

# CHARACTER IN THE MARKETPLACE

## LESSON 1: RED LETTER BUSINESS

*“The spiritual life is the life of Christ reproduced in the life of the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit in obedient response to the Word of God.”*

– DR. HOWARD HENDRICKS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Joel is a follower of Jesus and very active in his church. He has vibrant, daily fellowship with God and is the type of guy that you want praying for you. Everyone in the office knows about his faith because that is just who he is. Joel is a mid-level manager in a fortune 500 company that does work around the world. Joel loves working for the company and it is very meaningful work for him. He does not agree with corporate values, however, and they often conflict with his own Christian values. Joel has applied for a Sr. leadership position. He is overly qualified for the position and has the respect of other leaders and employees for the work that he does. In his interview with the executive team he is asked some very tough questions based on scenarios that could compromise his beliefs and values. Joel answers the best he can according to his faith values. He is overlooked and doesn't even get contacted by the interviewers. After this process he feels alienated and ignored by Sr. leadership. Thoughts of leaving the job and team he loves come into his mind.

**Q.** How would you provide biblical encouragement and counsel for Joel?

Throughout the sermon on the mount Jesus focuses our attention on God's true intent for righteousness as He put forth in His law. He describes the character and attitudes of the heart of the follower of Christ. As people in business, we tend to get caught up in what we do. We set goals and accomplish them. We tend to treat God and His word in the same manner and get focused on the doing and not the heart behind it. This sermon gets to the heart of the matter. It is not so much about what Christians do but more about the spiritual character they will possess. And we will only possess this character by giving up our rights and submit to the Holy Spirit living in us who can give life to our dead hearts and transform the way we think. Rom. 12:1-2

### MATTHEW 5:1-12

The Beatitudes are an amazing account, or picture, of the life of a submitted heart to Christ according to the values of the Kingdom of Heaven. As we read this passage think about how each character element would be practically defined in your life and specifically what that person would look like as a leader in the marketplace. Think also of the benefits and challenges that business leader would face.

<sup>1</sup> Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup> and he began to teach them. He said:

<sup>3</sup> *“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>4</sup> *Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.*

<sup>5</sup> *Blessed are the meek, (quiet, gentle, and easily imposed on; submissive)  
for they will inherit the earth.*

<sup>6</sup> *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.*

<sup>7</sup> *Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.*

<sup>8</sup> *Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.*

<sup>9</sup> *Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.*

<sup>10</sup> *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>11</sup> *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Reflect on each of the beatitudes and relate them to character traits of the Christian Businessman.

- Q.** Describe the type of businessperson who would live out these traits at work. What challenges do you think they would have? In what ways would they benefit this person?
- Q.** Which of these character traits do you find most difficult to accomplish at work and why?
- Q.** What workplace situations have you experienced where living out a particular trait was difficult?
- Q.** What have you experienced when you live out these characteristics?
- Q.** What are some roadblocks that can get in the way of being this type of Christian leader at work?
- Q.** How are we to be submissive and humble in a vicious and competitive work environment?

# SHINE BRIGHTLY

## LESSON 2: RED LETTER BUSINESS

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### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Harvey is sold out for Jesus! He works as an HR assistant and helps with compliance for the company's 530 employees. He is very outgoing and loves people. As part of his natural conversation, he references and acknowledges his Lord in everything he does. There have been a few complaints from some of the employees about Harvey's rhetoric that includes his Lord. Jane, his boss, and the CPO of the company has heard a number of these complaints and knows the individuals complaining are adversarial to the Christian faith. As a Christian herself she does need to address these concerns as they are mounting up.

- Q.** How would you counsel Jane as she addresses these concerns?
- Q.** How would you counsel Harvey as he is criticized for his faith?

### MATTHEW 5:13-16

*<sup>13</sup> "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. <sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

This is one of the most referenced passages in the bible. It is on the wall of our company downstairs! Remember that Jesus is probably addressing a larger group of His disciples throughout the Sermon on the Mount. He defines a Kingdom Character with the beatitudes that only God can instill in us and then tells them how this character will be perceived in this world.

Salt was very important in Jesus' time. It was a valued commodity. Roman soldiers were sometimes paid with salt, giving rise to the phrase "worth his salt." Salt was a preservative and added flavor to food. Most salt in the ancient world derived from salt marshes or the like and therefore contained

many impurities. The actual salt, being more soluble than the impurities, could leach out, leaving a residue so diluted it was of little worth.

The figures of salt and light also remind us that the life marked by the Beatitudes is not to be lived in isolation. We often assume that those inner qualities can only be developed or displayed in isolation from the world, but Jesus wants us to live them out before the world.

