witness because of a spiritual reality that is always at work. As we judge others, we are also judged (Matthew 7:2). Thus, the judgment we administer results in more judgment – toward our self.
5. Slack and lazy performance cripples our reputation and witness. Several Proverbs speak to this problem. For example, “one who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys” from Proverbs 18:9. Unfortunately such behavior is sometimes justified for spiritual reasons such as:
 - Taking inappropriate amounts of time to witness.
 - Using company time for unauthorized Bible study.
 - Surfing the internet for Christian sites.
 - Giving so much of self in church activity that little is left for the job.
6. Presuming upon a Christian boss creates an inappropriate burden for the supervisor and the claim of favoritism by coworkers. The Scripture is very clear on the responsibility of the Christian toward a brother or sister in the Lord to whom they report.

“Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them.” (1 Timothy 6:2)

7. Expecting a ‘softness’ from Christian managers, can create conflict and misunderstanding. A Christian worker looking for grace and mercy without accountability will not be a good employee. Hard feelings are likely to result. Many sincere Christ following leaders are confronted with statements such as:

- If she was really a Christian, she would not have fired me.
- If he were really my brother in Christ, he would have overlooked my error.

On which of the above seven items is your reputation in the marketplace at most risk (explain your answer)?

The Solution - Where a Good Name Comes From

Apply the following to your current role in the workplace.

“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.” (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)

Consider the following.

“My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.” (Proverbs 3:1-4)

According to the above Proverb how can you win a good name?

How can you move closer to God's Possibility for you in terms of your reputation in the community of faith?

And the entire mission field called your workplace?



Application of Foundational Possibility #3: Reputation

Review this lesson and record the key points and/or your personal insights.

Record a personal action and/or application that God has lead you to through this study.

Blessing

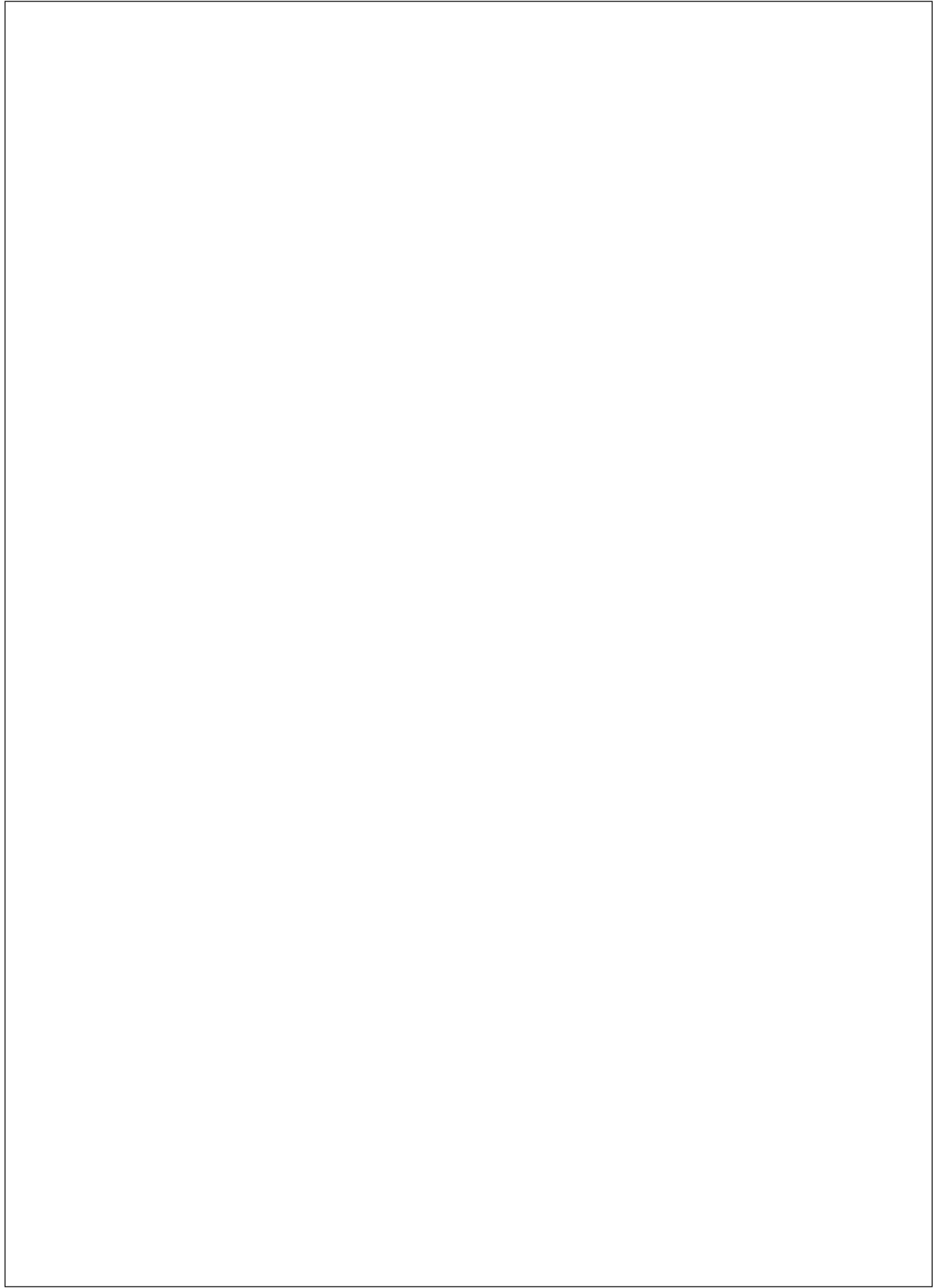
May your name bring joy and trust to others.

