

Worldview for the Marketplace: AUDIO #12

LESSON AT A GLANCE

“The Beauty of Justice”

Threefold Cord: Stewardship Skills

MASTER PRINCIPLE #12

Man is not “equal,” and economic redistribution cannot make “equal” what God has made unique.

<p>Key scriptures:</p>	<p>Num. 23:22; Psa. 82:all, 89:14; Prov. 3:27, 12:10, 27:20, 30:15; Eccl. 1:8, 4:8, 5:10; Isa. 11:4, 55:2; Hab. 2:5; Hag. 1:6; Matt. 4:4, 20:10-15,26:11; Mark 8:36-37; Luke 12:48, 15:14-24; Rom. 13:7, 14:10; James 2:1-9,15,16</p>
<p>Key concepts found in this lesson: <i>Kingdom theology demands that believers function in justice and righteousness both personally and socially.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christians are expected by God to become righteous and just, and extend righteousness and justice to all they touch both personally and socially. 2. God has created all people uniquely yet He has set His standards that apply to all mankind. 3. Biblically, charity and investing in people are two distinctly different assignments. 4. Biblical economics forces individuals, companies, and nations to wrestle with the question, “How much is enough?”
<p>How each of these four major teaching concepts generally applies to the marketplace ministries:</p>	
<p>Key business applications: <i>As individuals and organizations we must practice fulfilling the financial base required to fulfill our ministry and wisely release the overflow.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God expects organizational justice and righteousness both internally and externally. 2. Being unique or in a “special business or situation” does not place us above God’s laws or man’s laws. 3. Businesses need to practice investing in people and extending charity to people in godly ways. 4. An individual or an organization should only retain “enough” capital to fulfill its God-ordained mission.

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You are called to co-manage God’s creation in Christ.

Romans 8:17

Study • Train • Obey

"The Beauty of Justice"

I. MASTER PRINCIPLE #12:

Man is not "equal," and economic redistribution cannot make "equal" what God has made unique (Prov. 3:27, 12:10; Isa. 11:4; Matt. 4:4, 26:11; Luke 12:48; Rom. 13:7, 14:10; James 2:1-9,15,16).

This critical lesson deals with man's personal and social responsibilities, in the context of both a fallen world ("the poor you have with you always" Matt. 26:11) and a world where God has created all people with certain unique characteristics, and therefore, inherent inequalities.

- A. "Unequal" and "unique" are relative terms.
 - 1. To have more means greater responsibility to both God and man (Luke 12:48).
 - 2. "Injustice," on the other hand, means to deny someone what God wants us to share with them (Prov. 3:27; Rom. 13:7; James 2:15-16).
- B. As we go through this teaching we should remember these major truths:
 - 1. "Justice" favors neither the rich (James 2:19 among many) or the poor (Isa. 11:4, among many).
 - 2. Obedience to God is required of all mankind (Matt. 4:4; Rom. 14:10).
 - 3. God is into uniqueness and individuality, as clearly manifested in His creation.
 - 4. When we try and "help people," if done out of God's will, it actually hurts them (Prov. 12:10).
 - 5. Justice is not about trying to make "everyone equal."

II. Christians are expected by God to become righteous and just, and to extend righteousness and justice to all they touch both personally and socially (Psa. 82:all, 89:14).

- A. As the scripture notes (Psa. 89:14), God's throne rests on the foundations of justice and righteousness.
 - 1. God's standards of justice and righteousness are specifically revealed in the scriptures.
 - 2. God expects His people to be His instruments of justice and righteousness on the earth. We are His "hands and feet" as well as His judges (Psa. 82:all).
- B. Our friend Carl Ellis has made a simple yet profound diagram, which I have modified, displaying our responsibilities to both personal and social righteousness and justice:

	RIGHTEOUSNESS	JUSTICE	JUSTICE ISSUES
Our Personal Commitments to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character • Purity • Obedience • Personal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relational and community selflessness • Biblical conflict resolution • Modesty • Gluttony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gossip • Law breaking • Slander • Unforgiveness
Our Social Commitments to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom from racism, sexism, denominationalism, materialism, etc. • Empowerment of others • Charity toward others • Active citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being informed and active relative to the biblical rights of others • Working to extend God’s Kingdom into all spheres of human life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion • Welfare • Slavery • Drugs • etc.

