

puts it, the “encumbered self.” Religionists are not simply free-will individuals bound to choose their religious convictions as they choose between McDonalds or Burger King. Rather, people of faith are fundamentally identified by their faith convictions and communities. These commitments are seemingly foreign to the court that Hitchcock describes.

Will religious institutions, as a community of faith, be able to withstand employment discrimination lawsuits posed by individuals? Will parents, as the children’s most fundamental community, continue to be able to pass on religious values, through private education and homeschooling, even if deemed divisive and irrational by society at large? Furthermore, a liberal worldview that views true knowledge as rational and leaves issues of faith to personal speculations necessarily gives religious believers a disadvantage in the area of church-state relations. As Hitchcock accurately explains, the court, by defining religion as irrational and subjective belief may provide the benefits of the free exercise clause to political and philosophic viewpoints, including secularism. On the other hand, the establishment clause restricts the actions of traditional religions such as Christianity, while allowing other “faiths” to escape. This disadvantage plays out not only in traditional church-state issues such as funding (e.g., faith-based initiatives) but also in the rapidly escalating church-state discussion surrounding moral issues. For example, religious arguments made in the public square on issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and euthanasia are deemed less effective and potentially in violation of the establishment clause in contrast to secular arguments that are based on science and facts (i.e., truth).

Hitchcock’s work offers timely admonition to those who are concerned about religion, politics, and society. As church and state increasingly intersect, his proposal offers a compelling way forward: to see separation as governing the relationship between religion and government and accommodation as defining the relationship between religion and culture.

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Business for the Glory of God: The Bible’s Teaching on the Moral Goodness of Business

Wayne Grudem

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2003 (96 pages)

Wayne Grudem has done much to promote the concept of business as a calling, as labor that provides a context for human flourishing. Grudem writes out of a conviction that people who work in the business world are often made to feel guilty because few people think “instinctively of business as morally good in itself” (11). The purpose of this book is to demonstrate that many aspects of business activity are morally good in themselves and that these good activities bring glory to God.

The book is an expanded version of a paper given at the Conference for Holistic Entrepreneurs in 2002. It opens by grounding the entrepreneurial vocation in the *Imago Dei*. Business people imitate the character of God by representing God on earth through various business activities. Within each of the categories reflected by the chapter headings, Grudem shows how the activities that fall into these categories represent unique opportunities to bring glory to God: private ownership, productivity, employment, commercial transactions (buying and selling), profit, using money as a medium of exchange, producing inequalities in possessions, competition, borrowing and lending, and reducing world poverty.

Through private ownership, the human person imitates God's sovereignty by exercising human sovereignty over creation. When we care for our possessions, Grudem argues, we have an opportunity to imitate the attributes 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). The desire to have our own things is not bad and simply reflects our divinely bestowed desire to be sovereign over things. Private ownership also provides opportunities to do good with our resources by sharing them with those in need so that others can image God in other ways.

Readers are reminded that the word *subdue* in Genesis 2:15 implies the good of human productivity. God intends for the human person to work at developing the earth for human good and for God's glory. Manufactured products, Grudem contends, "give us opportunity to praise God for anything we look at in the world around us" (26). Any manufactured item allows us to discover the "wonders of God's creation in the things that we have been able to make from the earth" (27). Subduing the earth is nothing more than doing productive work, making "the resources of the earth useful" for us and other people (28).

Rejecting Marxism outright, Grudem maintains, "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 that employer-employee relationships are a good and are mutually beneficial (Luke 3:14; 10:7; 1 Tim. 6:2). The employment relationship provides a context for mutual appreciation for the dignity and callings of other persons. Employees can seek the good of employers by working hard and employers can seek the good of employees by offering fair wages for a job well done.

Grudem observes that commercial transactions have been a normal part of human society from the beginning (Lev. 25:14). The Scriptures teach that buying and selling are morally right because they provide opportunities for us to do good to other people by providing what people need. We imitate God in the marketplace when we practice "honesty, faithfulness to our commitments, fairness, and freedom of choice" (37).

Profit and use of money are good because they both imply that one has produced something useful for others who desire exchange. Profit not only is an indication that one is making good and efficient use of God's resources but also is encouraged in the teachings of Christ (Matt. 25:14-30). Money not only sets us apart from the animal kingdom but, as a tool for our use, it makes voluntary exchanges "more fair, less waste-

ful, and far more extensive” (49). Profit and money provide opportunities to glorify God by expanding our stewardship, meeting our needs and those of others, providing charity, and promoting the mission of the church in the world.

In what will be unfamiliar language for many readers, Grudem explains how the inequality of possessions is fundamentally good and pleasing to God. After establishing the fact of designed inequality in Luke 19:17,19; 2 Corinthians 5:10, and twenty-six other passages from both the Old and New Testaments, Grudem explains that “inequalities are necessary in a world that requires a great variety of tasks to be done” (52). In this chapter, Grudem biblically rejects arguments in favor of Christian communitarianism, health-and-wealth-teachings, and redistribution policies.

Competition, borrowing, and lending round out the wealth-producing topics. These chapters explain that competition is good because it “guides society in assigning jobs to those who are best suited for those jobs” (62). In the marketplace, competition also decreases the prices of items over time, thus increasing the standard of living for all. Grudem notes that the Bible has no absolute prohibition on loans but assumes them as a way of life. The biblical discussions around loans have to do with the abuse and misuse of the process, not the establishment of such arrangements. There is a very helpful rationale for why charging interest is not only necessary for institutions risking the use of their money with others but also how interest can be used to help other people.

Finally, Grudem reflects on the necessity of moral goodness among the actors in an economy in order for it to operate justly. The moral formation of individuals leads to an overall greater respect of human dignity and an ever-increasing desire for our activities to bring good, not harm, to others, while simultaneously glorifying God.

Grudem briefly explains at the end of each chapter how some business activities have “great potential for misuse and wrongdoing” because we live in a world with sinful entrepreneurs. The sins of some in business, however, should not lead us to assume that all business activity itself is immoral. What readers will find most appealing is the balanced synthesis of Scripture, theology, economics, and political theory.

The worst deficiency of the book (a criticism that is hardly fair) is that it is not long enough. Given the fact that it was written as an expansion of a lecture presented at a conference, it nonetheless whets the appetite for deeper study on these topics from the perspective of God’s self-disclosure. As such, the book is missing a needed discussion of some of the consequences of interference of business activities by third parties. In other words, Grudem explains what happens when the above attributes are abused, but more is needed on the consequences of the suppression of those attributes by government. Grudem promises a forthcoming larger book on biblical principles and economic values, and we eagerly await its arrival.

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