FOUNDATIONAL POSSIBILITIES



Foundational Possibility #4 Wealth





Foundational Possibility # 4: Wealth

The Possibility

Wealth is being created for personal use, for the benefit of all stakeholders and for sharing. The wealth created is through the complementary advantage of conducting business in a righteous and obedient manner.

The Concept

Having wealth is to be “well provided for, to prosper.” The idea of having wealth is often uncomfortable for the Christian. Sometimes we even spiritualize Bible passages on the subject with statements such as, “true wealth will be received in heaven.”

Why do you think it is so hard for us to accept the ‘real time’ blessing of wealth?

Part of the difficulty is related to the messages we receive from our pulpits. We have all often heard messages about the dangers of money and the evil of materialism. But have you ever heard a sermon extolling the virtue of creating wealth?

In April of 2003, The Wilberforce Forum, a ministry of Prison Fellowship held one of their ‘Christian World view Conferences’ – this one focusing on the marketplace. It was reported that a study of the leading seminaries in our land, those producing 80% of our pastors, had no courses on economics. Further, the more conservative the institution the more reluctant they were to discuss such issues for fear of diluting their message. Even though we are created in the image of a Creator, Christians are seldom encouraged in their creative workplace endeavors. An appreciation that creation of wealth is an honorable calling will serve us well as we serve Christ in our workplace calling.

“Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work, this is a gift from God.”
– Ecclesiastes 5:19

Having Wealth Is Not Sinful

The Holman Bible dictionary makes the following helpful distinction.

Wealth is the physical resources God gives humans to control while materialism is the tendency to lift those resources to replace God as the center of life.

The following clearly show that God possesses wealth.

“I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are ever before me. I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.” (Psalm 50:8-12)

“Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.” (1 Chronicles 29:11-12)

God possesses great wealth – everything in the whole world. Since God cannot sin, our possession of wealth cannot be sin.

Further, the following passages show that God gives wealth. Wealth that is countable and usable in our current time. If wealth were sinful, God would not give it.

“Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.” (Genesis 26:12-14)

“But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.” (Deuteronomy 8:18)

“Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work--this is a gift of God.” (Ecclesiastes 5:19)

Write a statement that affirms your understanding that possession of wealth is not a problem in God’s eyes (or questions you still have on this issue).

The Dangers of Wealth

While creation of wealth is a good thing, possession of wealth can cause us problems. Rather than using wealth properly, it may use us. Therefore, it is good to remind ourselves of some wealth hazards.

Hazard	Verse
May become prideful and less dependant upon God.	“You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)
May develop an unquenchable desire for more	“Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.” (Ecclesiastes 5:10)
May lose interest in God’s word.	“The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.” (Matthew 13:22)
May become a servant of money.	“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” (Matthew 6:24)

What is the greatest danger for you personally?

The hazards listed in the chart are what our old nature will do with wealth. Possession of wealth will always be an area that is open for Satan’s temptation. However, in Christ we have a new nature – a new possibility for how wealth will be used.

Our Possibility to Use Wealth Wisely

Rather than fearing wealth, we expect that God will mature us in Christ so that our use of wealth will bring Him glory. Below are some wise choices the Lord makes possible.

