



SECTION III – LESSON #12

SUMMARY:

This lesson addresses five major economic strongholds we face in our work to build according to God's pattern. In addition, this lesson develops some principles of transformation that provide a framework for us to continually hold our businesses and life practices up to the absolute standards of God's Word.

MAIN LESSON IDEAS:

- In order to bring transformation, we must first discover and disarm people's inappropriate internal objections and presuppositions.
- As previously noted, in a fallen world, recognizing and overcoming the obstacles to transformation is the major work of God in our lives.

Changing Man and His Institutions

by Dennis Peacocke

- I. We have looked at four of the major philosophical strongholds currently infecting Western culture, infecting the workplace; we now turn to examine some of the major economic strongholds to be overcome. Managing both ourselves and others requires clarity on these issues.
 - A. Economic Stronghold #1: *"The Bible is not a book about economics or business and has no legitimate place in the world of commerce."*
 1. We have already dealt with some of the aspects of this lie in our last lesson, especially the theological dualism which underpins this statement.
 2. We must refocus on the fact that all goods and services are produced by people, and for people, which means everything the scripture says about inter-human relationships is the very fabric of *all human exchange (business)*.
 3. We also need to be reminded of the distinction between "facts" (appearances, patterns) and "reality" (God's laws and purposes behind those facts). Otherwise, numbers and much of economics becomes "neutral."
 - B. Economic Stronghold #2: *"Measuring power and riches is the way realists keep score."*
 1. 1 Corinthians 3:9-15 tells us the way God keeps score relative to meaningful labor and success. Read the scripture.

2. Sin doesn't work (Ps. 37:1-2), so "realists" try righteousness because it has the optimum efficiency in the long-run (envy problem).
 3. As already noted in *Doing Business God's Way*, profit is a fruit, not a goal.
- C. Economic Stronghold #3: *"Economics is about the management of resources in a world of limited supply."*
1. Conventional economics presupposes scarcity. It falsely holds to a reality which is dependent upon the raw power of the prevailing currency; a reality where God cannot intervene to either create new resources or allocate them based on spiritual laws.
 2. Scripture presupposes a transcendent economy, that is, a resource base totally under God's control (Jesus and feeding of the 5,000; water into wine) and subject to His ultimate distribution of "riches laid up" for the righteous (Prov. 13:22).
- D. Economic Stronghold #4: *"The competitive energy of the free market is what ultimately drives success."*
1. "Competition" is not the true driving force of the "free-market." The true driving force is the *necessity of exercising choices* based upon the presupposition of what "success" means, in terms of life-style and possessions. Because God has called man to be a ruler (choices), His general laws of nature tend to honor an economic system that rewards choices over any system that transfers choices into the hands of others (statism, socialism).
 2. Kingdom economics is not based upon so-called "competition," though it is closely related to a "free market," operating under the laws and ethics of the scripture (responsibility/liability). The great difference comes from the questions of life-style: consumption orientation driving Western capitalism v. godly stewardship (obedience, service, relationships, and increase) driving true Christian culture.
- E. Economic Stronghold #5: *"God is more closely aligned with capitalism as a system than socialism as a system."*
1. "Capitalism," void of Christian values, creates a debt-driven, consumption-oriented culture of frantic activity. Its dominant positive attribute is the degree to which it fosters human choice/responsibility.
 2. "Socialism," void of Christian values, doesn't work pragmatically because it produces irresponsibility in the general populace. Its dominant positive attribute is the degree to which it promotes social concern for the less able.
- II. We will now analyze more of the major laws of bringing transformation to the men and institutions with which we work.

