

The Christian Financial Manager

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The point of business is profit, but there is no true profit without focus on The Prophet, Jesus Christ, The Lord. Proverbs 3:9, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst with new wine."

### The Glory of God Witnessed in Financial Management

How can the glory of God be witnessed while one seeks growth and expansion in finance? That question has challenged a number of individuals attempting to balance the pursuit of functional, effective fiscal discipline and fidelity in God. Often there are too many examples in a number of related cultures and nations where evangelists, supposed men and women of the cloth, have seemingly grown not only in wealth from the congregation donations but merchandising all forms of products centered around Christian worship and ideology. The problem is these people appear greedy, misleading, and terribly insecure. To the objective and atheistic, maybe business is good, but to individuals that know God as they know their own moral code understand that money is not always the bottom line and the customer may not always be right if their requests for business violate morals essential to commercial and financial stability. Such requests could be illegal, immoral, or unattainable without risking integrity, image, financial stability, business relationships, or the grace of God. The grace of God lies in the active experience of God's plan and gifts or benefits God endows upon an individual. The grace of God is awareness (Dyck, 2014; Bible Principles, 2016).

### Biblical Principles and God's Purpose for Finance

In order to honor God and reveal God's glory in business, one must fortify him or herself with the Word, not solely for business tips, but to safeguard oneself from temptation of "too much" financial success without a proactive, opportunity generating purpose. One must remain within the parameters of Christian logic according to the most objective interpretation of Bible verses. This allows an individual to look at pros and cons not as an individual but within a company (Bible Principles, 2016). Christian business practices seek to establish a sense of community versus commercialization where people simply go through the motions of business transactions for the sake of personal gain. The Christian ideology that permeates the purpose of making a profit is rooted in piety and pragmatism. Praying for insight is brainstorming, thanking God, following deep prayer it is a confirmation that the glory of God adds to the skills of a financial manager and is the source of his or her skills and decisions (Dayton, 2005). Financial managers reveal the glory of God through prudent deliberation, even in charitable donations, investments, expenses, and forming partnerships, as the Christian ideology seeks to embrace diversity that supports unity, greater development, and the best ideas. 2 Corinthians 9:8 (KJV) states, "...God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." Prayer is always the answer, the source of insight that leads to innovation (Fooshee, 2016).

If one does not recognize God as the source, then where is one looking? Looking to humankind alone can lead to a number of fallacious elements that adversely affect financial stability. However, with the 'God's eye' or perspective, skillful, aware financial managers align all aspects of business along with individuals within the business and their interests and insights



into the organization versus solely their income (Bible Principles, 2016). A financial manager must be a financial leader with a transformational leadership perspective, when considering the numerous aspects of budget such as the sales budget, capital structure, and investment fund. Sales budgets serve as the source for marketing campaigns and market research (Dayton, 2005). The production budget which includes design, manufacturing, and even aspects of distribution channels, facilitates the capital structure as far as the plan of action helps to manage operating costs, fixed assets and variable costs as well as other costs (Dyck, 2014, pp. 23-62).

The investment funds provide a means to save with greater returns. It is this particular facet of finance that many fail to fully experience and develop as professionals because they only see the financial and personal gains in capital per stakeholder or in most cases the executives alone (Dayton, 2005). The financial manager that looks ahead with the best interests of the company and autonomous groups and departments within it, understands that if only few receive the reward of the labors of all employees, then there is an imbalance and the sense of iniquity. A more communal, interdependent minded financial manager seeks to mitigate internal conflict of stratification that generates inequality and seeks to provide gains for all parties (Chand, 2016).

How can a so-called "numbers cruncher" shape the organizational culture of a company in which all parties are financially transparent, goal-oriented, and function efficiently with a steady flow of returns with low expenses? The answer is a moral code and seeking guidance from the Bible and the conscience provided by the Holy Spirit (insight leading to awareness). "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established" Proverbs 15:22 (KJV). For example, the conscious Christian financial manager approaches liquidity as one would approach fertile earth; it is not the actual outcome in which parties can consume, but the state of liquidity like fertile earth is the means to generate a greater

crop, financial gain. However, many times, this may not generate any money for the company in cash flow, funds increases and the flow of internal funds maintained by the company in banks.

