

What is Holding Your Business Back?



Business coach, *Ainsley Shepherd*, continues in the two-part series, examining strategies to keep your business alive and prospering

PART TWO

blessed if your business produces or sells products or services that God would not approve of. Alcohol and cigarettes are obvious, but what about the New Age or self help titles in a regular bookstore?

Is there holiness in every area of the business's conduct? Would God be hurt by the content of the magazines in your waiting room? Would he find your bookwork in order, with a record of prompt payments? You can evaluate your business by remembering Luke 12:3, which says that whatever has been in the darkness will come out into the light. If nothing was hidden in your business, would God come out looking good, or would it bring shame to his name?

We must also not be partnered with unbelievers in any sort of decision making role. God has clearly said, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14 NKJV). The person you are partnered with may be a 'nice person', but that doesn't change God's command. Those who are in the darkness, bring darkness into all they are associated with . . . including our businesses.

System: Am I operating on God's system, or the world's? When the Bible talks about the kingdom of God (not the kingdom of heaven), it is referring to God's system—his mode of operation, which is directly opposite to the world's system. If a business is operating on the world's system, for example, it is susceptible to every market crash and recession. But God's system is above the system of the world and those operating on his system are not susceptible to these things. If you don't know in which system your business operates, you likely don't understand how the kingdom of God operates and it's time to find out! His system is based on spiritual principles such as faith, sowing and reaping and the power of words.

Kingdom Connection: Is my business connected to God's covenant?

God doesn't promise us wealth to squander on our own lusts. His purpose for wealth is very specific. "But you shall [earnestly] remember the Lord your God, for it is He Who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant . . ." (Deu 8:18 AMP). God's work is his priority and when we make it our priority, he will provide us with everything we need. To identify whether or not it really is our priority, we must ask what connections our business has to God's covenant? Do we tithe our income to our local church? Is the aim of our business to see the salvation of those who come in contact with it? Are we partnered with ministries who are preaching the gospel? Without such connections in place, our commitment to God's work is questionable.

Praise: Am I praising in advance of my breakthrough?

Praise is evidence of both faith and relationship with God. If you are not praising God regularly—regardless of circumstances—you are missing an important opportunity to grow in your relationship with God. True faith also calls us to praise in advance of seeing our answers. It expresses our gratitude for what

Many people don't realise the answer to their business' success is spiritual. Dealing with obstacles only in the natural does not target their true source.

Satan takes advantage of every opportunity he can to bring destruction into our lives and our businesses. We must discern where those doors are open—even if only a crack—and slam them shut, by aligning ourselves and our businesses with God's instructions. "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," (Jam 4:7).

In the last issue, we looked at the following open doors:

- Calling: Am I called to this business at this time?
- Spiritual Growth: Am I growing in my relationship with God?
- Purpose & Plan: Do I have a God-inspired purpose and plan?
- Motives: Are my motives honouring to God?
- Established Heart: Am I established and unshakeable in faith for my vision?

In this issue, we will complete the list:

Holiness: Does my business exhibit holiness in all facets? Your business must honour God in all facets. Don't expect to be

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we believe he is going to do and ensures we are confidently expecting him to do it. Psalm 35:27 says, "Let them shout for joy and be glad, who favour my righteous cause; And let them say continually, 'Let the Lord be magnified, who has *pleasure in the prosperity* of His servant,'" (NKJV emphasis added). Note the alignment of our words to what we are believing for. Would this verse adequately describe our praise? It is not about our feelings; it is about a decision to obey . . . feelings follow.

Obedience: Have I followed all of God's instructions?

Are there any instructions—big or small—that God has given you, which you have not yet obeyed? God will not give you further direction until you have acted upon what he has already told you, or what is already in his Word. If you have not obeyed fully, do so as quickly as you can.

Love: Am I walking in love or is there strife in my business and life?

Many people don't connect strife in their personal life or business with the obstacles they are experiencing. Yet they are entirely related. Mark 12:30-31 clearly says that there is no commandment greater than God's call to love him and love others. Therefore any deviation from this is disobedience to the most important instruction God has given us and disobedience welcomes Satan into our lives. We simply need to read 1 Corinthians 13 to discover what God expects of us. "Faith . . . worketh by love," (Gal 5:6 KJV). That means, without love (God's definition of it—not ours), our faith cannot work.

James 3:16 says "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." It doesn't matter whether the strife is between those involved in our business or at home with our spouse. Our business is an extension of ourselves, so when we engage in strife—regardless of the topic—it affects our business. The call to love is for our own protection.

Blessing: Am I walking in the blessing of God?

Without an awareness of and faith in the blessing of God on our lives, we will miss out on the best that God has for us. "The blessing of the Lord—it makes [truly] rich and He adds no sorrow with it [neither does toiling increase it]" (Pro 10:22 AMP). We may see many blessings (such as finances and favour) in our lives, but they are all a by-product of the blessing of the Lord on our lives. This blessing is activated by faith and its job is to work for us 24 hours per day, bringing about the resources and open doors we need, to walk in the fullness of our calling. It all begins with an understanding of the blessing and how it operates in our lives.

Spiritual Warfare: Am I exercising spiritual warfare?

We don't contend with flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers (Eph 6:12). This is particularly true for businesspeople who often challenge the spiritual strongholds that exist over towns and cities and therefore experience more resistance. Do nothing without specific and effective prayer.

Time: Have I exercised both faith and patience?

Just because you are experiencing resistance doesn't mean you are doing anything wrong. If you have slammed every door shut a long time ago and have not yet seen your vision come to pass, God may well be using the circumstances to develop patience in you.

Don't let the waiting weary you. It's part of the process and if you fail this test by not allowing God to develop patience in you, there will surely be another one to face.

"For you have need of steadfast patience and endurance, so that you may perform and fully accomplish the will of God and thus receive and carry away [and enjoy to the full] what is promised," (Heb 10:36 AMP).

If we withdraw our faith too soon, we will miss what God has for us. See Hebrews 6:11-12.

Moving forward

As you discern and shut these doors, remember the need for patience. The Bible warns that when the Word is sown in our hearts, Satan comes immediately to steal it (Mar 4:15). As you align your business, don't look to circumstances to confirm that you are on the right path, but rather look to the Word. If you've first submitted yourself to God, you will be able to resist the enemy. And it will be only a matter of time before you experience Christ's victory in your business. **A**

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Introducing the Impact Restore Program...

Equipping your business to impact your world

Christian business coach, Ainsley Shepherd, has established the Impact Restore program as a response to the needs of the businesspeople in the body of Christ. It allows struggling Christian businesspeople to experience three months of weekly coaching sessions at no charge—with the focus on restoring their businesses quickly. One new businessperson is accepted each quarter.

To apply to become part of the program, simply explain in up to 300 words: **"What I am called to do and why I would like the Impact Restore program to help me accomplish it."**

Please e-mail your responses to ainsley@rememberyourlife.com.au. For further information on the Impact Restore program, or to subscribe to the Meaningful Business e-Newsletter, please visit www.rememberyourlife.com.au. Applications must be submitted by the 31 January and the successful applicant will be notified to commence coaching in the first week of February.