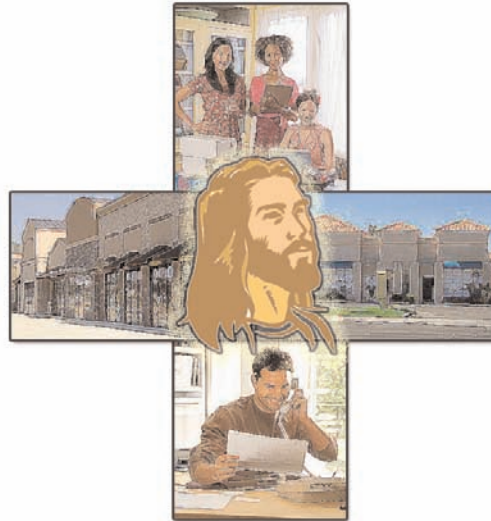


Operating A Small Business-Ministry To Extend God's Kingdom

Followers of Jesus Prayerfully Discovering A Need
and Establishing A Christ-centered Business-Ministry To Meet It

Lesson 4

Your Business As A Ministry



Ministering From Your Business

A business discovers what people need
and seeks to make a profit through meeting that need.

A ministry encounters a need and seeks to alleviate it
through compassion and relief.

A business-ministry serves our Father through discovering needs and establishing
a profit-making enterprise that helps His children provide for themselves.



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Lesson 4

A Business-Ministry Owner Whose Lord Is Jesus

Demonstrating Christ-like Authority and Leadership

During my graduate studies at California Lutheran University I took two courses taught by a professor who had spent 35 years in corporate America in the area of personnel management. He stressed that from his years of experience over 97% of the problems in a business are interpersonal. Very few are caused by company policy. It had hurt his heart that few in management had been trained to deal with interpersonal tension and ongoing apprehension. Many of the owners and managers didn't even know how to effectively deal with tension in *their own marriages*.

The Bible leaves no doubt that our God has established *authority* as a means to forestall chaos on earth. When authority is used properly, interpersonal tension is avoided and people are more able to live and work in harmony with one another.

The concept of “authority” has a bad connotation in many people's minds because it has so often been misused. But our Father intends for authority to be a *protective covering* for all who live and work under it—to find freedom within the boundaries that His Word has established. God holds personally responsible the person to whom He gives authority to serve in the best interests of the people under that covering (see Matthew 20:26; Romans 13:1-4).

God's primary goal for someone who serves in authority is to *maintain shalom*. A Hebrew word rich in meaning, *shalom* encompasses fullness, peaceful harmony,

and well-being. In fact, even the Hebrew letters for *shalom* mean “*authority that keeps chaos in check*.” A wise old adage corroborates the need for *shalom*: “Where tension exists, love doesn't grow.”

Having peace in your business-ministry means that each person who works there experiences wholeness, harmony, and relational safety. There's a loving warmth in biblical peace that's conducive for you to nurture your employees and customers in the way of our Lord. An owner who knows how to promote peace in his business is carrying out the responsibilities inherent in authority.

Certain biblical responsibilities come with the authority of a business-ministry owner:

- to **include** those people or things that contribute to peace and harmony in your business-ministry, and **exclude** those people or things that rob your business-ministry of peace and harmony;
- to **commend** those actions and attitudes that contribute to the peace and harmony of your business-ministry, and to **correct** those actions and attitudes that rob the peace and harmony of your business-ministry.

Maintaining and restoring peace in your business is similar to how you maintain and restore fellowship with your Father. Whether it's the owner or an employee:

1. The individual must take responsibility for the wrong they've done to another.
2. The guilty person must repent. This means they purpose to change their attitudes and/or actions to conform to God's Word in how they treat others.
3. The person at fault must ask the offended party for forgiveness.

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These three steps restore peace and give those who were offended hope for a more loving and harmonious future in the workplace. As a result, peace returns.