*Christ never contemplated the production of secret Christians — Christians whose virtues would never be displayed — pilgrims who would travel to heaven by night, and never be seen by their fellow-pilgrims or anyone else.*

**- CHARLES SPURGEON**

- Q.** Describe a businessperson in the marketplace that is Salt and Light?
- Q.** Jesus refers to Light in the context of a town or city. What does living this out at work look like and what are the challenges?
- Q.** What are some ideas to build a community of “light givers” at work?
- Q.** How does being salt and light relate to the beatitudes?
- Q.** Why do you think that Jesus makes no reference to how we are to become salt and light?
- Q.** How do you know if you are working as Salt and Light?
- Q.** How can you live as salt and light more effectively at work?

# IDENTITY CRISIS

## LESSON 3: RED LETTER BUSINESS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

John is five years from retirement and a manager of a production team at the company. He is well-known as an expert in his field and respected by his team. Jimmy is a 40-year-old Christian on John's team and is quickly gaining a leadership role with the team. There is tension growing in more recent years between John and Jimmy and now the whole team. John has distanced himself from Jimmy and John withholds important communication to the team for himself and leaves Jimmy out of some of the corporate decisions. The team continues to love to work for Jimmy, but John continues to hold Jimmy hostage. Jimmy reached out to John but was stonewalled. Jimmy contemplates leaving the company.

- Q.** Why do you suspect John is unreasonable to Jimmy?
- Q.** What are indications that your work has become your identity?
- Q.** How do you deal with a person whose identity is with their work?

### MATTHEW 5:17-20

*<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

The Law of God for his people was given through Moses in Exodus 20 as the 10 commandments but throughout Exodus, Leviticus, and as summarized again in Deuteronomy, there are a multitude of festivals, sacrifices, and special instructions for cleanliness. As you read these books you have a sense of how overwhelming all these requirements must have been for practical living in that day under those nomadic circumstances!

The law and the other many requirements were given by God to his people to clearly give his expectations of righteous living in this fallen world. The purpose and picture of this law being lived out by sinful people didn't turn out very well and the consequences were severe for them and us. We need a savior in Jesus.

In this passage Jesus claims to fulfill the law. He became our righteousness for us. God views us as righteous through the blood that Jesus shed. But this does not mean that the requirements God gave his people are invalid. These are the things that please God. They are of His Kingdom.

If you really zoom out on all the law, festivals, sacrifices, and special instructions, you will see a common theme that Jesus expresses in Matthew 22:37-40: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”* Every single instruction and command that God gives his people is to help them worship Him and trust Him alone. Jesus cannot dismiss any of these commands as they please His Father. Jesus provides a way that we can be restored to our Father as we do not have it in our sinful nature to please Him otherwise.

Gods people, the Israelites, had a propensity for serving other Gods. This seems to be a theme of the Old Testament. God gave very clear instruction as to His requirements, but they would chase after the Gods of other nations around them or that they had left. This activity infuriates our God. We know this by how God punishes His people for following other gods. We also see in the first two of the ten commandments how God is Jealous and wants us for Himself alone!

We serve and follow other gods and idols as well! It is usually subtle, but we are wooed by the allure of this world and its trappings. This can easily start at work. Work itself can become an idol. We can have idols of control, power, what people think of us, security, family and the list goes on. An idol is anything that we place our trust and faith in that turns our attention away from God.

- Q.** What motivates people to serve other Gods?
- Q.** What does an idol practically look like at work?
- Q.** How do you assess if you have any idols?
- Q.** How does having the characteristics of the beatitudes guard us against idols?

# ANGER

## LESSON 4: RED LETTER BUSINESS

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### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Frank and Harry are two Christian partners that grew a service company together over many years and are close friends. Harry is nearing retirement and wants to sell his part of the company to Frank. They agree on a price but Harry has additional stipulations that make the sell price even more than they agreed on. Frank feels this is unfair but agrees to the deal as he has ideas as to how to legally skirt the additional stipulations and additional cost. Frank acts on these cost saving initiatives and doesn't pay the cost of the additional stipulations. Harry files a lawsuit against Frank for the money he feels he is owed. A bitter fight ensues and is ultimately settled. Frank and Harry no longer have any relationship.

- Q. What shortcomings can you see in Frank and Harry?
- Q. How could Frank and Harry have handled this situation better?
- Q. What potential damage is done here and to whom?

