

MONDAY MANNA

30 October 2017

ARE YOU MINDING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

By Robert J. Tamasy

When we use the term “minding your own business,” we typically refer to not getting involved in or interfering with someone else’s business. However, life in the business and professional world can often be a lonely, solitary pursuit. This is especially true for entrepreneurs and top executives, but it also applies to most of us, regardless of our position on the organisational chart.

If we are confident and self-assured, it can be easy to prefer to “mind our own business” and not engage with others in making decisions or seeking to solve problems. “I can do it myself.” “I want to pull myself up by my own bootstraps – I do not need anyone’s help.”

We may feel this way at times, but it is wise to consider the admonition, *“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall”* (Proverbs 16:18). In contrast to that, we also read, *“Before his downfall a man’s heart is proud, but humility comes before honour”* (Proverbs 18:12).

I cannot count how many times I was involved in publishing a newspaper or magazine, when I saw the truth of the adage, “The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.” There are many reasons trying to succeed in the business world by oneself is unwise. Here are some cited in the Bible:

None of us is as smart as all of us combined. Working together toward a common objective provides the opportunity for shared wisdom and experience, different perspectives and insights. *“For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure”* (Proverbs 11:14). *“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed”* (Proverbs 15:22). *“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another”* (Proverbs 27:17).

We need encouragement during good times, correction during times of difficulty and temptation. Even during prosperous times, we need support. And caring encouragers will challenge us whenever it seems we might be drifting off course. *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...”* (Hebrews 10:24-25). *“See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily...so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness”* (Hebrews 3:12-13).

Each of us has something to offer. With our varied skills and talents, we can all contribute toward achieving the desired goals and mission we have established. *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work; if one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! ... Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken”* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

Others can provide spiritual redirection when needed. Many in the business and professional world have accountability partners and mentors that they can count on for advice, prayer support, and admonition as well, when necessary. *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

When you hear the phrase, "mind your own business," what comes to your mind – at least before you read this "Monday Manna"?

Can you see the pitfalls of insisting upon minding one's own business, excluding others from providing input or being able to contribute to the work in a significant way? Why or why not?

What are some of the challenges or problems of involving others in the process? Put another way, what are the benefits – if any – of working alone, not soliciting the help of others?

In the Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 uses the human body as an analogy for the value of working together with a shared commitment and common sense of mission. Do you think this metaphor applies to the workplace? Explain your answer.

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about principles it presents, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 12:15, 13:1, 19:20, 25:12

Romans 12:3-8

Ephesians 4:4-16