

Good Business Practices and Biblical Principles

Fortune magazine, in existence for ninety years, every year produces a *Fortune 500* issue, an annual ranking of America's largest corporations. Besides listing top corporations, *Fortune* is full of articles on good business practices. Some of these practices led to the success of the companies. In addition, the interviewers for each article believe the information they are providing will help their readers reach some measure of success in their own business ventures.

Little did most of the reporters imagine that these interviews reveal what God has told us all along: biblical principles lead to good business practices.

The following are representative of this truth. These articles appeared in the May 2012 issue of *Fortune 500*.

1. Executive Dream Team: Team Players Trump All-Stars: Formula for a Winning Company? Execs Who Play Well With Others by Geoff Colvin

Geoff Colvin, looking forward to *Fortune's* Executive Dream Team series, states they will be looking for "superstar performers who can work together, pushing a larger agenda than just their own advancement." Uncovering some foundational principles for teams that worked well together and lasted for a long time, he said, "Trust is the most important element in team success." Among team members, differing experiences, ways of thinking and strengths are good. Conflicting values are not.

Biblical principle (Acts 2:43-47)

Perhaps the best-known biblical team was the disciples of Jesus. Only one of them (Judas) had conflicting values although the team itself was as varied as any group of that age. A compilation of fishermen, tax collector, political zealot and other tradesmen (whose specific trades were unknown), none of them were professional theologians. After Judas left the group and Jesus gave these men His great commission, what His disciples accomplished together – even with continual persecution – changed the world.

2. The Way We Work: Want to Move Up? Get a Sponsor by Jennifer Alsever

This article examines some critical differences between mentoring and sponsoring. Ms. Alsever states, "A mentor can coach you, give advice, and help prepare you for your next position. A sponsor will go out on a limb for you, open the door to your next job, introduce you to the right people, and make the case for you in those top-level conversations that could make or break your career."

Biblical principle (Acts 9:26-31)

The Bible certainly has many examples of mentors. Paul was a mentor to Timothy and Titus, helping develop them as young preachers. When Paul was first saved, however, what he needed most was a sponsor. He got one in Barnabas who brought Paul to the disciples and spoke to them on Paul's behalf. It was because of Barnabas and his sponsorship that Paul was able to work with the disciples that previously had such good reason to be afraid of him.

3. David vs. Goliath: Business Cards, Popcorn and Hyperlocal Listings: How Three Small Owners Created Successful Businesses from Scratch by Elaine Pofeldt

Ms. Pofeldt explains her premise in her title. Small business owners, with the right idea, have a chance of success even against larger established businesses.

Biblical Principle (1 Samuel 17)

The title says it all. Even a non-Christian, non-Bible based, totally business oriented U.S. magazine is aware that everyone will understand the David vs. Goliath analogy. No one is too small to get the job done right. Like David, depend on our big God.

4. How Amazon Learned to Love Veterans: Won over by their logistical know-how and "bias for action," the online retailer is on a military hiring spree by Adam Lashinsky

Mr. Lashinsky reports that "it's easy to see what hiring managers see in veterans, particularly the young former junior officers who literally are battle-tested in addition to being well educated." He quotes Josh Teeter, the general manager of one of Amazon's facilities: "They understand that it's not about them. They have a huge running start. They're smart. And they've already met a certain bar."

Biblical Principle (Titus 2:1-8).

Here's where the mentoring comes in. Known in Christian circles as the Titus principle, it is expected that the older men and women will use what they have learned to teach younger members of the church. It is not so much an age principle, but an experience principle. Older men and women of the church have "been there, done that." The principle is good for the older members and good for the younger ones. What the elders have learned through experience, positive and negative, over the years will not go to waste if they can help steer younger ones through pitfalls and keep them from making the same mistakes or help keep them focused on what is truly important. This is a ministry of encouragement and guidance. Just like the veterans, they understand that life is not about them. It is about loving God, seeking His guidance, doing His will and bringing glory to His name.