AMBITION

Ambition - a strong desire to do or achieve something; a desire and determination to achieve success.¹

“Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:9-10)

“Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar, about which I tell you in advance—as I told you before—that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21)

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:3-4)

“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.” (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)

“Who is wise and understanding among you? He should show his works by good conduct with wisdom’s gentleness. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, don’t brag and lie in defiance of the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. For where envy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every kind of evil. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without favoritism and hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (James 3:13-18)

General William Booth’s One Ambition: For over thirty years the Salvation Army and William Booth in particular were subject to some of the most vile persecutions Christians suffered in modern times. But the General lived to see the day his army would be honored around the world. His own King Edward VII invited him to Buckingham Palace in 1904. All the persecution and trials of the previous decades must have seemed insignificant to Booth as he heard King Edward say, “You are doing a good work—a great work, General Booth.” When the king asked Booth to write in his autograph album, the old man—now seventy-five—bent forward, took the pen, and summed up his life’s work: “Your Majesty, some men’s ambition is art. Some men’s ambition is fame. Some men’s ambition is gold. My ambition is the souls of men.”²

Dr. Howard Kelly at Graduation: On the night of his graduation from medical college, Dr. Howard A. Kelly, world-famed surgeon and gynecologist, wrote in his diary: “I dedicate myself, my time, my capabilities, my ambition, everything to Him. Blessed Lord, sanctify me to Thy uses. Give me no worldly success which may not lead me nearer to my Savior!” — Orville S. Walter³

Discussion Questions:
1. With complete honesty, how would you state your primary ambition in business?
2. What one thing are you compelled to do to make your ambition a (more) godly ambition?