Wise Use	Verse
First and always present your tithe. You can trust that what God gave you included enough for a tithe	"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops." (Proverbs 3:9)
Experience the joy of giving beyond the tithe in support of Christian work.	"Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy." (Psalm 107:22)
Taking care of one's family.	"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8)
Providing for the needs of the disadvantaged.	"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." (James 1:27)
Honoring commitments to employees, investors and vendors.	"Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." (Romans 13:7)

We often think of the above as competing priorities in our life. However, our Possibility is not limited to meeting one or a few of the above. Serving God rather than money enables us to have victory in each of the above areas - simultaneously. How is that possible?



God's Economic Law for Building Wealth

As studied earlier, the Lord gives wealth. It is His gift and in His sovereignty, He can give it, withhold it or take it away. However, just as God put in place some physical laws such as gravity, there are also economic laws at work that we are to be mindful of.

Economic Value	Verse
Consistent effort on our part is expected.	"Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth." (Proverbs 10:4)
Understand that God is the source of any wealth created.	"Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life." (Proverbs 22:4)
Obedience to God's written instructions is a powerful economic force.	"Praise the LORD. Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever." (Psalm 112:1-3)
Do not presume that our plans will be blessed.	"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil." (James 4:13-16)
The economic gains of sinful activity are temporary and patience brings lasting wealth	"Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow." (Proverbs 13:11)

What is an example from your life of one of the above?

What additional God created economic laws would you list?

Application of Foundational Possibility #4: Wealth

Review this lesson and record the key points and/or your personal insights.

Record a personal action and/or application that God has lead you to through this study.

Blessing

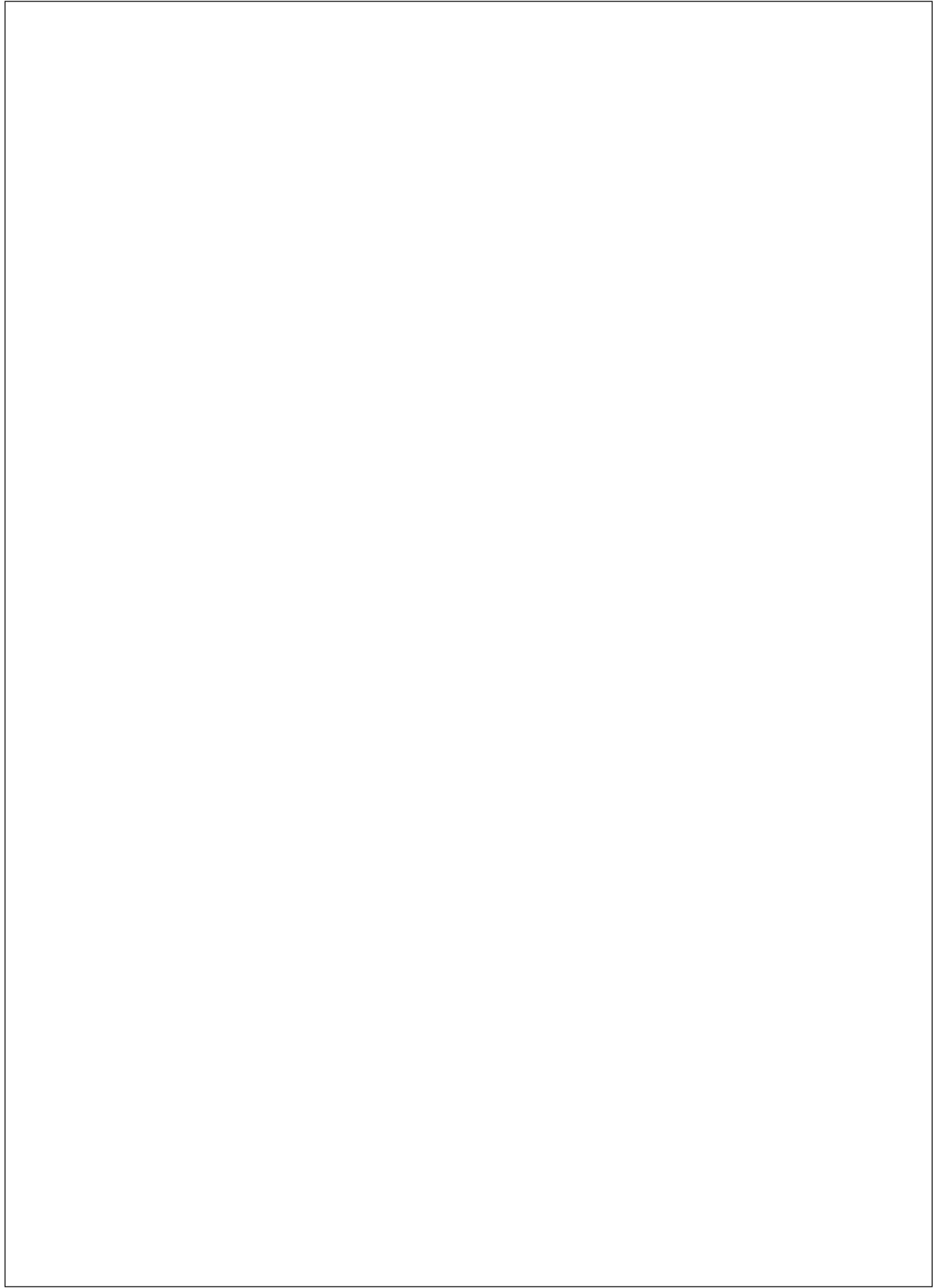
May you enjoy and wisely use the wealth God has in mind for you as you pursue The Possibilities of Christ-led enterprise.

