

Sales 100: Integrity of the Heart

I found a little book while browsing in the bookstore of a Christian university entitled Selling 101. The author is Zig Ziglar, an internationally-known seminar speaker who is also a professing Christian. I was curious, especially since I planned to write this business study on the topic of selling. Mr. Ziglar wrote a helpful, very readable book that summarizes nicely the “craftsmanship” of selling. The principles are the same ones, just with different words, which I learned in sales training years ago, and they are essentially the same ideas that I’ve seen over and over again in books and articles written about selling. There seems to be an interesting unity of thought on the subject which I commend to your professional study. There is nothing unbiblical about these principles, nor is there anything uniquely Christian about them either.

Shortly after reading this book, my wife and I met with a salesman to discuss a new roof for our home. I recognized that this man was superbly trained in these sales techniques, yet we purchased the roof in spite of him, not because of him. Donna and I discussed this later and determined that he (1) had poor listening skills (he kept missing our cues to adapt his presentation to what we wanted to know), (2) talked too much, (3) lacked sincerity and a true interest in our needs versus his needs, (4) violated the biblical principle of equal weights and measures (I had to negotiate and insist on the discount that he was authorized to give if he needed it to close the sales) and (5) he was so aggressive in his closing attempts that I had to threaten him with losing the sale altogether if he didn’t stop and leave and let me think about it.

I searched the Scriptures for instruction and examples of godly selling, but with the exception of the pricing principle of equal weights and measures that we studied carefully in the marketing series, I found little. There are many neutral references to buying and selling in the Bible, indicating that private property and commerce in the marketplace is a natural part of God’s design for meeting needs, and there are several negative references to merchants regarding greed and deception. But I could find virtually no instruction on how to do it in a godly manner!

I have seen business books in the Christian bookstore espousing Jesus as CEO and other such titles, but Jesus as the Master Salesman? The thought of a book or study with this premise frankly repulsed me. The only thing Jesus came to sell was His own life for the redemption of mankind, and He gave it away!

Since the Bible promises that it contains all the truth that we need to be adequate and equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:2-3), and since selling is a God-ordained activity for men called to minister in the workplace, I concluded that I needed to keep digging for the truths on selling and salesmanship. This 2-part study entitled Sales 100 – the prerequisite course for Sales 101 - is the result of that digging. I pray that you experience the same joy of discovery! So get your spiritual spade and let’s dig in!

I'd like to start by defining terms and summarizing what we studied earlier¹. For the purposes of this study, when I talk about **selling** I am referring to the **process of converting a prospect into a customer**. The purpose of marketing is to produce prospects for the sales team to convert into customers. A prospect is not a lead – which I refer to as a “suspect” – but rather a person who has met pre-established criteria.

What should these marketing criteria be? We discovered from God's Word that we should market our products and services to people who will benefit the most from them. **Usefulness** is the number one criteria. (Read from your Bible Ephesians 4:28).

We also discovered other parameters that define **legitimate business in God's eyes** – legality, morality and edification. Is any aspect of your product or process illegal? Is your product moral according to God's Word? Will its purchase and use edify a person in his/her spiritual journey or become a stumbling block? (Read from your Bible Romans 13:1-7, Ephesians 5:3-11, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13)

Another marketing criterion is **truth telling**, which is more than the absence of lying. Truth-telling is making known all the facts a person needs to make a wise and informed decision. (Read from your Bible Revelations 22:15, Exodus 20:16, Leviticus 19:11, Proverbs 6:16-19, Colossians 3:9)

Sin appeal is a powerful marketing tool – overtly arousing our sin nature passions for pleasure, possessions and position. Our marketing should avoid this, following the parameters outlined in Philippians 4:8 instead. (Read from your Bible 1 John 2:15-17, Philippians 4:8)

Thus, a biblically-based marketing strategy will produce prospects with this criteria:

- Your product or service will be truly useful to them.
- Your product or service will not harm or hinder them morally, spiritually.
- They were not deceived or misled in any way about your product or service.
- Their sin nature was not unduly aroused causing them to be interested in your product or service for ungodly reasons.

Now the selling process begins!

¹ Business Inductive Study Series: Market Selection, Pricing for Profitability, Equal Weights and Measures and Sin Appeal

Psalm 78:72

72 So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, And guided them with his skillful hands.

Philippians 1:21-2:13

21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.

23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

25 And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

26 so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and

*Leader: Read Psalm 78:72 and have the group say aloud and mark **integrity** and **skillful**.*

This verse refers to David and his leadership of God's people. Compare and contrast the two characteristics of his leadership.

The one thing that customers have always rated highest in the sales world is **trust**, which is a direct reflection on the **integrity** of the individual. The primary reason people will choose not to buy from you is lack of trust. (Ziglar, p. 12)

We are going to study carefully an important passage in Philippians to understand the **integrity of a Christian salesman's heart**.

Paul is writing to believers in Philippi from prison, a persecuted missionary writing a letter to one of his sending churches.

Leader: Read Philippians 1:21-2:13 and then give the group a few minutes to study the passage and answer the following questions on their own.

OBSERVE / DISCUSS

Find the first exhortation in verse 1:27 and write it down.