### MATTHEW 5:21-26

<sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'<sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

<sup>23</sup> "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you,<sup>24</sup> leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

<sup>25</sup> "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.<sup>26</sup> Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Jesus has defined what the character of his followers should be and now he is giving us a number of examples of what that character lived out in our hearts and minds will look like. He starts with low hanging fruit – murder. Murder would be the most offensive sin we could conceive and he uses that image to impress on us that when we even think in our hearts malicious thoughts it is the same as murder! We think we are doing well because we focus on our doing and we are not murdering people but it is more about who we are in Christ and this goes to our core. We are all guilty of murder...but there is hope for us in Christ!

- Q.** Where can anger lead us?
- Q.** When is anger good or bad? What kind of anger is this passage referring to?
- Q.** To whom does this passage apply?
- Q.** What implications does this passage have considering the Holy Spirit who lives in us?
- Q.** According to v.25-26 why do you think Jesus would agree with arbitration today?
- Q.** Which beatitudes character traits are exhibited in the one who reconciles?



# PURITY OF THOUGHT

LESSON 5: RED LETTER BUSINESS

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## CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Joe works in an administrative group in a company doing accounts receivable. Larry, his boss and the CFO of the company is a really good man to work with and for. In Joe's mind one of the most appealing qualities about Larry is that he is not shy about his faith – even at work. Over time Joe has noticed that Larry has spent more time with his executive assistant, Jane. In fact, he has noticed that nowadays Jane is in Larry's office with the door closed. They often go to lunch together and come back together. Joe gets the sense they are hiding something, and he is not alone. Sometimes Larry's wife drops by the office and asks Joe where Larry is, and this really makes Joe uncomfortable. The whole group is getting more uncomfortable every day.

- Q. How would you counsel Joe in dealing with his Christian boss?
- Q. How would you imagine these situations begin?
- Q. What temptations exist in the workplace and why are they so enticing?
- Q. What are some ideas to guard against this happening in the workplace?

## MATTHEW 5:27-30

*<sup>27</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup> And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.*

Here Jesus gives another example of a core change in our thinking and who we are vs. what we do. Purity of thought is one of the biggest challenges for men. Period. At the beginning of the sermon Jesus blesses the pure in heart because they will see God! Purity of heart is the gateway for our vision

of God. Our lustful thoughts keep us from a clear view. A clear view of God is paramount to intimate fellowship with Him to the degree that Jesus states our physical bodies are nothing in comparison.

- Q. Why is adultery such an intrusive sin?
- Q. How do we make purity of thought a priority?
- Q. What are some ways that you have been successful in purity of thought?
- Q. What are some practical ways that we can guard our hearts?

### **PSALM 119:9-11**

<sup>9</sup> *How can a young person stay on the path of purity?*

*By living according to your word.*

<sup>10</sup> *I seek you with all my heart;*

*do not let me stray from your commands.*

<sup>11</sup> *I have hidden your word in my heart*

*that I might not sin against you.*

### **1 CORINTHIANS 10:13**

<sup>13</sup> *No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted[a] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

### **DANIEL 11:32**

<sup>32</sup> *And by smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will be strong and take action.*

# INTEGRITY

## LESSON 6: RED LETTER BUSINESS

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### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Larry and Hank have developed a deep friendship over the 2 years they have been in the same CBMC group. Larry owns a growing company that needs more space and is interested in building a new headquarters. Hank has a construction company that is very successful in the commercial building market. They connect on the deal and quickly get started. Due to their trusting friendship and common bond through Christ they don't spend much time contractually and start construction immediately. The project starts very well and things are moving along faster than expected then the rain comes ... and the issue with the beam ... and the dispute with the window glazer ... and the developing crack in the floor. Larry and Hank hadn't really had to communicate too much as their people were doing the work as normal, but now they are forced into uncomfortable and contentious conversations and the finger pointing starts to ramp up. Now their relationship is very strained, and they are talking through legal counsel trying to settle all the delays and over-runs with the building. They no longer attend the CBMC group as they are consumed in this battle and wish they had never gotten involved with each other.

- Q. As their Christian legal counsel how would you advise them in this situation?
- Q. What are the leading contributors to their disagreements?
- Q. What role did their faith in Christ play in this outcome?
- Q. What are some ideas that would safeguard against this outcome?
- Q. As Christian brothers how should we engage in business with each other?

### MATTHEW 5:33-37

*<sup>33</sup> "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' <sup>34</sup> But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; <sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. <sup>36</sup> And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.*

Swearing or making an oath implies that you need to reinforce trust with the other party based on something beyond yourself. We see that God himself makes promises based on Himself but He knows the future and He knows us. Throughout history man has made promises like God but in reality has no control over the future or his own sinful nature for that matter. Jesus tells us here that as His follower and with His character we will just do what we say and that should be enough. We must guard against our tendency for making promises we cannot keep!