FOUNDATIONAL POSSIBILITIES



Foundational Possibility #5 Prayer





Foundational Possibility #5: Prayer

The Possibility

Praying continually brings the best that God has to offer into each business moment.

*"... pray continually."
– 1 Thessalonians 5:17*

The Concept

God has a plan for our business lives. He is available 24/7 to help us discover that plan.

What items concerning your work are or have you been reluctant to pray about?

Below are some of the reasons people have for not praying about work issues.

1. This portion of my life is not worthy of God's attention.
2. God has much more important things to be concerned with.
3. Do not think about God concerning workplace issues.
4. Seems like a selfish request.
5. Do not want to do what God might ask.

What additional expressions could be added to this list?

24/7 Praying

The reluctance concerning workplace prayer stands in stark contrast to the Possibility that Paul wrote of.

"...pray continually..." (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

God does not give us instructions that cannot be lived out. We are told to pray continually so prayer would have to include workplace issues and times.

Continual prayer includes ideas such as:

- Constant conversation with God
- Uninterrupted awareness of God
- A mind always open to God's input
- Moment by moment watching for God's activity
- Complete dependence on God for all of our needs
- Utter trust for all things

What does the concept of continual (24/7) prayer mean to you?

Jesus also wants us to pray always.

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.” (Luke 18:1)

The parable Jesus taught is

“He said: ‘In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’” And the Lord said, ‘Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?’” (Luke 18:2-8)

What then can we expect to be our personal benefit of this ‘always’ praying that does not give up?

Discarding the Limiting Ideas

Since we have the privilege of praying to One who deeply cares for us and who makes 24/7 connectivity possible, it seems wise to discard the ideas that limit our work related praying. Below are some thoughts on the barriers listed at the beginning of this lesson. Complete the checklist at the end of each bullet section.

- This portion of my life is not worthy of God's attention.

"If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:30)

"And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matthew 10:30)

If God tends the lilies of the field and counts the hairs of your head, how can we justify such a devalued view of a major life activity?

___ I have known that my work-life is worthy of God's attention.

___ This has been my attitude but I now repent of such thinking.

___ I continue to have the following questions concerning this.

- God has much more important things to be concerned with.

345 times in Scripture is "Almighty" is used in reference to God.

Is our view of God so small that He cannot concern Himself with everything?

___ I have known that my work-life is important to God.

___ This has been my attitude but I now repent of such thinking.

___ I continue to have the following questions concerning this.

- Do not think about God concerning workplace issues.

"Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all." (Acts 10:36)

If He is Lord of all, how can we think that He is not Lord of our work life?

___ Thinking about God and work has been common for me.

___ This has my attitude but I now repent of such thinking.

___ I continue to have the following questions concerning this.

- Seems like a selfish request

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6)

Everything has to include our workplace issues. Could we ever be so self-sufficient that we never have an anxious thought about work? Does pride call us to solve the problem ourselves rather than rely upon God?

___ I have known that God desires to meet my workplace needs.

___ This has been my attitude but I now repent of such thinking.

___ I continue to have the following questions concerning this.

- Do not want to do what God might ask

“Now listen, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.’ As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.” (James 4:13-17)

Does pride hinder us from seeking God’s will for our work life? Do we avoid listening to God because some of the good He has in mind for us might interfere with our plans?

___ I have desire God’s will for my work-life.

___ This has been my attitude but I now repent of such thinking.

___ I continue to have the following questions concerning this.

Confident Praying

Not only does God want us to pray concerning our work issues, He desires to meet our needs. The following gives us some guidance on what an effective workplace prayer would be like.

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.” (1 John 5:14-15)

Effective workplace prayers open the door to God’s will. Praying is not about receiving our selfish desires but about discovering what pleases God. Review the action steps you recorded in the previous sessions of this study and write a prayer for each that God would love to say yes to.

