

GOD & BUSINESS: SESSION EIGHT

PURPOSE

Welcome! We are meeting together to discover and discuss any connections we see between spirituality and vocation. Although our study will flow from a Christian worldview, we welcome perspectives from other faith and non-faith traditions. What we do with our bodies and our lives, our *vocation*, matters deeply. We will explore how our vocation can be a participation in God's work of renewing all things and how vocation is related to the career we are pursuing.

GATHERING (5 MINUTES)

- Which next step did you try after our last study?
- How did it go?
- What did you learn about yourself, humanity, or God?

WARM-UP (15 MINUTES)

Check out the content on this site (5 minutes):

[What's Hard and What's Exciting about Business](#)

- What do you appreciate about this content?
- What do you disagree with? What makes you wonder?



SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES)

Today we will look at a passage from the book of Acts, which Luke wrote as a continuation of his account about the ministry of Jesus. Before this section, Luke writes that Paul, once a persecutor of the Jesus-followers but now one of the most influential proclaimers of Jesus, had been teaching in the city of Ephesus for over two years. Many came to believe in Jesus as Paul taught and performed miracles and healings, and they burned all their sorcery scrolls and stopped buying idols to show that they were now followers of Jesus.

ACTS 19:23-41 (NLT)

²³About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way. ²⁴It began with Demetrius, a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis. He kept many craftsmen busy. ²⁵He called them together, along with others employed in similar trades, and addressed them as follows:

"Gentlemen, you know that our wealth comes from this business. ²⁶But as you have seen and heard, this man Paul has persuaded many people that handmade gods aren't really gods at all. And he's done this not only here in Ephesus but throughout the entire province! ²⁷Of course, I'm not just talking about the

loss of public respect for our business. I'm also concerned that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will lose its influence and that Artemis—this magnificent goddess worshiped throughout the province of Asia and all around the world—will be robbed of her great prestige!"

²⁸ At this their anger boiled, and they began shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ²⁹ Soon the whole city was filled with confusion. Everyone rushed to the amphitheater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, who were Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia. ³⁰ Paul wanted to go in, too, but the believers wouldn't let him. ³¹ Some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, also sent a message to him, begging him not to risk his life by entering the amphitheater.

³² Inside, the people were all shouting, some one thing and some another. Everything was in confusion. In fact, most of them didn't even know why they were there.

³³ The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander forward and told him to explain the situation. He motioned for silence and tried to speak. ³⁴ But when the crowd realized he was a Jew, they started shouting again and kept it up for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

³⁵ At last the mayor was able to quiet them down enough to speak. "Citizens of Ephesus," he said. "Everyone knows that Ephesus is the official guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, whose image fell down to us from heaven. ³⁶ Since this is an undeniable fact, you should stay calm and not do anything rash. ³⁷ You have brought these men here, but they have stolen nothing from the temple and have not spoken against our goddess.

³⁸ "If Demetrius and the craftsmen have a case against them, the courts are in session and the officials can hear the case at once. Let them make formal charges.

³⁹ And if there are complaints about other matters, they can be settled in a legal assembly. ⁴⁰ I am afraid we are in danger of being charged with rioting by the Roman government, since there is no cause for all this commotion. And if Rome demands an explanation, we won't know what to say." ⁴¹ Then he dismissed them, and they dispersed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you appreciate about this content?
- What makes you wonder?
- What do you disagree with?
- The town is in uproar over the recent events. What values are in conflict? How are various people impacted – the local citizens, the craftsmen, and the followers of Jesus? What is at stake for each community?
- What challenges do modern business leaders face as they try to profit while also responding to realities in their communities?

NEXT STEPS (5 MINUTES)

Which next step could you take based on our discussion today?

Perspective – Create, write, or buy something that will remind you to put people and integrity ahead of profit as you engage in the challenge and adventure of business.

Engagement – Reflect honestly on your understanding and philosophy around profit in business. What does your philosophy reveal about your values? Are there any experiences in your past that are influencing your current business values (for example, experiences of poverty, excess, misused finances, etc.)? Consider ways you can seek healing and health in the connection between your past experiences and your business values. This might mean finding a therapist or trusted mentor you can talk with.

Investment – Ask a friend who also studies business or works in business to meet regularly and talk about integrity and profit. During your first meeting, share your values, areas you want to grow in, and your ideas for what it could look like to hold one another accountable to the values you hope to carry in business. Make a plan for what questions it would be good to ask one another each time you meet. Commit to confidentiality and honesty. You could also include prayer and Scripture in these meetings, if you would like.

HELP US MAKE THIS BETTER!

[PLEASE PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THIS STUDY](#)