- Q. What oaths or promises have you made in your life? What form did they take?
- Q. What are the best ways to assure that your intentions line up with your actions?
- Q. What are the subtle ways we break trust?
- Q. According to this passage are contracts necessary? Why?
- Q. What part does a contract play in establishing a clear yes or no?
- Q. What beatitudes play a part in making promises?

## **RELATED SCRIPTURE**

James 5:12

Numbers 30:1-2

Ecclesiastes 5:4-7

Proverbs 20:25

Proverbs 27:1

James 4:13-17

# CONFLICT

## LESSON 7: RED LETTER BUSINESS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Chip is a strong Christian serving as a manager of a large team that does projects around the world for an international company. He is excellent at what he does and has doubled the team and the work they do over the last 10 years. A big part of his success is due to developing his leaders, and he spends much of his time leading, developing and caring for his team.

Robert was a recipient of Chip's time and was a rising star in the group. After 5 years of intensive investment, Robert announced he was leaving the group to start his own company doing the same type of projects! Chip was very disappointed and tried to convince Robert to stay, but to no avail. Not only did Chip lose his future successor that he had spent years mentoring, but Robert also recruited three of Chip's other leaders to leave and join him! Chip was bitter and didn't talk to Robert again.

Five Years later, Robert's company had grown to be very successful, specializing in the same projects as Chip's company. Chip, meanwhile, had also moved up the corporate ladder and was now a vice-president. There was an opportunity forced upon Chip to collaborate with Robert's company on a large project for a client. Chip reluctantly moved forward with the joint project, but as the work progressed it was clear that Chip was biased against Robert and would redirect blame onto him or his company when problems arose. Now the project itself was in jeopardy and Chip was being criticized for his handling of the work. His response was to double-down on blaming Robert. The two companies parted in lawsuits and never finished the project.

- Q. Was Chip justified for his bitterness towards Robert?
- Q. As a Christian business leader, how could Chip have handled Robert's departure?
- Q. How did this unresolved conflict affect Chip? Robert?
- Q. What parties suffered in this conflict?
- Q. What healthy boundaries would you establish to engage an enemy?

### MATTHEW 5:38-48

*<sup>38</sup> You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'<sup>39</sup> But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.<sup>40</sup> And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.<sup>41</sup> If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.<sup>42</sup> Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*

### Love for enemies

*<sup>43</sup> You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'<sup>44</sup> But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,<sup>45</sup> that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.<sup>46</sup> If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?<sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?<sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

- Q.** How do you tend to deal with conflict?
- Q.** How have we been taught in business to perceive the competition?
- Q.** Why is it so hard to show kindness to the opposition?
- Q.** As Christian's what advantage is there for us to forgive and even love our competitors?
- Q.** What does it take to change how we feel about those who are against us? What part does our identity play?
- Q.** Why does Jesus want us to behave in this way? Who benefits?
- Q.** What Beatitudes are at play here?
- Q.** Why are the Peacemakers the children of God?
- Q.** How can we be perfect? What do you think Jesus means? Leviticus 19:2
- Q.** Does the Old Testament law and Jesus' teaching contradict one another?

See also Romans 12:17-21

# MATTERS OF THE HEART

## LESSON 8: RED LETTER BUSINESS

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### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

George is a generous, Christian man that works in the marketing department for a construction company. Recently, he went to lunch with Chris, who works on one of their construction crews. Chris has had several challenges with his family, and he is over-extended financially in trying to care for them. George is moved by Chris' situation and helps him by buying a car to replace Chris's car that can barely get him to work. George explains that this gift is just between the two of them. Chris is overwhelmed by George's generosity.

As the weeks go by George is approached by the marketing director, Louis, who asks him about his generosity to Chris. George is shocked that he would even know about it but Chris in his enthusiasm has shared the story that has set him on a better path for his family. George tries to shrug it off with his boss but Louis presses in. He asks George if he would be willing to do a short video with Chris and tell their story. He would like to post this story on the corporate website to encourage other employees in how the company cares and go external to influence potential clients and staff to engage with their company. Louis tells George that he has already asked Chris who, in his enthusiasm, has agreed to share his story. George asks Louis if he can take the weekend to pray about this proposal.

- Q.** As Georges trusted friend how would you counsel him in making this decision?
- Q.** What are the implications in agreeing or rejecting the proposal?
- Q.** How does the method in which this gift was given affect the outcome?

### MATTHEW 6:1-18

*<sup>1</sup> "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup> "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

## Prayer

<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup> “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.’

