

# Business God's Way - Book

## CHAPTER TWO - BUSINESS BY THE BOOK

<http://www.compassbooks.org/sample/lesson/business-god-s-way-book-v1-1>

Dave Palmer had been grooming his 38 year old son, Adam, to succeed him as CEO of Palmer Software. Dave's decision to help the leadership of their former company bewildered Adam.

"I don't believe this!" Adam had charged into Dave's office, waving a memo in his hand. "How could you do this, Dad? They stole your company! For the last ten years they've lied about us. Slandered us. Tried every way possible to sabotage Palmer Software. And if that's not enough, you're doing this job gratis? Not charging them a penny?"

"I know, I know." Dave leaned back in his chair, and responded quietly. "Look Adam, it won't always make earthly sense trying to operate our business God's way. I get that." He picked up the Bible on his desk. "But we've made a commitment to base our decisions on this book."

It may surprise you to learn how much the Bible—a book written thousands of years ago—has to say about business and finances. More than 2,350 verses address God's way of handling money and possessions, and hundreds of verses have application to operating a business.

The Bible makes these remarkable claims about itself: "*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and . . . able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart*" (Hebrews 4:12-13). "*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work*" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The truths in the Bible are timeless. It is truly a living book that communicates God's direction to all generations, bringing wisdom and perspective to every situation of life.

When we think of people who are skilled in business decision-making, we often think of "experts"—or those who are older and more experienced. Yet the Bible offers us more insight and wisdom than experts or highly-paid consultants who don't know God's way of operating a business. The psalmist wrote, "*Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies. . . . I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes*" (Psalm 119:98-99, NIV). "*I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Your precepts*" (Psalm 119:100).

***Warning: It's going to be different!***

The way most people operate a business stands in sharp contrast to God's business principles. Isaiah 55:8 puts it like this: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord" (NIV). The most significant difference between the two is that the Bible reveals God being closely involved in every area of our lives, including our work. Many people fail to realize this because He has chosen to be invisible to us and to operate in the unseen supernatural realm.

---

*The Bible has more than 2,350 verses that address God's way of handling money and possessions, and hundreds of verses that apply to operating a business.*

---

The next verse says: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9, NIV). Not only are God's ways different, they are exponentially better. (Just how much higher are the heavens than the earth?) So fasten your seatbelt! This book will transform your business, your finances, and your life as you learn what the God of the universe says about operating a business and so much more. This book is for everyone in business — whether the business is large or small, well-established or startup, prosperous or struggling, a for-profit enterprise or a non-profit charity.

***WHO OWNS THE BUSINESS?***

Soon after starting his first software company, Dave Palmer's perspective of business was radically transformed by participating in a Bible study on money. Not only are we to honour Christ in our company, he thought to himself, but everything we have belongs to God, even the business.

---

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts"*

*Isaiah 55:8-9*

---

Recognizing this changed everything! He felt as if he had been elevated from the role of just operating *his* business, to the most important position possible — a person entrusted with

managing God's business. Dave Palmer had embraced the most significant truth for the Christian in business — ownership.

### **God owns it all**

The Lord owns everything in the world, including our businesses—public or private, large or small. *“To the Lord your God belong . . . the earth and everything in it”* (Deuteronomy 10:14, NIV). *“The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains”* (Psalm 24:1).

Scripture even reveals specific items God owns.

- Leviticus 25:23 identifies Him as the owner of every square inch of land: *“The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine”* (NIV).
- Haggai 2:8 says that He owns precious metals: *“The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,” declares the Lord of hosts.*
- In Psalm 50:10-12, the Scriptures tell us: *“Every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills . . . everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all it contains.”*

If we are going to be genuine followers of Christ, we must transfer ownership of our businesses to the Lord. *“None of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions”* (Luke 14:33). When we acknowledge God's ownership, every business decision becomes a spiritual decision.

No longer do we ask, “Lord, what do you want me to do with my business?”

Instead, we ask, “Lord, what do You want me to do with Your business?”

### **Wanting to be the owner**

When we act as if we are the owner of the business, we often allow it to own us! In 1928, a group of the world's most successful financiers met at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. The group read like the Fortune 500: the president of the largest utility company, the greatest wheat speculator, the president of the New York Stock Exchange, a member of the President's Cabinet, the greatest “bear” on Wall Street, the president of the Bank of International Settlements, and the head of the world's greatest monopoly.

Collectively, these tycoons controlled more wealth than there was in the United States Treasury! For years, newspapers and magazines had been printing their success stories and urging the youth of the nation to follow their examples.

Twenty-five years later, this is what happened to these men:

- Charles Schwab, the president of the largest independent steel company, lived on borrowed money the last five years of his life and died broke.
- The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cotten, died insolvent.
- The president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, served a term in Sing Sing Prison.
- The member of the President's Cabinet, Albert Fall, was pardoned from prison so he could die at home.
- The greatest "bear" on Wall Street, Jesse Livermore, committed suicide.
- The president of the Bank of International Settlements, Leon Fraser, committed suicide.
- The head of the world's greatest monopoly, Ivar Drueger, committed suicide.

When these men originally met in 1928, they all thought they alone were responsible for making their fortune. But not one of them understood that Jesus Christ was the owner of their business, and they needed to operate it His way.

### ***We are stewards***

Our responsibility is summed up in this verse: "*It is required in stewards that one be found faithful*" (1 Corinthians 4:2, NKJV). A steward is a manager of someone else's possessions. We are managers of the businesses and possessions that the Lord entrusts to us.

Before we can be faithful, we have to step back and gain perspective on what God expects of us. Just as the purchaser of complicated software studies the manufacturer's manual to learn how to operate it, we need to examine the Creator's handbook—the Bible—to determine how He wants us to operate His businesses.

The Framework of this Book

Every successful business has four components that function well: Values, Strategy, People, and Finances. If one is missing or weak, the business will not achieve its potential. In this book, we will examine how to significantly improve each of these components—all from God's perspective.

Examine this diagram for learning Business God's way.



It's been said that the best way to finish well is to start well. This chapter has been all about starting well, which simply means embracing the foundational truths that God owns your business and His way of operating it is the best way.



## **Business Plan**

Few enterprises succeed without a well designed Business Plan. At the end of each Section of this book, you will complete a practical step aimed at improving your existing Business Plan or helping you develop one tailor-made for your business for the very first time. Our goal is for you to gain a sound biblical foundation for your business and a solid business plan. The basic Business Plan you will be completing is also available for free in electronic form at the Compass web site, as well as a more detailed plan.

There are no one-size-fits-all Business Plans. On the contrary, the content and format should be thoughtfully adapted to your business. We encourage you complete this with your leadership team at work. In this Section, you will complete a SWOT Analysis. Its purpose is to help you evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to the organization or department. Once these facts have been gathered, it aids in the development of the Business Plan.