

# What principles should distinguish a Christian business?

<http://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-business.html>

**Answer:** Are there certain laws, rules, or principles that delineate a secular business enterprise from that of a Christian business? What are the identifying hallmarks of a Christian business? Are there any biblical guidelines to managing a Christian business?

A recent study conducted by the Gallup organization and the National Opinion Research Centre revealed that 78 percent of all Americans claim they want to experience some form of spiritual growth. Of this group, half of them felt they were too busy with their careers to enjoy God or even give enough time to developing their spiritual lives. And when polled about their workplace, it was found that, when businesses provided spiritually-minded programs they felt not only more calm and relaxed, but were, in fact, more productive.

Additionally, it was discovered that those who worked for Christian business organizations where spiritual values were encouraged were less fearful and more committed to their workplace goals, as well as less likely to compromise their values. Ian Mitroff, professor at the USC School of Business, says that “spirituality could be the ultimate competitive advantage.”

What, then, are the key principles that set apart these organizations that place a high premium on Christian values? Though we could name many, there are three biblical principles that stand out that define a Christian business worthy of that name.

First is integrity. Integrity is about Christ-centred living. It is about doing what is right rather than what is expedient. The organization with integrity will make its business decisions based on the standards and principles of God—righteousness, truth and honesty. That is, there is congruency between what the organization verbalizes and what it practices. No one can point a finger at such a company and justifiably cry out, “Hypocrite!” Socrates (469-399 BC) declared, “The greatest way to live with honour in this world is to be what we pretend to be.” A Christian business is the epitome of integrity. This means “we are who we say we are.”

Second is a commitment to excellence. Paul said, “This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone” (Titus 3:8). If an organization is to be recognized as an exemplary one, one whose goal is to glorify God through its commitment to excellence in its service and product, it must always honour God and be thoroughly

cognizant of its role and mission in a pagan world. Such an organization never forgets that God has called them to be His witness to the lost world in which they do business.

When business organizations commit themselves to the pursuit of excellence, they exalt the Word of God. And as the Gallup and National Research Centre study revealed, they also demonstrate God's power to transform lives, not only through their employees but with their customers as well.

Finally, a Christian business should have a commitment to its people. This includes the area of fair compensation, performance recognition, and providing growth opportunities, both professionally and personally. It has been determined that organizations that recognize the needs of their people and create opportunities for them to fulfill those needs are able to bring out the very best in them. The apostle Paul indirectly addressed relationships between employers and employees. To those who work for someone else, Paul gave this command: "Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:22-24).

Then to employers, Paul commanded, "Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven" (Colossians 4:1). Paul gave this command to employers because, just as their employees report to them, they themselves have someone to report to—their Master in heaven. Employers could hardly expect to be treated fairly by God if they failed to treat their employees fairly. Paul's remarks concerning the employee/employer relationship involve the mutual submission of employees to their employers and vice versa. Employees, too, are to treat their employers with respect and "obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart" (Ephesians 6:6).

In all things, for both employers and employees, Christ should be the model for Christian business, because He was known to be a man of integrity, even among His enemies (Matthew 22:16).