



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

44 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6NN

Charity No. 1060655

Tel: 020 7328 0869 (Manse)

Email: newlifeplondon@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.newlifebpc.org.uk

"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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Godly Wisdom in the Secular Workplace

Introduction

Wisdom, as seen in the recent global financial upheavals, is a rare commodity. It was the lack of wisdom and failure to exercise godly wisdom on the part of CEOs and their management teams to make right and righteous decisions that had resulted in this recent financial upheaval of such extreme proportion, never seen before.

What is missing is the fear of God

They did what was right in their own eyes. They followed their own hearts and hearkened not to their God given conscience and moral principles. They discarded wisdom in exchange for foolhardiness. They were wise in their own eyes but fools before God. Sadly, the whole world suffers along with them.

We the people of God, the redeemed, ought to be able to do better and exercise godly wisdom in every aspect of our lives, even in the secular workplace where most of us spend a fairly large proportion of our waking hours during the day.

We are called to be temperate and diligent, to use the God given talents in a God honoring manner to bring about a stop to unethical, unjust, deficient practices and choices in our workplace, be it in the corporate room, office, workshop, factory, classroom or in the store etc.

Godly wisdom in the secular workplace is needful. Why?

For the lack of godly wisdom in our workplace has caused many unpleasant, hurtful and uncalled for situations. Most of them could be avoided if only everyone subscribes to the commandments of God.

For Christians, we have a duty to seek the LORD and ask for wisdom to deal with every situation - big or small. For we are told in Prov 3:5-7, *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil."*

Know this. God is interested in how you go about daily in your various vocations. We may think what we are engaging with each day in our workplace is secular and hence less holy, unlike our ministries duties and responsibilities.

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For the vocations we are in are as holy as our church ministries and responsibilities. We are exhorted to serve faithfully and obey them that are our masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of our heart, as unto Christ (Eph 6:5-8). We are to work as unto Christ not unto our bosses. Since we are to work as unto Christ and not as unto men, we need to exercise godly wisdom in our workplace. Also, as salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt 5:13-14), we need wisdom from our God and grace from above to do His will in our daily work, and to be a godly influence in the workplace for the purpose of glorifying God.

Source of Wisdom for the Secular Workplace

God is the giver and bestower of wisdom for the task he assigned to us. On our part, we are to fear the Lord and gladly receive it. For the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge but fools despise wisdom and instruction (Prov 1:7).

During the Old Testament Period

In Ex 31:1-6, we see the LORD filling Bezaleel and Aholiab with the Spirit of God, equipping them with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all manner of workmanship for them to work expertly with gold, silver, brass, stones, timber and all the items used in the tabernacle, the ark, the mercy seat, the altar and the pure candlestick.

Furthermore, the LORD gave the women the necessary sewing and weaving skill to work with all manner of embroidery and fine linen (Ex 35:26, 31 and 35). He also gave all the wise hearted men (God-fearing men) the wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded (Ex 36:1-2).

God gave young Solomon wisdom and understanding in exceeding measure and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore (1 Ki 4:29 -30 and 1Ch 22:12) to rule and reign righteously as the king of Israel after his father, king David. God bestowed the four Hebrew children - Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in a foreign land, under the captivity of the Babylonian - knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams so much so that he was greatly appreciated for his excellent service. He served before Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and was ranked ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in the king's realm (Dan 1:17-20).

During the New Testament period

We can also infer from 1 Cor 12:1-31 that just as in the exercising of spiritual gifts, where the Spirit of the Lord equipped and gave diversities of gifts to believers for the edification of the body of Christ, we are also similarly equipped and bestowed with the right level of wisdom, understanding and knowledge to fulfill our vocational callings in the secular workplace so as to bring glory to our God.

James tells us in James 1:5-8 that if we lack wisdom, let us ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given us. Oh what comforting words from our...

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great God who does not leave us to swim or sink wherever he places us in.

Can we then, not have absolute confidence in our great God who both calls and equips us for the task ahead be it secular workplace or church ministries?

God who watches over us is concerned whether we succeed or not in our vocation. Our Shepherd leads us in the path of righteousness for His name's sake (Ps 23:3). He is our only source of wisdom and we need to acknowledge this biblical truth.