<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

## Fasting

<sup>16</sup> “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

- Q.** What idols do you have in your life if you seek recognition?
- Q.** Is there a time where others should know about your “acts of righteousness”?
- Q.** What are some indicators in your life that would determine your true motives?
- Q.** What do you do if your motives are not pure?
- Q.** What do you do if people figure out that you are the one?
- Q.** What is the fruit of pure motives?
- Q.** What does 2 Cor. 9: 6-15 tell us about motives?
- Q.** What are some ideas you have that can guard against wrong motives?



# TREASURES IN HEAVEN

## LESSON 9: RED LETTER BUSINESS

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### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Timothy is a hard-working, driven business owner who is very open about his faith in the marketplace. Tim is always pushing for efficiency and profitability. To this end he is even a little uptight with his employees and clients as he always seems to have an agenda and is never satisfied. As an employee you can count on having more to do after a meeting with Tim than before. If there is a more efficient and profitable way to do something you can be assured Tim will find it out. But the one thing that everyone knows and even respects about Tim is that he tithes to the Church. Of everything that Tim makes he gives 10% without fail and without fault. Tim would even say that the thing that drives him as a businessman to make more money is the fact that he could give more money to the Church. This may be true, but Tim's employees and clients wished that Tim would ease up a bit.

- Q. What are your observations about Timothy?
- Q. What do you think are Tim's true motivators in life?
- Q. What idols do you think Tim deals with? What are the dangers in these?
- Q. Where does Tim's character fall short of the character traits Jesus refers to in the Beatitudes?
- Q. What are some better ways that Tim could enjoy freedom in Christ.

### MATTHEW 6:19-24

<sup>19</sup> "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

<sup>22</sup> "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

<sup>24</sup> "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

- Q. What are the treasures Jesus is referring to on earth?
- Q. What would these treasures be in heaven?
- Q. Why is it so easy to focus on earthly treasures vs. heavenly treasures?
- Q. What happens when we try to be generous and stingy at the same time?
- Q. How would our attitude of “treasure” and generosity be shaped by our view of God?
- Q. In what ways do we serve money? In what ways does money master us?
- Q. What are some indicators in your life that would expose your true master?
- Q. What are some ideas you have that have worked in your life to guard your heart from earthly “treasure”?

# ANGER

## LESSON 10: RED LETTER BUSINESS

*The spiritual life is the life of Christ reproduced in the life of the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit in obedient response to the Word of God.*

– DR. HOWARD HENDRICKS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

John is the best mechanic on the shop floor. He has been working at the dealership for 23 years and is considered by management to be their most valuable employee. He is constantly improving and helping team-mates improve. He is a Christian man and takes his family to church every week. Some might say that John is a workaholic. He is always the first one on the floor and the last one to leave. John grew up in poverty and has commented that he will not allow his family to live that way. He has already saved enough to retire on and saves every penny he makes and works all the overtime he is allowed. He has trouble even giving money to the church because he is so driven to save. His kids would say they miss out on things their friends get to do, but what they really want is for their dad to be around.

Management has tried to promote John many times over the years due to his influence on the team, but John refuses. He doesn't want to take on added responsibilities because he's already helping the other guys so much. Meanwhile, he constantly tells management how grateful he is for his job as if he were afraid he might lose it. At home, he spends his little spare time planning for any potential crisis his family might face. Conversations with John always lean toward the problems in the world and how there is never enough to go around. His anxiety has diminished his witness as well. He has never shared his faith at work or anywhere because he doesn't want to offend anyone.

- Q. What are your observations about John?
- Q. What kind of personality does John have?
- Q. In what ways are John's fears holding him back?
- Q. What idols do you think John deals with? What are the dangers in these?
- Q. How would you counsel John to find freedom in Christ?

Worry is serious business. Jesus addresses worry directly because it reveals a distorted picture of who God is and how He feels about us. Worry is an indicator of our level of trust in our Heavenly Father. It can lead to additional issues such as blaming others, victim mentality, anger, and a scarcity

mindset. It is a key tool the enemy uses to render us ineffective for the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus knows us so well! He knows the temptation of worry, so He provides a way out so that we might not fall into the sin of mistrust.

### **MATTHEW 6:25-34**

*<sup>25</sup> “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?*

*<sup>28</sup> “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

- Q.** Why does worry blind us to the things of God?
- Q.** What is a person’s view of God when they worry?
- Q.** What does God provide for us to help keep our perspective focused on Him?
- Q.** What kind of person worries according to v32?
- Q.** What does v33 mean in practical, every-day terms?
- Q.** What implications does this passage have concerning planning for tomorrow?

