

Why Is Your Health Their Business?

Let me start out by saying, *“I love capitalism!”*

Our system of capitalism affords freedom, opportunity and the power of choice for everyone—the entrepreneur, as well as the consumer. It’s a system that encourages competition, and competition brings about better products at better prices. But, as with most things, there are pros and cons to capitalism, and this is especially true when it comes to our health.

Over and over again, when I am presenting to groups on the topic of health, and I bring up the role of big business, I witness a jaw-dropping, eye-opening response—especially with respect to preventable disease. Jesus said, *“Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves”* (Matthew 10:16).

In other words, Christians are to be shrewd. And unless we’re shrewd, we are not likely to realize the dramatic influence the business world has on our personal health and wellbeing.

Consider this:

1. **Big business** spends billions of dollars on marketing and advertising to persuade us to consume foods and beverages that increase the risk for obesity, hypertension, diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease.
2. **Big business** governs food availability to the extent that certain neighborhoods are categorized as “food deserts” where residents have limited access to fresh, wholesome foods and “grocery” shopping is done at places like gasoline stations and convenience stores.
3. **Big business** creates cigarette advertisements that appeals to teens, and posts billboards for alcohol in

places of hopelessness—neighborhoods that are destitute and poverty stricken.

4. **Big business** develops advertisements especially appealing to kids for foods that are high in sugar, sodium, saturated fat and calories.
5. **Big business** oversees the research, development and marketing of prescription medications that cost a fortune, but are necessary to treat the diseases which are the inevitable result of numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Did I say *I love capitalism*? Indeed I do!

And I'm not being sarcastic because, as I said, capitalism is a great system. But in all things and in every place (including the marketplace) Christians are called to be a "peculiar people" (1 Peter 2:9).

So we are to be governed by biblical virtues such as discipline and moderation. Paul said "we should live soberly" (Titus 2:12) which doesn't just refer to drunkenness, but to a life that is not defined by self-indulgence. We are blessed with the fruit of the Spirit of self-control, and have access to Godly wisdom and discernment through prayer.

So, with all this POWER at our disposal, we are equipped to take full responsibility for our lifestyles for the sake of our health.

Big business has every right to advertise and market products, but we have the right to make decisions that are beneficial and not detrimental. So the answer to the question, "Why is *your* health *their* business?" is this: It's only if you allow it to be! As Christians, we are equipped to mind our *own* business, and make the choice for better health!

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