In that sense, a Christian financial manager seeks to avoid further debt and correct the areas of loss which often times can increase expenses that are so far removed or remote from operations, they can be reduced or completely discarded (Chand, 2016; Dyck, 2014). This is directly evident in the Bible through a precautionary measure in mitigating financial quagmire due to erratic spending or failing to reveal means to establish stable profit. Proverbs 22:3 emphasizes, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." In other words, it is best to mitigate greater difficulty once problems are discovered and address the mistakes upon which problems potentially worsen, as opposed to ignoring them. Financial problems, large or small, challenge functionality and the fruition of a business when challenges go unchecked or the strategy to resolve them is not sufficient (Dayton, 2005).

Dyck (2014) states that no matter the religion, numerous companies per nation and region are beginning to look at the religious foundations for guidance as to the best means to address business needs of all parties and to generate a sense of solidarity in business decisions, specifically in finance. From a Christian perspective, noting that Christianity is the largest religion in the world, the template used to address God's glory in business, namely finance, is primarily based on the interaction between religious doctrine and corporate agenda rooted in Judeo-Christian perspectives. These perspectives address a selflessness and self-sufficiency at the same time.

It is this implementation of Christian financial management which does not place more importance on the individual (employee) or society (company, organization or institution); the



most important factor is the relationship or reciprocity between the individual and the company. Mainstream management addresses finance as simply numbers, but never addresses the purpose, focus, or outcome of the numbers as long as the numbers look good on the books as far as quarter, semi-annual, and annual financial reports (Dayton, 2005). Unfortunately, whether through loss or gain, having little foundation in faith or rather, failing to study and synthesize the structure of righteous business and fraudulent business practices in the Bible has actually led to disadvantages in business growth. In order to truly grow and to value success as it comes to fruition, one must understand with every gain there is God and even in financial loss there is wisdom that can be applied to revise financial planning and rejuvenate even the most challenged financial performance (Dyck, 2014, 23-62).

#### The Grace of God Makes One recognize the Glory of God in Business: The Christian Businessperson

Awareness is a blessing, a means to see above the proverbial forest of uncertainty specifically in business, and finance is a constant concern even among the most secured, successful, and pious of business people. Therefore, with the grace of God manifesting a greater awareness in an individual, the glory of God can manifest as fair, honest, even-handed success in financial management. Financial management can be the strength and foundation of good business or the source of a collapse due to bad business. As long as one is prudent, pragmatic, and able to forecast outcomes and is ready for the occasional anomalies in financial management, it is attainable from an ergonomic perspective. However, without the moral core and aptitude of knowing and living for God, there is a loss of value even to being successful in any business because there is no substance to drive or justify the struggle or reward of business beyond the ever-needed, forever fluctuating dollar. Money in itself has little value compared to

its use. Therefore, there is far more to business than the earnings themselves. However, many are misled and the reason for engaging in business is solely money (Dyck, 2014).

The focus of business must be to establish and maintain relationships, to compete for better designs or outcomes, and to understand money as a means of growth and development, but it is not a longevity unless one conducts business in service of God by best serving others and being honest in their practices and understanding of how clients and business need each other and benefit. The knowledge of God's glory changes the uninitiated in the Word from simply avaricious men and women to gregarious representatives of God by serving community, avoiding indulgences or negligence, and focusing on how to continuously help and assist others in a manner which inspires them to take the same initiative no matter their occupation or position in a given business situation. Financial management is understood to be a business that demands prudence, patience, and recognition of purpose in regards to checks and balances in fiscal matters and budgeting, but also financial management is a field that embraces the means to study, analyze, and generate a plan to expand or replicate success (Chand, 2016).

Essentially, the greater success in financial management is noting how difficult it can be to deal with the temptation and not engage in a collaborative, charitable mutually beneficial relationship with clients, other financial entities, and the community. Simply focusing on how much money can be made to hold for personal fortune is manifestation of not believing in God and turning from God to "invest" faith in the material world. There is no justice without the law, and there is no business that is righteous without consideration of how God's glory best manifests in business. Financial management manifests as the glory of God when there is conscious effort to focus on how finances can be utilized in programs or products to help people based on



maintaining and augmenting their financial gain with the thought of interdependence and agreeable growth among numerous companies within various communities (Dyck, 2014).