See also Romans 12:17-21

# JUDGING OTHERS

## LESSON 11: RED LETTER BUSINESS

*The spiritual life is the life of Christ reproduced in the life of the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit in obedient response to the Word of God.*

– DR. HOWARD HENDRICKS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Joel became a Christian at an early age and never really veered off the path too far. He has always been plugged into his church, has regular time in the Word, and serves as he has time. After 10 years of working his way up the ladder, Joel has become the manager of a production floor in a manufacturing plant. Leadership of the company recognized Joel's expertise and knowledge in producing virtually every part they make. Joel's mind is sharp, and he is constantly thinking about better and more efficient ways to make the parts. You can see him every day on the production floor mirroring his team giving them advice as how to do their job's better and more efficiently. Sometimes he will call the team members into his office individually and give them very detailed correction not only in their work but also advise in their personal lives based on his observations. Joel means well and really cares for his team but can come across blunt and critical. On one occasion Joel decided to start a Bible Study at lunch for his guys but all he received was excuses. Discouraged, Joel put all his focus on helping the guys do better in their work and increased the amount of time he spent going from station to station to criticize and correct. To this day Joel feels distant and disconnected with his team. This is his biggest concern but does not know how to connect with them.

- Q. How would you counsel Joel to connect with his team?
- Q. What do you think are some idols in Joel's life?
- Q. What do you think Joel's spiritual life looks like?
- Q. Which of the beatitudes do you think Joel struggles with?

### MATTHEW 7: 1-6

*"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

*<sup>3</sup> "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

<sup>6</sup> *“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.*

I bet you never knew that the airlines were so scripturally based as they always say to “put your mask on before you help others with theirs”! When I was younger, I was very critical and judgmental of others. It wasn’t until I was knocked down by life a few dozen times and humbled that I had more grace for others. Judging others can take on many forms in our lives such as being critical, sarcastic, gossiping. It is usually a coping mechanism we use to lift ourselves up and usually we judge people more severely on the very things we struggle with. Having a judgmental spirit can be a direct hindrance to a full and complete life in Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal a judgmental or critical spirit within you. Many times, being judgmental is a subtle sin that creeps in on your life and can render you ineffective in your Christian walk.

- Q.** What do you think would be considered as judging others?
- Q.** Who are we not to judge?
- Q.** Does this passage mean we should not have a court system?
- Q.** How can you remove the speck from a brother’s eye without judging?
- Q.** What are some ways to guard against being judgmental?
- Q.** What does v6 have to do with the intent of this passage? Who are the dogs? What is sacred?

# ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

LESSON 12: RED LETTER BUSINESS

*The spiritual life is the life of Christ reproduced in the life of the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit in obedient response to the Word of God.*

– DR. HOWARD HENDRICKS

## CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Jim works for a small company that produces seat belts for vehicles of all types. He was hired 10 years ago by George, the founder of the company, and has been a part of the amazing growth in the company from day one. Jim and George are both followers of Jesus and the company has a good culture where everyone “does what it takes” to get the product finished on time. Jim started work doing whatever was necessary on the production floor and now oversees the team that does the work. Jim has made a good salary from the start and every year he has gotten a cost-of-living raise. A few years ago, Jim found out from a friend who has a similar position that he is underpaid. Jim has very high trust and respect for his boss, George, and has just ignored this fact trying to be content with his great job and what he has been given already. Every year these thoughts continue to be with him and are growing. Now his attitude toward George and the company are changing.

- Q. What should Jim do?
- Q. How does Jim’s perspective on his situation hamper his actions?
- Q. What do you think is Jim’s perspective of his Heavenly Father?
- Q. What fears are holding Jim back?
- Q. In what ways could George have been a better leader over the years?

## MATTHEW 7:7-12

<sup>7</sup> “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

<sup>9</sup> “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? <sup>11</sup> If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! <sup>12</sup> So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

“I don’t want to bother God with my requests” is a common attitude and tells of a deeper view of God. Our attitudes and actions in the marketplace and in life directly reflect our perspectives on our Heavenly Father. If we are not actively seeking Him and the good gifts that He offers us, we can not live the full and rich life He calls us to. If we don’t believe that God wants to give us good gifts this attitude will show up in our relationships in life. We can become complacent and settle for our “lot in life”. This attitude can result in bitterness and a sinical nature that we project on our families and co-workers. We can only truly treat others as ourselves if we believe that our Father in heaven does have abundant, good gifts for us and we seek Him and ask Him for them!

- Q.** If the foundation of the beatitudes is humility and submission how does these character traits relate to seeking and asking?
- Q.** What impact does the fact that God wants to revel Himself to us make on your life?
- Q.** What do you think good gifts are?
- Q.** Why and how would our actions and attitudes toward others change if we are seeking God and asking him for good gifts?



