

The Secret to Power in Business

by Glenn Clark

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X. Reverence toward God

One day in my Bible Class in the Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis, I made the statement that many great businesses had been established in Chicago at the same time that Marshall Field began his, but most of them had come to an end. I gave as one of the reasons the fact that Marshall Field had never advertised in the Sunday papers. Now, there is no sin in advertising in the Sunday papers. Jesus himself said that the Sabbath is made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. The great spiritual value of Sabbath-keeping is as a symbol for reverencing God, as a doorway by which one can enter into a deeper partnership with God. It had that significance to Marshall Field and was used faithfully even to the point of endangering the success of his business. Its significance and power were real. While other businesses faded away I believe that this partnership with God helped to lay the foundations for the permanence of this great company.

After I related this to my Bible Class, one of the members came to me and said, "Don't you know that the Dayton department store, which is owned by a member of the Board of Trustees of your own college, has never advertised in the Sunday papers and it is the fastest growing store in the Twin Cities?" That was fifteen years ago, and today the George L. Dayton department store of Minneapolis has grown to be the largest and most prosperous department store in this entire section of the country.

I am aware of the fact that in the past there has often been much cant and hypocrisy connected with the formal observance of religious rites and rules and regulations. It is therefore sometimes difficult to judge and differentiate between the sincere and the insincere expression of reverence toward the Deity. But whenever one genuinely and sincerely bows in reverence before the sacredness of Divine Personality, he is opening a door through which some strange and mysterious power for good enters into this world.

Even more austere about keeping this holy day sacred for the Lord than Marshall Field and George L. Dayton is Mahatma Gandhi. Nothing in heaven or earth can make him break his silence on the day of the week which he sets aside for his silent day. Some years ago he went to England on an important mission and was met at the dock with all the pomp and panoply of Great Britain. He was taken to the royal palace and sat at the table with the counsellors of the king. But as this happened to be his day of silence nothing could induce him to open his lips. He kept the king waiting and he kept the prime minister waiting, but he refused to break his appointment with his God.

I have been at religious camps very often with Roger Babson. One afternoon right after lunch he was booked for an important appointment, but he kept everyone waiting for one hour because he said that that was the hour that he always set aside faithfully for his Lord, and neither the King of England nor the Premier of Russia could induce him to break this appointment with his "Senior Partner."

A number of firms are adopting a method of bringing all their employees together for one hour each week to listen to a morale-building or spiritual talk. There are a few firms that I know that now pause a few minutes each day when all can turn to the Lord for a few minutes of meditation and prayer. There are a number of business executives that I have talked with that would love to do this, but feel a natural reticence because they realize that many of their employees would consider it sentimental and superficial. During this last World War, however, some were able to meet with their salesmen each day and hold a little prayer for the servicemen in the armed forces. "I am hoping," said a big executive in Waco, Texas, "that they will experience the power that comes out of this gathering so effectively that when the war is over they will like to have us continue these meetings." Another big executive said to me, "I am doing my best to learn how to bring religion to my associates by creeping up on their 'blind side.' "

Great business leaders have said, "What is the secret of that great power which seems to insulate International Business Machines from all the ills of depressions and other catastrophies which cause us to lose all our reserves while International Business Machines goes steadily on, ignoring those ills and piling up more reserves? What magic wand has Mr. Watson got which we have not in us?" Walter Russell explained it as follows: "Practically all business men put the material aspect first, last and always. In International Business Machines, the spiritual aspect is first, last, and always. That was Mr. Watson's masterly and daring conception, and, to the amazement of the economic world, he proved himself right."

SUMMARY

The only way to prove the truth behind the laws which I have outlined in this booklet is to step into the stream of business life and apply them. I am not a very worldly man. I am not at all interested in making money. The details of business bore me. I can't remember figures to save me. If these principles would work for me, they ought to work for anyone, so I decided I would put them to the test.

In 1924 when I was receiving a professor's salary that was hardly big enough to support my wife and three children, I began tithing. Almost immediately my income almost doubled, and I have never since had to be concerned about money.

Like Vash Young, I began giving about half my time to helping others without expectation of reward. Out of the conversations over the needs of others there came to me helpful suggestions that I began to put into books and talks; and for these, grateful listeners and readers gave me compensation.

As I took more time for periods of meditation and prayer, and sitting behind my desk and looking out the window, I found that I had acquired the gift of "thinking straight," and that my decisions in business matters were always "lucky." Instead of going to business experts for advice I found that presidents of big companies were coming to me for prayers and advice.

I tried to be fair to my customers. I wrote to Little, Brown and Company, asking them to reduce the price of "The Soul's Sincere Desire" by half, which they were willing to do if I would take a cut in royalty, which I was very happy to do. As Eastern publishers were charging forty cents for my small paper-bound booklets, I established a little publishing company of my own which would offer them to the public for fifteen cents. As the sales kept increasing and the number of employees kept increasing, the need for larger quarters kept growing, so after renting larger quarters three different times I finally found myself becoming the owner of a large building, marvelously adapted to meet all of our needs.

In a business of this kind it is very easy to keep in the flow, as there are innumerable opportunities to give out free literature without expectation of reward, to people that it would help the most. It also offers opportunity for others to be brought into the flow who wish to render a day of service occasionally in helping to send out spiritual literature.

Knowing that religious organizations are often the worst examples when it comes to harmony and teamwork, we had to be especially on our guard at this particular point. At certain periods our work would pile up and everyone would have to work at rather feverish haste to get it done on time, and we were constantly confronted with new decisions which had to be made and new forms of procedure to be learned, for we were exploring new frontiers. Naturally, little tensions and misunderstandings would arise. But one by one these were all ironed out, and a wonderful teamwork developed. It is down on our record, however, that whenever any period of lack of harmony arose, our sales actually fell off, and when the perfect teamwork was restored, the business prospered.

But the most wonderful thing about this little company is its devotion to God, and the blessing which this has not only brought to us, but to the thousands who reach out to us for help, either for books and magazines or prayers. The heart and soul of our establishment is the beautiful prayer alcove where at the beginning of each hour one of our staff spends a little period of prayer. Once a day the entire staff comes together for a period of joint prayer.

In addition to this, we conduct the continuous Prayer Tower, which is shared in by some spiritual people in the Twin Cities who have special power in prayer. Letters come in every day seeking help from this Prayer Tower, and many wonderful answers to prayer happen every week.

I think it would be well if every business in America had a Meditation Room where employees who had faith in this sort of thing could relax their bodies, drop their cares, clarify their minds, and *think straight*. This would do something for the establishment as well as for the individual. Every manager would be blessed if he could find three of his executives who were spiritual and selfless enough to join with him once a week or once a month in a little quiet time for the good of the service. He might call this the private session of his "Board of Spiritual Directors, with ...

THE SENIOR PARTNER IN BUSINESS."