[For more on confronting sources of interpersonal tension, download a free copy of our book, *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation*: <<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/books/grtc/GrowingRelationships.pdf>>;

Lifebyte 73. *Stop Toxic Thoughts — Replace Toxic Memories*

<<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/LifeBytes/73.ReplacingToxicity.pdf>>;

Teaching E-mail 19. *Replacing Apprehension With Love*

<<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/TeachEmailAtt/19.Dec22-05.pdf>>]

Authority Requires Gatekeeping: Keeping the Wolves Out

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the [called-out-ones] of God, which He bought with His own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock”
(Acts 20:28,29).

Satan readily utilizes people he has taken captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:26). Most often he manipulates those under his influence to emotionally wear down the followers of Jesus and rob them of peace. Often the devil’s captives *appear* like sheep of our Lord’s fold; but our soul’s enemy uses them to disrupt, destroy and create emotional tension among whomever they’re with. This is why, in the pattern of a shepherd/teacher in a Hebraic home fellowship family, the owner of a business-ministry must be a *gatekeeper*.

As you’ll discover through these lessons, the God-given responsibilities of a business-ministry owner parallel those of a biblical shepherd/teacher. The criteria for inclusion into the extended spiritual family of a home fellowship are almost identical for inclusion of employees into a Christ-centered business.

Whether an individual is seeking to join a home fellowship family or a Kingdom-minded business-ministry, the shepherd or owner should meet with that person as often as needed before he or she is included or hired. If an owner is part of a Hebraic home fellowship, it might be wise for the shepherd(s) to be part of the interview process. Especially find out about that person’s relationship with their parents.

Parents, particularly fathers, are the most common source of bitterness in people. You don’t want an unforgiving, bitter person in your fellowship family or business-ministry. God’s Word makes it painfully clear:

“If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”
(Matthew 6:15).

“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many” (Hebrews 12:15).

Bitterness and unforgiveness are closely related. If your heavenly Father refuses to forgive an unforgiving person and if bitter people defile others, what do you think a bitter, unforgiving individual will do to a fellowship family or business-ministry? If you discern that the person has unresolved bitterness, insist that they deal with it biblically *before* they become part of either your extended spiritual family or business-ministry.

Some of the problems a bitter person causes:

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- They’ll never come under biblical authority.
Thus they rob your business or fellowship family of peace.
- They’ll never let others get close enough to them to exercise relational accountability.
As a result they hamper the cooperative nature of the Spirit in the group.

Your fellowship family or business will never press on into all our Father desires if bitterness is camped in your midst. If you are a person in authority, it will wear on you, perhaps even driving you into discouragement or depression.

[For more on facets of a Hebraic Home Fellowship, download a free copy of our Hebraic Article: *Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations*:

<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/hebraicArticles/ProducingGodlyGenerations/ProdGodlyGen_EntireFile.pdf>]

Keep Your Business-Ministry Free of Demonic Strongholds

A rich man was once asked, “How much money is enough?” He replied, “A little bit more.” To crave and yearn for more of earth’s treasures and pleasures defies God’s will to “*seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.*” Instead, many Christian business owners will follow whatever worldly path they think will make them successful. That’s idolatry. And idols don’t have to be tangible. An idol is **anything you seek more than your desire for God.** Your idol may be recognition, praise, acceptance, hobbies, even relationships—anything that distracts you from loving and serving Him and the people around you (Luke 10:27).

Often these anti-God influences are a result of demonic strongholds passed along in families from generation to generation. We wrote a workbook entitled *Demolishing Strongholds* to help people rid themselves of



these demonic influences through the power and authority of Jesus so they might hear only from His Spirit and fulfill His purposes in their lives.

The goal of demonic strongholds is to destroy relational intimacy and peace in your fellowship or business-ministry.

A stronghold is a demonic fortress of thoughts housing evil spirits that:

- (1) control, dictate, and influence your attitudes and behavior;
- (2) oppress and discourage you;
- (3) filter and color how you view or react to situations, circumstances, or people.

The most common strongholds we’ve noticed among Christian business owners are Idolatry & Worldliness, Fear & Insecurity, and Control. Demonic strongholds induce business owners to establish unbiblical goals and methods. They also entice them into sinful ways of thinking that keep them from experiencing God’s blessings.

