

Business for the glory of god | book review



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

For this assignment we are to read the book by W. Grudem, "Business for the Glory of God: The Bible's Teaching on the Moral Goodness of Business." Mr. Grudem explores the Christian side of business which gives an elaborative explanation of what one might encounter. He clearly shows that in all the various aspects of business, which includes profit, ownership, money, lending, borrowing, and competition. Overall, the author clearly illustrates that people who work in the business world are generally made to feel guilty, because few people think "instinctively of business as morally good in itself. (11). The main purpose of the book was to demonstrate that the various aspects of business activities are good and these good things will also bring glory to God.

Book Review

Business people are an imitation of God's character by representing Him on earth through the approach of various business activities. Grudem reflects on each of the chapter's categories, and clearly illustrates how each of the activities fall into these categories which represent a unique opportunity to bring God's glory to the forefront: private ownership, productivity, employment, commercial transactions (selling and buying), profit, using money as means of exchange, producing inequalities in possessions, competition, borrowing and lending, and the reduction in the world's poverty. In private ownership, this is where a person would imitate God's sovereignty through the exercise of mankind's sovereignty over the creation. When a person cares for worldly possessions, Mr. Grudem makes an argument about people having the chance to imitate certain characteristics of God such as "wisdom, knowledge, beauty, creativity, love for others,

kindness, fairness, independence, freedom, exercise of will, blessedness (or joy), and so forth” (20).

When people have the desire to have their own things is not necessarily bad, but it is a representation of our overall desire to be ruler over things. The topic of private ownership also gives people the opportunity to do great things with their resources by sharing them with those who are in need so that others can see God in different ways. The word subdue in the book of Genesis implies to the greater good of human productivity. The main point to remember is that God expect for people to work hard at developing the world for God’s glory and for the sake of mankind. In reference to manufactured products, Mr. Grudem states, “ give us opportunity to praise God for anything we look at in the world around us” (26). Typically, any item that is manufactured allows people to discover the “ wonders of God’s creation in the things that we have been able to make from the earth” (27). When a person does productive work, this takes on the meaning of subduing the earth and it makes “ the resources of the earth useful” for everyone.

In reference to the rejections of Marxism, Mr. Grudem states, “ the Bible does not view it as evil for one person to hire another person and gain profit from that person’s work” (31). The Bible teaches us that employee to employer relationships are generally good and they are equally beneficial (Luke 3: 14; 10: 7; 1 Tim. 6: 2). A relationship at the employment level can provide a context for mutual appreciation for the callings and pride of other people. The good of an employer can be easily seen by employees through hard work, and the opposite can be achieved from an employer’s perspective by issuing fair pay for a hard day’s work. Mr. Grudem made some

observations about commercial transactions and he realized they has been a normal part of society since the very beginning (Lev. 25: 14). The Bible teaches us that selling and buying are ethically right, because they both provided an opportunity for people to do great things for other people by providing the thing they need. People often imitate God in places where they practice “ honesty, faithfulness to our commitments, fairness, and freedom of choice.” (37).

The use of money and profit are great, because they both entail that one has produced something beneficial to others who desire exchange. Not only is profit a clear indication that one is making efficient and great use of resources from God, but it also is encouraged in the teachings of Jesus Christ (Matt. 25: 14-30). Money ultimately sets us apart from any animal kingdom, but in such a way as a tool, which makes voluntary exchanges “ more fair, less wasteful, and far more extensive” (49). Money and profit can provide opportunities to glorify God by meeting our needs and those of others, providing charity, expanding our stewardship, and promoting the mission of the church throughout the world.

Even though reading this book may seem as an unfamiliar language to most, Mr. Grudem illustrates how the inequality of possessions is fundamentally good and also pleasing to God. Passages in the Bible such as Luke 19: 17, 19; 2 Corinthians 5: 10 establish the fact of designed inequality, and many other passages from both the Old and the New Testaments. The author explains that “ inequalities are necessary in a world that requires a great variety of tasks to be done” (52). In chapter 7, the author rejects arguments

from a biblical perspective in favor of Christian communitarians, redistribution policies, and health and wealth teachings.

The chapters about competition, borrowing and lending are basically a summary of the wealth producing topics. These chapters give an in-depth explanation about the good of competition, because it “ guides society in assigning jobs to those who are best suited for those jobs” (62). In common business practices, competition can also decrease the prices of items over time, while in turn increasing the living standard for everyone. The author also notes that the Bible has no absolute prohibition on loans, but he also assumes them as a way of life. There have been many biblical discussions around loans, which focuses on the abuse and misuses of the process, not the actual establishment of the loan. There is a good rationale behind why charging interest is not only necessary for institutions jeopardizing the use of their money with others, but also how it can be reversed to help other people.

Lastly, the goes on to discuss the necessity of moral goodness among the business people in an economy in order for things to operate more smoothly. This type of moral formation of a person would often lead to an overall greater respect for the dignity of mankind, and the increasing desire for their activities to bring not harm, but good to others while at the same time bringing glory to God. Mr. Grudem then goes on with an explanation at the very end of each chapter about how most business activities have “ great potential for misuse and wrongdoing” because we live in a time occupied by entrepreneurs with a sinful nature. The sins of some people in business,

however, should not make us assume all business activities are morally wrong.

In my honest opinion, Mr. Grudem made great points about the abuses of business, and the ways in which we idolize success and money and become cordial by losing sight of the truth that everything belongs to God. The author continued to make comments throughout the course of the book on the concerns to balance the view, but the real wealth changing information comes from the fact that business practices can be glorifying to God. He also mentions in the text that we should not feel guilty about business, but we can take this as a stepping stone towards our common goals. The author explored the various topics that most business professionals have to deal with on a daily basis at work. He does an excellent explanation of the most common misconceptions about work and business, and then offers a way to look at everything from a different perspective.

Mr. Grudem goes on to show how business is good and how it can be used to glorify God. Although this book was enjoyable and easy to read, this book was also very thought provoking and even life changing so to speak. I really could not find a bad point about the book and it was packed with plenty of insight about the moral nature of business. The thing I did not like was with his arguments, while most were very well written, are poorly supported with only a few bible verses and almost no logic whatsoever. In one section, he states that since Jesus gave laws on how employers should treat their employees, and God approves of hiring people and being an employer is good. On the other hand, he does not mention anything at all about the Sabbath, and this could cause someone to believe God also approves

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slavery. I honestly support keeping people gainfully employed, but some of the arguments in the book were lacking supporting facts.

In conclusion, I truly enjoy reading this book and I would highly recommend it to any Christian who is working in the business world. I think the long term solution that the author proposes involves starting and maintaining a productive business organization. I think as these businesses are pursued to God's glory, the positive effect of creating commerce and employment should also have a domino effect where the ability and the economic status of people should continue to prosper in ever-widening circles. Lastly, I feel this book does a great job of illustrating how everyday Christians can have a calling to business and in the midst of pursuing it; they can continue to glorify God, bless others and reflect His attributes. When it comes to money, work, finances and business, Ephesians 6: 5-9 makes a great point when it states,

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. ; Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.