What is the significance of "only" at the beginning of verse 1:27? Refer back to the preceding verses for context.

see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 in no way alarmed by [your] opponents-- which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that [too], from God. 29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear [to be] in me.

2:1 If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;

4 do not [merely] look out for your own personal interests, but also for

In verses 1:27-30, how does Paul explain what it means to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ?

Leader: Check on progress and discuss the group's observations. Then ask the group to continue working on their own.

What is the exhortation in verse 2:2?

How does Paul explain in verses 2:2-4 how to make his joy complete?

What kind of attitude were they to have (verses 2:5-11)? The Greek word translated "attitude" means to have the same mind, will and affections, to think the same as, to want the same things.

Describe from the passage what Jesus' attitude should look like in your life.

Jesus' Attitude	Our Attitude

How does Paul wrap up this section in 2:12-13? Relate this to the first exhortation in 1:27.

the interests of others.

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, [and] being made in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for [His] good pleasure.

Leader: Check on progress and discuss the group's observations.

Now, let's drill down and take a closer look at Philippians 2:3-4. Outline these two verses in this chart.

Do not	BUT	Do

Relate these verses, and those following regarding our attitude, to the heart of a Christian salesman. Write out in your own words how you can **walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ** as a salesman in the workplace.

Since the context of this Philippians passage is instruction to believers regarding their relationship with other believers (being of the same mind ... unity of purpose ... etc), does this really apply to our business in the marketplace?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

Agape love is sacrificial, unconditional, volitional love that always looks out for the best interests of the other person. Since Christ demonstrated this kind of love towards us while we were still yet sinners (Romans 5:8), is our agape love limited to other believers?

Leader: Ask someone to read from their Bible 1 John 4:7-21.

1 John was written to encourage believers that they can know for sure that they are saved (stated clearly in 1 John 5:13). John explains that the evidence of salvation (changed heart) is a changed attitude which results in the changed life.

Based on 1 John chapter 4 which we just read and our study of Philippians, what evidence of salvation might we look for in the life of the Christian salesman?

What is the opposite of looking out for the interests of others?

*Leader: Read Proverbs 28:22 and mark and say aloud **evil eye**.*

Proverbs 28:22

22 A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth, and does not know that what he wants will come upon him.

The word translated "hastens" means to tremble, to be disturbed. The NIV says "eager to get rich," but I believe the idea is really being anxious, driven out of fear, obsessed with not having enough, obsessed with a compelling desire to have more. The description of this man as having an **evil eye** tells us that his pursuit of wealth is the outward reflection of an inner attitude. He is constantly looking for opportunities to gain more. A man like this sees every relationship, every encounter, and every transaction as a means to his ends. And what is the result of this?



Okay, it is time to take an eye test. Read the following verses from your Bible and list what you learn about men who apparently have such an **evil eye**, and men who do not, and then evaluate your spiritual eyesight.

Reference	Description	Does this describe you? Yes/No
Jude 1:14-16		
Proverbs 28:21		
Ecclesiastes 5:10-13		
Psalm 27:1-2		
Proverbs 23:6-8		
Proverbs 17:11		
Proverbs 6:16-19		
Ecclesiastes 4:8		
Proverbs 27:20		
1 John 2: 15-17		
Matthew 6:25-34		
Proverbs 22:9		
Hebrews 12:1-2		
2 Corinthians 4:16-18		
Mathew 6:19-24		

How did you do?

Do you have 20/20 spiritual vision? If not, are you spiritually near-sighted – unable to focus clearly on eternal things, making all of your decisions based on temporal things, immediate needs and desires and concerns? Or perhaps you are spiritually far-sighted, unable to see God's plans and purposes in everyday life, in daily decisions at work, always swinging for spiritual homeruns and not getting on base very often. (Sorry, I am writing this just as a new baseball season is getting started!)

Have you ever been on the receiving end of a salesman with an evil eye? Have you ever been such a salesman? Take a moment or two to prayerfully reflect upon that last question.

Contrast this man's heart with the heart of a godly salesman. What is each of them respectively seeking?

Let's recap what we've discovered thus far.

- Christians, followers of Jesus Christ, are supposed to have the same attitude towards others that Jesus demonstrated.
- This means that we are to always look out for the best interests of others, even over our own if necessary, in all areas of our lives including what we do for a living.
- Thus, the Christian sales person should have the attitude of Christ, looking out for the best interests of our customers, even over our own if necessary.
- This changed attitude, this changed approach in the marketplace is in fact evidence that we are saved, that we are a new creation, that we will spend eternity in heaven.

Do not fret if your professional life doesn't reflect this yet. Read Philippians 2:12-13 again from the passage we studied. What does it say about sanctification, about growing spiritually? Also read from your Bible 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

For many Christians, careers and finances are the last areas of their lives that they yield to the Lordship of Christ. For some professing Christians, their unwillingness to ever do so reveals that they have not yet experienced true salvation by grace through faith in Christ. Read Matthew 7:21-27, 2 Corinthians 13:5.

Take a couple of minutes and speak to the Lord about this privately. Is this an area of your life that you have been withholding from Him? Are you willing to study, to not only hear but do what the Bible says and trust Him for the results, even in your career and finances?

Perhaps you haven't really given your life to Him in the first place? Now would be a perfect time to do that.

Write below what you hear the Lord saying to you about these questions.

Prayer Requests