- A. *You must continuously “run into scripture” as absolute truth and build your concepts, thinking processes, and emotional behavior patterns upon it (Transformation Principle #14).*
1. The scripture is filled with axiomatic truths (God’s building patterns and thinking patterns) which break out into corollaries of specific application; our job is to see them, study them, and apply them (worldview, presuppositionalism).
 2. Epistemologically (the study of knowledge and how we learn), we never “graduate” from studying God and His truths. Our external growth and creativity is ultimately measured at the borders of when we say, “Enough,” and inwardly coast on what we know. *The edge (life/energy) will stop there.*
 3. There is a difference between resting, lessening activity, distributing responsibility, and quitting the race.
- B. *You must believe in the law of cause and effect (sanctions) (Gal. 6:1) (Transformation Principle #15).*
1. The “free market” is built upon the presupposition of an orderly universe with the sanctions of cause-and-effect.
 2. Ourselves, the individuals within the organization, and the values of the organization itself *must believe in cause-and-effect* in order to honor God and be honored by Him.
 3. Most people’s belief in cause-and-effect is highly selective (Freud’s “Pleasure-pain” principle). “Selectivity” here means choosing sin and unreality rather than obedience to God.
- C. *You must understand that change comes from the inside-out and the bottom-up, while leadership comes from the top-down (Transformation Principle #16) .*
1. The world teaches transformation from the outside-in and top-down. This is because it opposes God’s law of “be-do-have” and instead tells us that real maturity comes from “do-have-be.”
 2. Biblical leadership both models and teaches the values to be emulated but understands that it is the gap between the leaders and the people that measures the true condition of the organization. Good leaders don’t outrun their blockers.
- D. *You must be committed to reorganizing your mind’s “bookshelves” in order for new paradigm shifts (Transformation Principle #17).*
1. Transformation presupposes finding God’s ultimate laws and principles and building our lives and work upon them.
 2. Because we are finite, this building requires constant readjustment of the

“bookshelves” of our knowledge. Transformation stops when we refuse to reorder the shelves. Baker’s book, *Paradigms*, deals with this truth extensively.

3. Nicodemus and his crisis is a classic picture of the necessity of reordering our shelves.

E. *Failure is an invitation to enlist the input of God and others* (Transformation Principle #18).

1. Failure, for the unsaved, presents a major ego crisis. In Christ, it should be handled with openness, any required forgiveness or restitution, and the opportunity for biblical input and correction or mentoring.
2. Productivity (faith) requires an atmosphere/procedure-base like this.
3. In such an atmosphere, lasting growth is inevitable because God helps humble disciples and compassionate mentors in the breaking of the curse of single-generational skill-hoarding (Mal. 4:4-6; Ps. 25:9,12-14).

F. *You must be in reality as to where you now are, what must be done to change it, and have a picture as to what that change will look like* (Transformation Principle #19).

1. True faith is built upon reality, not “idealism” (wanting things to be the way they “should be” rather than the way they are). Transformation begins with asking the Holy Spirit to show us what is, without window dressing.
2. Biblical strategy builds from where we are (without “stories”), to where we must go *incrementally* (vs. 90 degree turns), to seeing what the change should look like when we’re there. Without a faith picture, we have no blueprint overview.

G. *You must embrace disillusionment as a gift* (John 3:19-21) (Transformation Principle #20).

1. Loving truth means loving reality and, as John 3:19-21 states, wanting to know the *source* of the wisdom.
2. To experience disillusionment means we were functioning under illusions, i.e., unreality.
3. We must embrace and rejoice in disillusionment, discovering whether we were misled (management issue) or misled ourselves (why?). Reality is hidden behind illusions.

H. *You must look for blockages and find answers to them (seeing)* (Transformation Principle #22 – #21 comes later).

1. Jesus said, “while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear” (Matt. 13:13). This happens because we don’t want to *change*. Most reasons for not seeing problems (blockages) are not because they are hard to see but because our current investments are too dear to us to let us see them (John 11:48).

2. Truly seeing something produces “interruptions” to our agenda.
- I. *Your inner conversation must be in agreement with your outer conversation, in order to act in faith* (Transformation Principle #23).
 1. Words can bury things as well as clarify them. Too many words, or words spoken beyond the point, obscure and weaken what may have been said that was real.
 2. There is a *major deception* of not recognizing when people are fooled by confusing *words as action* (management problem).
 3. Words are action only up to the point of clarifying or painting a picture. Beyond that, they are a mental deception.
 - J. *You must be prepared to give away what you want to receive (the Golden Rule)*. (Transformation Principle #24 – discussed in tape #3).
 1. The “Golden Rule” (Matt. 7:12) tells us that we ought to sow what we desire to reap. This is a law, not a nice idea. It’s the law of consequences (sowing-reaping; Gal. 6:1-2).
 2. Conventional wisdom tells us to relate to others with guarded self-defensiveness in the competitive marketplace. While we are to be “harmless as doves but wise as snakes” (Matt. 10:16), we are doing business *before God as our defense*, not men. *Kingdom economics is about doing business with God first and man second*. We are back to the “Golden Triangle” (God-man-situation).