Applying God’s Word to the Marketplace

The following statement from E.W. Kenyon in *The Two Kinds of Life*, while made many decades ago, sounds a lot like what we see happening today.

“The whole human race is facing a New Era. Civilization is in a state of flux. Sense Knowledge has failed again. It has destroyed what Revelation Knowledge has accomplished in the last four centuries. Sense Knowledge has never produced a civilization that it did not destroy, nor given a monetary system that did not enslave the masses, nor originated an educational system that did not corrupt the spirit of youth.

“Sense Knowledge has gained the supremacy over Christianity and dominates it. The mass of humanity has lost God and knows not how to find Him. Civilization has failed because the type of Christianity we have given it has failed. It was a sense-ruled type that was stripped of miracles.”

This statement by Kenyon helps shed light on what the real (root) causes are that have given us the economic climate we deal with today. The results of worldly wisdom (sense knowledge) brought us sub-prime mortgages, investments in pooled sub-prime loans and thinking that cash generated through debt is somehow wealth.

We know the outcome of that—the bubble burst. This is why we must always apply biblical principles and standards in evaluating every opportunity and directing our decisions. We must strive to avoid getting caught up in the excitement over the latest “in vogue” trend. The world’s wisdom often seems so appealing and promises great things, but in the longer run only delivers disappointment and bondage. Nothing, however, can compare with the outcomes provided by the truth and wisdom found in the Word of God.

Because of the uncertainty many feel with the economy today, some have become convinced that the market has failed and are questioning if the free market system is still a valid structure for providing opportunity to prosper. As the statement by Kenyon points out, the failure isn't in the market; it rests squarely on spiritual factors that the truth—God's Word—reveals to us. Actually, the market worked exactly the way the Word of God said it would. We reap in accordance with what and how we sow (Galatians 6:7-9). Sow according to the world's system—reap destruction; sow in line with God's system (His kingdom)—reap life and a good harvest.

There are a number of factors that contribute to adverse economic outcome and the uncertainty and confusion we see today. Three very critical factors are spelled out in the following Scriptures.

Chasing fantasies. "He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty. A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished" (Prov. 28:19-20, NIV).

Chasing wealth. "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle" (Prov. 23:4-5).

Wanting to get rich. "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction" (1 Tim. 6:9).

For a strong and resilient economic climate, it is necessary to grow solid businesses, not just hedge funds. Adding value by providing a needed product and/or service is the pathway to valid increase and stability. Real wealth is built and the economic climate in our communities benefit not by riding a wave of speculation, but by building a strong business on a proven foundation and building on that piece by piece—one step at a time.

Proverbs 13:11 says, “Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.”

The only sound foundation is the Word of God. It is also so very critical that we rely on the Holy Spirit to lead us into what will be effective and sustainable—the truth.

Matthew writes: “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. 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. 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. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash” (Matt. 7:24-27).

It should be clear that when the principles being applied are not in line with the Word of God, then the outcome will not be the best. It may look for a while like things are really rolling along and that great prosperity is in hand, but as these Scriptures state, this pathway will eventually bring an unfavorable end. We, Christians in the marketplace, are to be the ones to show the way—that God’s way really works. It is vital that we incorporate the truth from the Word of God in all the plans, strategies and operations for our endeavors. We are to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves (see Matt. 10:16).

In November 2008, David Brooks of *The New York Times* made the alarming comment that, “There is a real danger that the U.S. is going to leap from one over-consuming era to another; from one finance-led bubble to another.” This is the type of dire observation many have come to and it is all too possible if we allow ourselves to be influenced by the world's wisdom. We, however, must remember that we trust in God and His kingdom system—not the world's system. The market does work, for good or bad depending on which principles are being applied.

Christians in the marketplace have an important role in God's plan for restoring the social and economic stability so urgently needed. We must demonstrate that true prosperity and success results from making Jesus Christ Lord and applying kingdom of God principles and practices in our endeavors. We cannot allow ourselves to be persuaded and enticed away by the clever schemes offered by those operating with worldly wisdom rather than God's wisdom. The same type of thinking that brought on the economic concerns are faced today.

The marketplace needs to see us still standing strong even as the wealth others thought they had slips away. We are to be leading the way showing the world how it is done and to be the pillars of stability others can learn from. We must become very aggressive and never apologetic in our pursuit to bring the kingdom of God into every arena in which we operate.

Remember the instruction in Matthew 6:33, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."