

A businessmen and businesswomen bible study out of the book of Daniel (Read Daniel chapter 6):

Daniel was, what we would call in the New Testament, a Christian businessman. His impeccable testimony we find in Daniel 6:1-5:

Darius... appointed one hundred twenty governors to administer all the parts of his realm. Over them were three vice-regents, one of whom was Daniel... Daniel, brimming with spirit and intelligence, so completely outclassed the other vice-regents and governors that the king decided to put him in charge of the whole kingdom. The vice-regents and governors got together to find some old scandal or skeleton in Daniel's life that they could use against him, but they couldn't dig up anything. He was totally exemplary and trustworthy. They could find no evidence of negligence or misconduct. So they finally gave up and said, "We're never going to find anything against this Daniel unless we can cook up something religious." (The Message)

You might say: "That sounds more like the testimony of a politician". Maybe you're right, but business and politics were never far removed in history. Many politicians in the USA, or the Middle East, are an example. Another example is the middle ages when many religious positions were being bought with money. Politics give power, money gives power, so what is the difference?

The difference is if you are a Christian or not. The love of power, for the Christian, should be embedded in the love of God. In short, the love of power should be the love of God's influence in this world.

Daniel's integrity cost him. His rivals couldn't find anything against him and fabricated a scheme whereby Daniel had to choose between God and his existence. He chose God and ended up in a lions' den. How many times have I not heard the same struggle, between God and existence, businesspeople are grappling with? Someone once said to me if he doesn't lie he would lose all his clients. Someone else expressed how he has to be an unchristian tyrant at day, even when he is a loving person by nature and at home, to live up to his 'responsibilities'. Does that touch a nerve, or something you grapple with as well?

Are you willing to risk your existence for the sake of God? Fortunately the way it went for Daniel will not be the case with everyone, however that's a privilege not to be taken for granted. God comes first, just as in the case of Daniel. Daniel's story has been given to us from evil's perspective,

but could have been also from God's perspective, as we read in 1Peter 1:6-7:

Be glad about this, even though it may now be necessary for you to be sad for a while because of the many kinds of trials you suffer. Their purpose is to prove that your faith is genuine. Even gold, which can be destroyed, is tested by fire; and so your faith, which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested, so that it may endure. Then you will receive praise and glory and honour on the Day when Jesus Christ is revealed. (The Good News Translation)

From God's perspective He allowed evil to test Daniel. In the same way God can and will also put you on the spot, sooner or later, to make a choice between Him and existence.

What we can learn from Daniel is that he could also have found a rationalistic way out. He could have reasoned that God has placed him in this powerful position to protect His people, and to pave the way for the Messiah to come, and so an apparent and outwardly worship of the king is a little and pardonable sin for a great and good cause. How many times have I not heard the same kind of rhetoric to justify sin for an apparent good cause?

Daniel was rewarded for his integrity when God sent an angel to keep the lions' mouths shut. Daniel couldn't have known that God was going to save him this way. In the same way it takes faith for us to have integrity in this unjust world, so that when God don't shut the mouths of our adversaries today, we know He will do that on judgement day when Jesus returns.

The last lesson we can learn is Daniel's faithfulness to an unsaved king. When the king arrived the next day at the lions' den, Daniel expressed these words:

"O king, live forever!" said Daniel. "My God sent his angel, who closed the mouths of the lions so that they would not hurt me. I've been found innocent before God and also before you, O king. I've done nothing to harm you." (The Message)

Faithfulness, to an unsaved boss or client (who is your boss), has to be in innocence before God and not in the unjust rule of maximum profit. It is not innocence before God to keep face for personal profit.

Driving it home:

1. How would your testimony appear through the pen of someone else?
2. Would the Lord send an angel to shut the mouths of you adversaries, because of your integrity, or rather encourage them since you're an internal wound in the Kingdom of God?

3. Is God you motive for decision making, or is it personal profit?