- Complementary Advantage

- Trust

- Reputation

- Wealth

Jesus also told us that our prayers are to be about God's will – His kingdom.

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’” (Matthew 6:9-13)

Using the above as a model, write a personal workplace prayer.

Application of Foundational Possibility #5:

Review this lesson and record the key points and/or your personal insights.

Record a personal action and/or application that God has lead you to through this study.

Blessing

May your work-life be victorious through prayers that will bless God.

Review and Reflection on the Foundational Possibilities of Christ-led Enterprise

Application Review

Review the Application Sections of the five Possibilities in this study and respond to the following.

List the top three key points or insights that you recorded.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What has been the most important personal action and/or application to which God has led you through this study?

What difference has this study made in your life or your understanding of the connection between your faith and your work?

What transformational change do you expect this study will have in your life over the next few months?

Self-Assessment

Following is the self-assessment for the Possibilities covered in this study. Please circle the number that best represents the level at which you feel you are currently experiencing each Possibility.

Complimentary Advantage. Weapons of the world are not depended upon.

<i>Dependence on such things as own resources, technology advances, negotiation skill and good luck</i>					<i>Understanding that victory rests with the Lord through obedience, prayer and the other Possibilities.</i>				
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Trust. Trust in God rather than self-reliance is modeled resulting in an open and caring work environment.

<i>Suspicion and turf protection are common</i>	<i>Information is closely guarded and used as a tool to gain power</i>	<i>The need to work together and share information is promoted</i>	<i>Open and trusting communication is the norm</i>	<i>Dependence upon another improves outcomes</i>
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Reputation. A good name is maintained within the community of faith and the community at large.

<i>Bad witness for Christ</i>	<i>Many would be surprised the company was Christian led</i>	<i>A good name has been earned</i>	<i>Counted on for delivering on promises made</i>	<i>Above reproach</i>					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Wealth. Wealth is being created for personal use, for the benefit of all stakeholders and for sharing. The wealth created is through the complementary advantage of conducting business in a righteous and obedient manner.

<i>Wealth is hoarded and created through unrighteous means</i>	<i>Resources are squandered and profits are minimal, if existent</i>	<i>A good balance exists between profits, righteous business practice and God's sovereignty</i>	<i>Business metrics far exceed those common for the industry and economic times</i>	<i>Wealth is being stored in Heaven</i>					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Prayer. Prayer continually brings the best that God has to offer into each business moment. Lives and transactions are being changed through prayer.

<i>If at all, prayer is an afterthought</i>	<i>Crisis prayers are offered</i>	<i>Corporate event praying occurs</i>	<i>Consistent prayer is offered for all company stakeholders</i>	<i>Prayer is a normal part of the company's culture</i>					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Using a distinctive marking, record the responses you made to these Possibilities on the Self-Assessment you took in the introduction. What differences do you notice?

How are you encouraged by any growth in marketplace maturity you sense?

What, if any, Possibilities has God revealed to you through this study?

God will not use this tool to condemn you but may well be using it to convict you of the next step He has for you in your transformation to marketplace maturity. If so, what is He speaking to you?

Possibilities for Christ-led Enterprise

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Beneficial and Constructive Actions. Although many actions can be considered as possible and within the law and even acceptable to the culture, only those actions that are beneficial and constructive are undertaken.

Best Thinking. Thoughts are focused on whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable- anything excellent or praiseworthy.

Complementary Advantage. Christians have a special ability to work within God's economic realities and enjoy the marketplace benefits of doing so.

Fairness. Equal treatment, even beyond government standards is offered to all.

Love. Being known for love for neighboring business, competitors, staff, suppliers and every stakeholder.

Obedience. Obedience to God is seen as a positive quality.

Prayer. Praying continually brings the best that God has to offer into each business moment.

Reconciliation. A clear commitment to reconciliation exists – beginning with an articulated model for good communications that teaches a process for discussing and resolving differences.

Reputation. A good name is maintained within the community of faith and the community at large.

Respect. Respect and opportunity is given to everyone by the company and its employees.

Servant Leadership. Through the ethical use of power and authority true leaders help others grow, achieve success and attain organizational outcomes.

Submission. Willing submission to appropriate authority.

Trust. Trust and dependence are reinforced within the culture and result in value adding teamwork.

Wealth. Wealth is being created for personal use, for the benefit of all stakeholders and for sharing. The wealth created is through the complementary advantage of conducting business in a righteous and obedient manner.

Wisdom. Recognition that Godly wisdom is available, appropriate and advantageous for business issues.