[For a list of other demonic strongholds that may be affecting your personal and business life, see our workbook, *Demolishing Strongholds*, a free download.

<<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/books/dms/DemolishingRevision.pdf>>

or shorter article, *Demolishing Your Strongholds*.

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<<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/hebraicArticles/DemolishingYourStrongholds.pdf>>

and Lifebyte 73. *Stop Toxic Thoughts—Replace Toxic Memories*

<<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/LifeBytes/73.ReplacingToxicity.pdf>>].

Leading a Business-Ministry By Reproducing Yourself in Others

Take a Lesson from the Pelicans

Our Father told us that our ministry would serve a threefold purpose:

1. **To share** the Hebraic foundations.
2. **To lead** in a biblical manner that is apart from institutionalism. (I had a hard time with this one because *leadership* in Christendom often means control and domination—decidedly un-Christlike qualities.)
3. **To contend for Jesus** in the midst of so many who call themselves “Christian” but do nothing to serve the Kingdom purposes of our Lord.

Mike: A few days after our Father’s command to us to lead, I walked out to a beach in North Carolina at dawn. I was seeking to understand what He meant by leading. As I was standing on a dune overlooking the ocean I experienced a wonderful time of prayer and thanksgiving. Then an insight into *leading* came to me.

As I looked down the beach at the rising sun I saw a trio of pelicans flying toward me a couple minutes away from where I was standing. The wind was coming from the ocean, and the pelican in front was leading the others over rooftop to rooftop using the updraft from the buildings to make their flight down the beach easier.

Shortly after that group passed, another flight of 3 came winging along the shore following the exact same track as the first three. I heard an inner voice: “The leader of the first

group of pelicans had taught the second leader how to catch the updraft from the roofs.”

A short time later a much larger flight of pelicans (25+) came overhead following the same path as the two smaller flights. It was then that the Lord enabled me to grasp the nature of the leading He wanted. Leading wasn’t ecclesiastical; rather it entailed role modeling a Kingdom way of life for others—*something they could see and do themselves.*

As an owner of a business-ministry you are putting yourself on the frontline of not only representing Jesus but also reproducing yourself in the lives of others so they too may be equipped to lead. This is the essence of true biblical leadership. It can’t be taught; it must be acquired. Studies show that people are transformed most by having others they respect role model a Christlike way of life for them. This is what our Lord Jesus wants of a business-ministry owner who bears His name.

A Business-Ministry Owner Needs to be Open-handed

Like the parable vineyard owner, a business-ministry owner sees himself as our Father’s frontline in not only reconciling the world to Him but also in representing His concern for the well-being of others. Again like the vineyard owner, a business-ministry owner is His means to provide employees their livelihood. Stinginess has no place here. Generosity must be the hallmark of an owner’s regard for those who work for him or her.

You may find that even outside the business-ministry are opportunities to give others a helping hand. Throughout the Bible our God shows His care for the poor, the widow and the alien. In Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus announces several practical ways in which we as His people

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can demonstrate authentic love to others. These ways become the criteria for His judgment when we stand before His throne:

“I tell you the truth, **whatever you did** for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me” (v.40).

“I tell you the truth, **whatever you did not do** for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me” (v.45).

Being alert to help those who can't help themselves is one of many biblical goals for the owner of a business-ministry. It's what the vineyard owner did for his workers. And, it was demonstrated by Boaz as he helped Ruth and Naomi when they were in need (Ruth 2). This wealthy landowner didn't just offer charity; instead, he facilitated Ruth earning her own provision. And because this man poured his love into his actions, their resulting union produced a lineage that leads all the way to the human heritage of our Lord Jesus.

The Hebrew Scriptures overflow with commands to meet the needs of one another out of obedient trust in the God Who Provides—*Jehovah Jireh* (see Genesis 22:8). Good deeds of practical kindness were a hallmark of Hebraic daily life. The “righteousness [that] delivers from death” (see Proverbs 10:2, 11:4) was no abstract concept but rather a deliberate donation of material goods to meet real needs. The Hebrew word for righteousness means “acts of right or justice.” That translates into compassionate benevolence.