Examples of Godly Wisdom in the Secular Workplace

We have many examples of the Old Testament saints displaying godly wisdom in the course of their service unto their masters or working with the men under their charge.

From Gen 39 - 40, we can see **Joseph** serving the Pharaoh well. He was able to interpret the dream Pharaoh had. He was recognized to be one who had the Spirit of God. Joseph was responsible and was able to administer well the affairs of Pharaoh's household. Earlier on, he was proved to be a faithful and capable servant of Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. He did wisely, ethically and morally in refusing to succumb to the Potiphar' wife's advances even to the extent of being falsely accused of molestation and sent to jail. Not surprisingly, in the jail despite its harsh condition, he too did well and found favor in the sight of his jailor. How could he achieve all these in a tough and wicked environment? It is because he feared God and used God's given wisdom, understanding and knowledge to glorify Him.

In Ruth 2:4, **Boaz** greeted his men in the harvest field "The LORD be with you. ..." He was aware of God's presence even in the harvest field. This keen awareness of God's presence was demonstrated in the way he showed his kindness to the widows – Naomi and Ruth, and the manner he handled his kinsmen redeemer role when Ruth presented herself before him to ask him to be her kinsmen redeemer. Boaz checked with one of his relatives who had the first right and when this relative gave up his first right, Boaz then took upon himself to be Ruth's kinsmen redeemer (Ruth 4:3-9). This was an act of compassion and kindness on the part of Boaz.

Obadiah was courageous enough to put his own life on the line when he took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water during the time when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD in 1 Kings 18:3-4. He was recognized as the palm in the desert. His very selfless act saved one hundred prophets of God. Godly wisdom calls for courage to do the right thing even if one were to suffer the consequence of standing up to wickedness.

Mordecai played an important role in the preservation of the Jewish people. He instructed Esther to seek the audience of the king (Esther 7) to save her people from the king's decree which Harman instigated and schemed to have all the Jewish people annihilated (Esther 3). Esther risked her own life when she sought the audience of the king. Both Mordecai and Esther did not succumb to fear for their own lives but instead they kept the fear of God and did wisely.

We have another goodly example in the life of **Daniel** in Dan 2:47-48 where the king...

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made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel shown to the king he possessed the wisdom from God. He dealt prudently with his enemies. He did not stop his usual practice of prayer three times a day even though there was a decree to punish anyone worshipping any other except Darius, the king (Dan 6:7-10). He was caught violating the decree and was thrown into the lions den. God shut the lions' mouth. Daniel was preserved and his enemies were devoured by the lions instead.

For the **saints in Caesar's household** in Phil 4:22, we can infer that they served the master with wisdom, with diligence, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God. In these, they acted wisely. Otherwise, they may be caught in the hideous web of the palace's politics.

Guides to Godly Wisdom in the Secular Workplace

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye (Ps 32:8). If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (Jas 1:5).

God promises to instruct and teach us to do the right thing. We are exhorted to acknowledge our God in all our ways, in all that we do and say, even so, in the secular workplace. In return, God will direct our paths, our actions and our words (Prov 3:5-6).

In our dealing with people or situation, we can refer to the many precious instructions in Proverbs to guide us in our work place daily.

In the workplace, we shall be:

- diligent and not indolent ; hardworking and not slothful (Prov 6:6, 12:11,24).
- accommodating and not antagonistic; pure not perverse (Prov 6:12).
- humble, lowly, truthful, not proud or high-minded or deceitful (Prov 6:17, 11:2)
- godly and not evil or full of mischief (Prov 6:18)
- peaceable and not sowers of discord (Prov 6:19)
- satisfied and not covetous and go for easy money unethically (Prov 10:4)
- honest, just, principled and full of integrity (Prov 11:1, 3, 16:11, 20:7, 21:3)
- discreet , prudent and circumspect (Prov 11:13, 12)
- merciful, compassionate and not cruel (Prov 11:17, 16:6)
- generous and charitable (Prov 11:24-25, 21:26)
- teachable and able to learn from others (Prov 12:15, 19:20, 27:17)
- patient, slow to anger not hasty and quick temper (Prov 14:29, 16:32, 19:11)
- co-operative and a good team player (Prov 15:22)
- God honouring and not mammon worshipping (Prov 23:4)
- concerned when our enemies stumbled and not rejoiced over them (Prov 24:17)
- contented and not envious of those who gained from unethical means (Prov 24:1,19)
- forgiving and kind (Prov 25:21-22)
- prudent and alert not careless (Prov 27:12)
- knowledgeable and not ignorant (Prov 27:23)
- law abiding corporate citizen (Prov 28:7)