Financial management is more than simply numbers on paper. It's deeper than accounting as far as checks and balances. It is a matter of noting financial reports that forecast the potential progress of a company based on financial health and development. Forecasts can be made only in consideration of the current situation and elements of a company's past financial practices, resources available, trends, and legal developments that shape tax laws, banking, and financial transactions in which all companies engage. Financial management beyond the financial health of a business also extends its importance into personal finance. In other words, whether one works in financial management for any institution, organization, business, or corporation or simply is seeking to better balance their own budget and expand finances for their personal needs, demands moral fortitude in order to truly be a manifestation, an example of God's glory, that every person involved witnesses. In financial management, one primary drive is to increase finances by allocating capital, matching investments to probable earnings to avoid loss in bad investments or negligence in financial responsibility (paying utilities and income tax correctly, paying incomes accordingly, or maintaining thorough financial health in general) (Chand, 2016).

#### Fulfill the Creation Mandate to be Good Stewards

To exhibit righteousness in financial management, one has to address or define the proper use of revenues in order to generate greater profits with the comparison of expenses versus revenues (or surpluses within a non-profit organization). Profit maximization can only occur following an alignment of marginal cost being equal to marginal revenues. From that point, financial management can move into wealth maximization or simply put, profit that perpetuates



beyond profit alone but in fact generates greater expendable income and profit-based assets with the evidence of dwindling capital cost, thus substantiating wealth maximization. However, if a financial professional solely seeks to discover means to retain and gain more profits but he or she has no grounding in The Prophet (Jesus Christ) then there are challenges that can arise because the focus of the financial authority's actions and ideas centers not on how best to invest or what to restrict as far as spending, but solely to serve oneself or merely to increase funding yet without an altruistic or morally aware approach (Fooshee, 2016). This sort of approach to financial management provides a clear 'playing field' or clearer understanding of the financial stability and needs a company or home demands to survive, and in order to survive in business much like life, one must consider the state of the relationship and the interactions of all stakeholders to each other and the concept of how best to be transformational, avoid marginalization or biased attitudes, and places the health and growth of the company's finances alongside stakeholder needs per strata accordingly (Dyck, 2014).

According to Chand (2016) commenting on James Van Morne's explanation, the definition of financial management reads as a clear invitation to grow if one only chooses to seek, unveil, and reveal God's glory in business, namely financial management. Functional financial management demands that funds flow directly into a specific plan, but which plan leads to such growth that one will always feel relevant, functional, and accomplished depends on one's understanding of what success is. Financial management is a key practice that strategically addresses means to implement a course of events within a company which can safeguard savings and reduce spending while investing in evidence-based or proven plans of action that maintain and augment not only financial gain but financial performance with a steady flow, not sporadic or erratic. Financial management is an activity that addresses operations within a company or

home. How a home or business operates financially is often a matter of sensible mitigation and austerity in relation to negligence and random spending which is wasteful and undermines financial management professionals' effectiveness. Proverbs 21:20 says, "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up" (Fooshee, 2016).

Financial management is a business of control as far as understanding how to limit or distribute resources, rate of business, or growth with consideration of aligning individual objectives that lie in each person within an organization or home and their composite enterprise-centered goals. Financial management is a business of being careful with money, being conscious in planning, implementation, analysis, and application of revised strategies that are not set on generating high profits but rather aligning the needs of a diversity of people. The needs of a diversity of people are the needs of stakeholders. As stakeholders, such people could potentially take losses if financial management is fallible or fallacious by addressing the values that are synonymous among all individuals and then treating the specific changes to meet financial stability and growth in a fashion that incorporates individual demands or concerns in order for all stakeholders to benefit. This is where the concept of an intelligent versus erratic investment or other financial act differs when one seeks to understand the manifestation of God's glory (Chand, 2016).

Financial management demands decision-making that considers the numerous strata within a company as far as how financial changes will affect them individually as well as the company, organization, or institution as a whole. It is a matter of being careful to be considerate of how best to serve the needs of others, unite them, and the needs are all potentially met. In the book of Luke 6:38 (KJV), "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same



measure that ye meet withal it shall be measured to you again." In financial management failing to measure or align the needs of all in order to generate a composite plan to serve most leads to conflicts and challenges in business finance that do not exist ideally within a company or organization where the Christian consideration of the community is the leading strategic standard (Dyck, 2014, pp. 23-62).