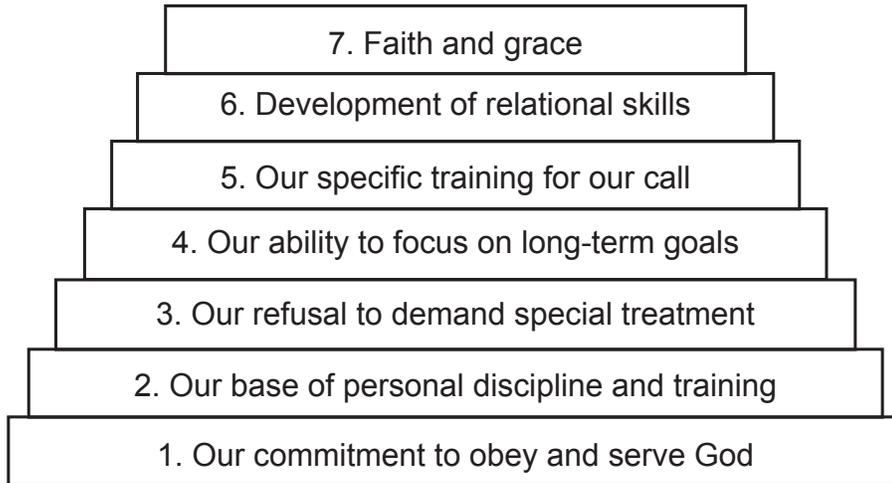
Worldly Deceptions	We are told falsely that “justice and righteousness” are relative concepts: personally, socially, and anthropologically.
Key Business Applications	The truth is, God expects organizational justice and righteousness both internally and externally. Justice and righteousness are as important to God in the institutions of our culture as in the area of personal morality.

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III. God has created all people uniquely yet He has set His standards that apply to all mankind (Matt. 4:4).

- A. As already mentioned, different gifts mean different destinies, skill levels, economic consequences, living standards, etc. Examples: scientists, professional athletes, movie stars, “average people.”
 - 1. Not only do our gifts make us “unequal,” so do our genetic and spiritual heritages from our parents.
 - 2. Somehow, a just God reserves for Himself the right to judge how all these apparent differences work out to ultimate justice and appropriateness.
- B. Beyond all of this, our personal or social inequalities are largely worked out by the following responses we have to diligent work; personal discipline; obedience to God; and relational skills and commitments to others.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SUCCESS



Worldly Deceptions	We are told falsely that “uniqueness and skilled effort” cannot be used to justify social injustice.
Key Business Applications	The truth is, being unique or in a “special business or situation” does not place us above God’s laws or man’s laws.

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IV. Biblically, charity and investing in people are two distinctly different assignments (Num. 23:22; Prov. 12:10; Luke 15:14-24).

- A. In our humanistic zeal toward those less materially advantaged, as individuals and as a culture, we are often in confusion over the differences between charity and investments.
 - 1. “Charity,” which is a biblical mandate, is the act of giving to others without any expectations of return or even “thank you.”
 - 2. “Investments” are the release of resources into people or organizations where the expectation is that the investment will help produce a new level of productivity in the recipient. It may also bring a return to the giver based on prior mutual agreements.
- B. An excellent Bible study is to review all the scriptures related to poverty and giving.
 - 1. Proverbs is full of scriptures related to the causes of poverty and its cures.
 - 2. Cutting people out of their “cocoon” often interferes with what God is doing to bring them to greater repentance and life (Luke 15:14-24).

Worldly Deceptions	We are told falsely that unless we support the poor in their lifestyle, we have no heart, let alone right, to have more.
Key Business Applications	The truth is, businesses need to practice investing in people and extending charity to people in godly ways. While true charity is a biblical mandate, God has enumerated the causes and cures of poverty in His Word, and supporting someone who is choosing a lifestyle of dependence on others may interfere with what God is doing to bring them to greater repentance and life.

V. Biblical economics forces individuals, companies, and nations to wrestle with the question, “How much is enough?” (Prov. 27:20, 30:15; Eccl. 1:8; 4:8, 5:10; Isa. 55:2; Hab. 2:5; Hag. 1:6; Mark 8:36-37).

- A. One of the essential challenges of gaining resources or seeking to gain resources or perceived power, is dealing with the question, “How much is enough?”
 - 1. Jesus makes it clear that “enough may cost us our souls” (Mark 8:36-37).
 - 2. The scripture is also clear that there is never “enough” for people with certain spiritual maladies (Prov. 27:20, 30:15; Eccl. 1:8, 4:8, 5:10; Isa. 55:2; Hab. 2:5; Hag. 1:6).
- B. Materialism and the spirit of mammon demand that our lives be spent on accumulating and using a never-ending amount of things.
 - 1. Our friend and spiritual colleague, Earl Pitts, has a fantastic set of teachings on personal finances and answering the question of “enough with a closed circle,” which we highly recommend for everyone.
 - 2. I also remind you of teaching number nine and the question of “enough” relative to what you can truly manage in God:
 - a. How much can I manage without corrupting my values and ethics?
 - b. How much can I manage without de-humanizing myself and other people?
 - c. How much can I manage without living in destructive anxiety?
 - 3. All of these questions are answered by, “only enough to fulfill my God-ordained mission.”
- C. The beauty of justice is this:
 - 1. God perfectly gives us the circumstances and opportunities to succeed or fail according to our responses and His will.
 - 2. The pattern on the front side of the rug looks very different from the one on the back-side of the rug!

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Worldly Deceptions	We are told falsely that what I fairly acquire is mine to do with as I will.
Key Business Applications	The truth is, an individual or an organization should only retain enough capital to fulfill its God-ordained mission. It is God who gives us the power to create wealth and He expects steward that wealth, whether small or great, according to biblical principles and with a heart of obedience.