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In Luke 3:3, the publicans were told by the Lord Jesus to exact no more than that which was appointed them to collect on behalf of the Roman authority. While in Luke 3:14, the Lord instructed the soldiers to do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with their wages. The Lord did not say their vocation is not holy but instead gave them the principles on how they should conduct themselves in their vocation.

The Apostles too instructed the believers to serve heartily unto their masters not as menpleasers (Eph 6:6) but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. **This means that our conduct in our workplace shall be governed by the words of God, nothing less.** In dealing with those under our charge and supervision, we are to be firm, just and at the same times merciful just as Eph 6:9 exhort us, *"And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."*

Conclusion

The whole purpose of exercising godly wisdom in the secular workplace is to glorify God and give Him all the glory. Unto God all glory. The Apostle Paul said, *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"* (Gal 6:14).

In the workplace, the chief aim is not to earn money and earn more money. It is not to promote ourselves financially but rather to promote Christ and His kingdom. We are not there to show case our talents and capabilities but to declare and make known to all God's creative power and infinite glory. All else is secondary - to make money for the company, to earn a living, to provide for our family, to attain our personal goal, to better the lives of others, to help and assist other to reach their goals and to benefit society at large.

We must always be reminded like John the Baptist that we are nobody but unworthy servant of our most High God when he answered to the crowds who came to him to be baptized, saying unto them all, *"I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire"* (Luke 3:16).

*Dn Daniel Tau, Maranatha B-P Church, S'pore
(adapted from Maranatha B-P Church bulletin dated 7 December 2008)*

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON
CHURCH THEME: WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR
AND TREMBLING. (Philippians 2:12)

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	Today: 14/12/2008	Next Week: 21/12/2008	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Geraldine to our worship services last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Dr David Allen	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	
<i>Message:</i>	Selah	Properly Appraising God's Ministers	
<i>Text:</i>	Psalms 61:4	1 Corinthians 4:1-21	
Evening			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Joshua Flinn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We welcome Dr David Allen, our speaker for this Lord's Day. Dr Allen is the Senior Deputation speaker for the Trinitarian Bible Society. • Calling of Resident Minister: Continue to pray for the Lord's calling for a resident minister. The church leaders are praying about calling Rev Timothy Ki. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas (knee pain), Maria (ankle and joint pain), Constance (left heel pain), Maureen (knee pain), Anthony (recovery from collarbone fracture), John (recovery from fractured toe), Margaret (sprained wrist, back and shoulder pain), Joy (cough), Joshua (fever) • Pray for those who are seeking employment: John, Constance • Pray for Journey Mercies: Mark & Hui Min (USA), Douglas (Ghana), Hubert (S'pore), Jiak Eng (S'pore), Yetta (South Africa) • Pre-Worship service prayer: Those serving on the Lord's Day, please gather at 10.30am for prayer.
<i>Preacher:</i>	Dr David Allen	Dr David Allen	
<i>Message:</i>	Ebenezer	Fellowship with Jesus	
<i>Text:</i>	1 Samuel 7:12	1 John 1:1-10	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Sophia	Grace	
Other Duties			
	Today: 14/12/2008	Next Week: 21/12/2008	
<i>Ushers</i>	Daniel / Sharon	Joey / Evelyn	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Hannah	Hannah	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>PA Crew:</i>	Nicholas	Anthony	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 19 Dec	7:30pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Bible Study – Survey of the Old Testament	
Sat 20 Dec	4.00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Rev Yeo Seow Phong	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering:	£657.38	YAF: £51.55 Lunch: £35.60	
Memory Verse			
<i>Last Week (December 08 Wk 2): 1 Corinthians 13:8</i>			
Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.			
<i>This Week (December 08 Wk 3): 1 Corinthians 13:9</i>			
For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.			