It isn't enough before our Lord to parcel out a little to someone so you can feel self-righteous and still have more for extras yourself. The help you measure out to help others will be poured out to you as a blessing (Luke 6:38). It really is a heart issue; is yours bountiful or stingy?

Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land” (Deuteronomy 15:10,11).

From a Hebraic standpoint, to love God was to love your fellow man in a way that met his needs. Jesus warns us to keep everything we have in open hands. We are stewards of what He's given us, not owners. Consider the motive behind your giving. Tightly clinging to what you have reveals a darkness that may snuff out your light:

“‘The eye is the lamp of the body.’ So if you have a ‘good eye’ [if you are generous] your whole body will be full of light; but if you have an ‘evil eye’ [if you are stingy] your whole body will be full of darkness. If, then, the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:22,23).

A business-ministry owner with a “good eye” has a clear understanding that *Jehovah Jireh* is the only Provider. The business-ministry is His means of distributing His provision. In this light, the owner has more of a sense of being God's servant than of owning the business. Blessing people rather than seeking riches is the righteous driving force behind a godly owner's motives. The generous heed our Lord's warning: “It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for those who trust in riches to enter the Kingdom of God” (Mark 10:25).

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Putting Your Business-Ministry on the Frontlines of the Kingdom

Most business owners wouldn't connect the description of a righteous older woman in Proverbs 31:10-31 with how they should view their business. But compare some of her actions and character qualities with those of a business-ministry owner in Christ:

- “*She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night*” (vv.16-18). [She's wise rather than impulsive, and doesn't give way to laziness. She keeps in shape, has a right regard for the value of her wares, and doesn't waste time on frivolous activities.]
- “*She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy*” (v.20). [She takes the initiative to meet the needs of those around her with a compassionate heart.]
- “*She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes*” (v.24). [She's creative and industrious, and seeks out favorable markets for her quality goods.]
- “*She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come*” (v.25). [Her character is important to her; because of her trust in God she has no fear of the future.]
- “*She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue*” (v.26). [She has

learned much about living for God over the years and is eager to share with others His perspective and testimony of His faithfulness.]

This woman is a role model on the frontlines of representing God to all who know her. If you treat your business-ministry as your Lord's, then you too must see yourself as His point person on the frontlines representing Him. You must be adamant in seeking His guidance and searching His Word, and He'll keep His promise and prosper you in a number of ways.

Go back over the various points in these lessons and begin to develop your own business manual that will guide you according to His Word. With His Spirit's guidance establish *halakhahs*, biblical applications that will direct your motives and actions into how to glorify God. Your personal *halakhahs* will also guide you into how to treat others—employees, customers, and other business personnel.

Develop a biblical basis for how you deal with money. You'll want to keep yourself from greed and open yourself to generosity. And in everything, do to others what you would have them do for you. In our next lesson we'll discuss in depth the issue of biblical applications and how to confirm God's will.

[For more on being on the frontlines in making disciples, see our Hebraic Article, *Abraham, the Father of Discipleship*:

<<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/hebraicArticles/AbrahamDiscipleship.pdf>>]

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Questions to Consider and Discuss

- **What has been your personal response to the concept of authority? Do you see those in authority as God’s means to maintain and restore peace? If not, why not?**
- **What is your firsthand experience with gatekeeping? Have you had to exclude or correct anyone for acting in an unbiblical manner? If you have, how did you feel?**
- **Is the concept of demonic forces out to destroy relationships and disrupt peace new to you? Can you discern any situations where you can see how they might have done this to people around you in the past?**
- **How do you feel about the description of leading as reproducing yourself in others? Has this been a primary focus in your own life?**
- **Do you stand up for Jesus when the opportunity arises? Do you cringe when others mock you for identifying with Him?**
- **Are you an open-handed person? Do those who know you well consider you a generous person who puts the needs of others ahead of your own?**
- **Do the character qualities of the Proverbs 31 woman describe you? Do you radiate the love of Jesus to others?**