The ebb and flow of earnings pending, opportunities, threats, gains, and losses draw upon a financial manager with a Christian mentality to be judicious with the well-being and development of a client or client company in mind. Many times as Christians, a number of business people in financial management who consider Christ first in their lives remain on serving God versus serving mammon. Christ warns of choosing between two masters and how only one can be served, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24, KJV). Mammon is a demon or the very personification of greed and selfishness, placing material wealth, specifically money above all things and all people. To receive money through theft may be an unfortunate matter of desperation but it takes a conscious effort to selfishly ingratiate oneself financially at the expense of others' trust or ignorance of the interworking of financial management itself. A Christian financial manager understands that he or she must be transparent and ethical, not desiring what others have but rather what can be shared or developed through collaboration, compromise, and communication. Hebrews 13:5 puts it succinctly: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." When considering gain at the expense of others, the Christian financial manager considers also the expense of oneself. In other words, serving mammon is essentially serving greed and not God. Therefore, one makes gains in

the material world, but can lose themselves, challenging the well-being of the immortal soul (Dyck, 2014; Fooshee, 2016).

A finance professional with an understanding of how God's glory manifests in business, understands that as he or she advises or acts in areas of investments or even restricting certain financial practices that take into account what habits, decisions, or course of actions either leads to gains or losses, yet never lose sight of remaining honorable, logical, and prudent, no matter an outcome. The flow of equity capital raised from properties or even equity generated in homes, loans or capital gains afforded by individuals or entities such as banks, corporations, non-profits or personal investors demand balanced, fiscally-conservative approach that only demands risks be taken when the possibility to generate further success that does not undermine or challenge the doctrines of Christ when involved in business. Again, being transparent, communicative, and collaborative leads to the revelation of God's glory in financial management. Financial managers have to look beyond their title and the 'bottom dollar' because, in business, a Christian's bottom line is not profit; the bottom line is to strategize means to generate capital while remaining respectful of oneself and others despite differences of opinion or perspective (Dyck, 2014).

#### Financial Foundations Provided by God

A financial manager is the proverbial 'penny pincher' in business. Essentially, by being financially-conservative, companies have more stable finances to stand upon as far as maintaining operation. However, when challenged by competitors, lack of resources, changing marketing and design trends, or even scenarios in which a company faces losses due to complaints or conflicts, the financial manager considers the future of the financial stability of a company based on foreseen outcomes. If those outcomes are fixed on finances alone, then



opportunities to regain stability and exceed in profits following 'righteous' financial management strategy implementation may be overlooked, discarded, or never explored for an easier or more conducive plan of action. For instance, a financial manager who does understand that God is the source of all things, even the concept of finance is lost in the field or will not meet the same success. Success in the sense of the glory of God is not always about winning; it is about being at peace with decisions made and standing by them based on faith alone in God and approaching business not only from a Christian doctrine-based perspective, but the perspective that God is the source of success. Money is solely a result of success. Therefore, taking losses in finances is not actually taking a loss in success; success is the constant in the mind of the Christian financial manager. Philippians 4:19 (NIV) says, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Fooshee, 2016).

Proverbs 8:20, 21 (NIV) states, "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." With awareness (the grace of God) one is open to God's influence through prayer as a means of brainstorming in an altruistic and organic focus on the betterment of business as it relates to the very people who benefit not solely financially but those who benefit from the quality of products, services, or processes a company provides. It is with this mentality one can initially generate plans. Nevertheless, beyond financial management texts and study, the Bible stands as a moral guide as to how to conduct oneself and to reflect those values in professional performance namely in finance since many people of God understand how money like power can corrupt and lead people to iniquities that manifest in gains for some at the expense of others. This is not God's way in any aspect of life (Dyck, 2014; Fooshee, 2016).

The point of focus from a business perspective of the Christian financial manager is to augment profit maximization, but unlike the secular-minded professional, the Christian professional considers the effects of both failure and success on the intentions behind the strategies to streamline and perfect financial management that is cost-efficient and profit-generating. The Christian financial manager does not focus primarily on profit but stability in regards to financial transactions that take place within an organization or home- budgeting. "Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches" (Proverbs 24:3, 4). There is little logic to make high profits but have erratic spending due to poor payment schedules, negligent or absentminded planning, implementation, analysis, and synthesis which lead to erroneous plans (Fooshee, 2016).

Erroneous plans do not specify mistakes. In many cases, mistakes are not where a financial manager fails. In other words, one can have and strive for material success in any business, but the Christian financial manager understands if the intentions of a business, as far as the investors, the board, or administrators, are not aligned with Christian values or simply put, moral values that recognize God or providence, provides the actual source of opportunities, significance of the business, and purpose of conducting such business. Therefore, to align God's plan with a business' financial plan is ideally what the financial manager does with the grace of God (awareness) which leads to the manifestation of God's glory in business finance (Dyck, 2014; Bible Principles, 2016).



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