

What About... Profit

By RJ Regan



*But have nothing to do with **worldly fables**¹ fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but **godliness**² is profitable for all things since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7-8*

Based on this verse, it is obvious that profit is a good thing and that it should be both desired and pursued in this life and in the life to come. This [profit] is a foundational message found on virtually every page of Scripture. It is absolutely in our best interest to discipline ourselves toward godliness. Our benefit and profit is promised, but it must be understood that our profit, even though promised by God, is not the primary focus of Scripture or why Christ died on the cross.

Christ's death on the cross paid for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21). But the primary reason He died was to glorify God. By accepting Christ as Savior, we reap the benefits, as beneficiaries but the primary focus is glorifying God. This is a very important concept to grasp. It is not all about us, it is all about God. Yes, you are promised profit in this life and in the life to come, but that should never be the focus of your life. The focus is on the glory of God.

The profit you receive is His. Your body is His. Your children are His. Your life is His. Everything you "own" is His. We are nothing more than stewards of what is His.

Two distinctions I would suggest.

First, shifting your focus from temporal profit to eternal profit is a wise thing to do. As Missionary Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool

who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." Everything we have been entrusted with here on earth will eventually pass away. Only two things live forever, people and the Word of God. To the degree that we can lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, you will never regret in eternity.

Remember, the earthly physical profit, as a result of bodily discipline, is a good thing, but when compared to the eternal spiritual profit as a result of godliness, it pales in comparison. It is not that profit now is wrong or even bad, but future profit is much greater than the little profit we receive now.

Second, the more you can shift your focus from your profit to God's glory will be a good thing. It is not that the profit you receive is wrong or bad, but glorifying God is infinitely better. What turns temporal profit into eternal profit is when its focus is on bringing glory to God.

¹ A worldly person is experienced, sophisticated, or "street smart." He understands the way things are. A fable is a legend, myth or parable designed to teach a lesson or moral. It seems to me that "worldly fables" as used in this context, has to do with mystical or fantasy that is not based on reality or truth. These fables are the fanciful stories that might make a person feel good initially but are based on lies.

² Godliness is the quality or practice of conforming to the laws and commands of God; devoutness and moral uprightness as defined in Scripture. Edification is what I do, and sanctification is what God does.