# THE NARROW GATE

## LESSON 13: RED LETTER BUSINESS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

George feels called to build a broadcast media company from the ground up. He feels he has been given a vision that can influence many for the Kingdom of Heaven through this company. Although the media is of secular nature, he is building the company through much prayer, time in the word, and thoughtfulness about how to honor God through this endeavor. He has already been able to influence his business partners and others as he's spoken to, interviews he's given, and advertisers he's pitched. This is all very exciting to him.

Revenue for his broadcast company comes from advertising. He and his staff are constantly looking for organizations to advertise on his network. George has been contacted by a local casino wanting to go all in on his network! This would be a huge opportunity to get his fledgling company "over the hump" and onto more solid footing. But George has a check in his spirit about this big account. He has some deep-rooted convictions about gambling in part from some negative experiences in his extended family. He is struggling with the doubts in his mind. Could this client be a part of God's plan to launch the business He's given him, or is George just rationalizing?

- Q. How would you counsel George in this decision?
- Q. What questions or considerations do you think George should be asking in this decision?
- Q. How have you made similar decisions?
- Q. What scriptures come to your mind that would help in this situation?

### MATTHEW 7:13-14

*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

There's a road that leads to destruction, and one that leads to life. While the road to destruction might not mean business failure, scripture is clear that it's still the disobedient path and not honoring to God. At the same time, not every obvious choice is the wrong choice. So how do you distinguish between the narrow road and the wide road? The truth is, in business even the wide road can be hard. The answer is simple, it's just not easy: filtering every decision you make by the Word of God. This means taking the necessary time to bring each employee relationship, client interaction, and financial decision to Jesus Himself. He's *the* gate. He's *the* way. Remember, the end never justifies the means. In other words, a God-honoring outcome will never be achieved through actions that take advantage

of others or put them in harm's way (spiritually speaking). Often, you will know that you are on the narrow road because it comes at a cost! Are you ready for this blessing?

- Q.** What is the narrow gate?
- Q.** What makes the road narrow?
- Q.** What are the costs/rewards of taking the narrow road?
- Q.** What are some challenges that today's faith-based businesses might encounter?
- Q.** What temptations might we face in business?
- Q.** How have you been able to stay on the narrow road?
- Q.** How can seeking His kingdom and His righteousness help us in business?
- Q.** What questions should we use to filter each business decision?

# PROMOTING THE RIGHT PERSON

## LESSON 14: RED LETTER BUSINESS

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– DR. HOWARD HENDRICKS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Joseph is being considered for a promotion. The leadership of the company are impressed with the volume of sales he has accomplished in the 6 months he has been on the job. He is very good at networking and seems to be a mover and shaker in the industry. Gary works in the marketing team that supports Joseph and the other salespeople. Gary has seen and has been drawn into the drama that Joseph has caused within the marketing team and even with some of the new and existing clients Joseph is engaging. In the 6 months he has worked supporting Gary he has only seen gossip, agendas, and self-promotion. Gary has already had to clarify and address some promises that Joseph has made to a few new clients. Promises of working out of contract and without a clear and defined scope. Things that the company does not endorse. Gary heard that Joseph is being considered for promotion and he can't believe that Joseph is even still working at the company much less advancing in it. He is torn between minding his own business or ratting on Joseph by telling one of the leaders of the company his observations.

- Q. How would you council Joseph in this decision?
- Q. What are the dangers for Gary in approaching leadership?
- Q. In what ways could Gary influence leaderships decision?
- Q. What do you think are some systemic problems that leadership of this company has?

### MATTHEW 7:15-20

<sup>15</sup> "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. <sup>16</sup> By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

Every boat leaves some sort of wake behind it. A wake boat leaves a large wave that you can even surf on, a cruise ship leaves a flat but very wide wake and so on. You can tell a lot about the boat by the

wake it leaves – its shape, type, speed, direction, weight. Every leader leaves a wake as well. It can be a wake of confusion, stress, mistrust, broken relationships, or it can be a wake of unity, clarity, trust, engagement. You can determine much about the character and direction of a leader by their wake. What does your wake look like?

- Q.** What is a false prophet?
- Q.** Why are they dangerous?
- Q.** What tools or methods have you used to detect a false prophet?
- Q.** How are you able to identify a person's fruit when you don't know them well?
- Q.** Why do we settle for questionable people in the marketplace?
- Q.** What can happen if you settle for a person with questionable fruit?
- Q.** What do you think would be the fruit of a person that has the character of the Beatitudes?

# WHO YOU KNOW

## LESSON 15: RED LETTER BUSINESS

*The spiritual life is the life of Christ reproduced in the life of the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit in obedient response to the Word of God.*

– DR. HOWARD HENDRICKS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Jerry has worked very hard in the last 5 years to build his construction company. Now he has 50 employees and feels he is on the verge of a significant break-through if he can land some larger and more profitable clients. Jerry claims to be a Christian and he takes his family to church every week and is morally a good person. His church is very large and affluent, and Jerry often will network and gain clients there. He truly believes that by going to church and serving the poor that Jesus will bless his business to be successful. Jerry has already seen promise with this strategy to get ahead in that he has secured work from a major client due to the connection with his benevolent work. Jerry will find out what charities the potential client connects with and then give to that organization extensively. Then he does a little marketing campaign targeted at the potential client and closes the deal! Brilliant! Jerry has even had to hire staff to complete the work and he is on his way.

Now, this very client he has been working for decides not to pay him. This payment is critical for the business to survive after all the expenditures and charitable giving made thus far. He has already had to back away from the promises he has made to the charity his client likes. He has done everything he can think of including litigation to get paid and now he is on the brink of bankruptcy. This situation has brought him to his knees, and he has cried out to God but there is no answer. He feels alone and in despair.

- Q. How would you encourage Jerry?
- Q. Why does Jerry feel alone?
- Q. What are the flaws in Jerry's thinking?
- Q. Could this situation happen to a Christian in an intimate relationship with Jesus?

### MATTHEW 7:21-23

*<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*

Some people like the idea of knowing Jesus but they don't want to submit their lives to Him. They want to associate with people who do know Him as these people make good clients and employees. Their motives are not pure because they do not have a relationship with the King. Their true motives chase after fulfilling their own desires by utilizing the benefits of an association with people who love the Lord! As Christians in business, we must check our fellowship with Jesus first, and then out of the overflow of this relationship will come good works for all.

- Q.** When would a person call out Lord, Lord in life?
- Q.** What is the fruit of the person who truly knows Jesus?
- Q.** What do you think is the person's view of God who "does good works" according to this passage?
- Q.** Why is doing things in the name of Jesus not enough to get to heaven?
- Q.** How do you know if you have fellowship with Jesus?
- Q.** How does fellowship with Jesus affect your desires, motives and character?

# DEVELOPING FOUNDATIONS

## LESSON 16: RED LETTER BUSINESS

*The spiritual life is the life of Christ reproduced in the life of the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit in obedient response to the Word of God.*

– DR. HOWARD HENDRICKS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Joe is a driven, 25-year-old, college graduate with a degree in marketing. He has begun his career working for a small tech company that is wanting to start marketing and growing in earnest. Joe has big ambitions for accomplishing his personal goal of becoming a regionally known for his marketing abilities and making a million dollars by the time he is 30. He quickly develops marketing strategies and vision that are very ambitious for the small company. Jim, the owner of the company, likes Joe's ambition and even parts of the plan but is frustrated with him early on because his production and administrative duties are getting pushed aside. Jim is struggling to corral this young buck who has so much promise.

**Q.** How would you advise and counsel Jim in his handling and development of Joe?

We have been looking at the life of a follower of Jesus whose mind and heart have been transformed by the Holy Spirit. This is the person whose character has been developed into that character of Christ. A submissive spirit would exemplify the starting place for this person. We have seen a picture of the thoughts and attitudes of this transformed follower in the examples Jesus gives us in his sermon.

We are called by Jesus himself on a journey of Personal leadership. This is foundational to everything we are, the decisions we make, the person we will become – especially in the marketplace. Foundations are the key to success in our lives, but most don't have the patience to focus on them. We tend to be distracted with the shiny things in the world – the idols in our lives.

We are never done with developing or strengthening foundations in our lives or in the lives of others. The secret sauce of building a business is that when you have sufficiently developed your own foundations you continue developing and cultivating foundations in others. Your business foundations will only be as strong and as deep as the foundations of its leaders. The deeper the leader's foundation the more stable any company will be.

So never neglect or even skip over solid foundations for the allure of achievement no matter how tempting. True success can only come through firm footings. Achievements are fleeting.

### **MATTHEW 7:24-29**

*<sup>24</sup> “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

*<sup>28</sup> When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.*

- Q.** Why is foundational work so difficult to engage in?
- Q.** What is the key to get started as mentioned in the passage?
- Q.** What are your biggest barriers to focusing on your foundations?
- Q.** How do you know when you have worked sufficiently on your foundations? Are you ever done?
- Q.** What does working on your foundations look like practically?
- Q.** How do you help someone else on your team with their foundational work?