

Entrepreneurship and Christian Ministry!

Can a Christian be an entrepreneur or is that something only suited to those who want to pursue financial gain? We will explore this question by looking at what an entrepreneur is, who can be one, what motivates them and in what ways such people can be used in Christian Ministry. The workshop explores the strengths and weaknesses of the entrepreneur and the challenges and temptations faced by them as a Christian.

About Jeremy Peckham

Jeremy Peckham began his career as a government scientist at the UK Royal Aircraft Establishment and later moved to Logica, an international software and systems integration company. He founded his own speech recognition company in 1993 and launched a successful public offering on the London Stock exchange in 1996. Jeremy is now a technology entrepreneur having helped to establish several high tech companies over the last 15 years where he has served as interim CEO, Chairman or non executive director. He set up and is Chairman of a private Charitable Trust, one of it's projects, Africa Rural Trainers (www.africaruraltrainers.org) trains rural pastors in Kenya in bible understanding and practical skills in a sustainable way through business engagement. Jeremy served as an elder for many years at Eden Baptist Church, Cambridge, UK. Jeremy is a Fellow of The Royal Society of Arts and 1st class honours graduate in Applied Science.

1. Overview

- a. Common perceptions & Biblical perspectives
- b. What is an entrepreneur
- c. Can a Christian really be an entrepreneur?
- d. What are the challenges for a Christian?
- e. Where are the opportunities?
- f. Strengths, weaknesses & challenges
- g. Self Assessment

2. What is an entrepreneur?

- 75% of influential Americans believe that entrepreneurship will be the defining trend of the 21 Century , Ernst & Young
- Video
 - Possible characteristics (group work)

3. Can Christians really be entrepreneurs? *PART 1*

- a. An entrepreneur just wants to make money!
- b. They are ruthless!
- c. Being Christ like doesn't sit with being an entrepreneur!

4. **Antipathy in the church**

background to religious leaders negativity

- a. Augustine “business is in itself an evil”
- b. Tertullian on trade “is scarcely adapted for a servant of God, for apart from covetousness, which is a species of idolatry, there is no real motive for acquiring” [On idolatry, xi]

5. **Differing economics!**

The church and business

- a. The church speaks of collecting money, an entrepreneur talks of generating it.
- b. Capitalism, the free market (in which entrepreneurialism flourishes) is often frowned on by religious leaders.
- c. Challenge of poverty & ignorance of economics often fosters this view - redistribute wealth rather than help them to create wealth. Teach a poor man how to fish...

6. **Opposing Worldviews**

“The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries” *Winston Churchill, House of Commons, October 22, 1945*

- a. Gnosticism - the material world is evil
 1. Liberation theology - wealth as sinful
- b. Prosperity gospel
 1. Prosperity a sign of God’s blessing
 2. Poverty a result of sin

7. **Biblical Worldview**

does this really conflict with being an entrepreneur?

- a. Genesis - the material world - “and God saw that it was good [fit for purpose]”
- b. Industry commanded & commended
- c. Call to productivity, creation mandate Gen 1:26-28, 3:19, 9:1, Ps 8:6, Eccl 9:10, Luke 19:11-27, Mt 25:14-30
- d. Many characteristics of entrepreneurs mirrored in scripture
- e. Creativity reflects God’s creative activity
- f. Through us that the nations will be blessed (Gen)
- g. Pastors, businesspeople, educators, politicians.....

8. **Characteristics of an entrepreneur**

a closer look from Research by Judith Glick-Smith, Southern Methodist University, Cox School of Business, 1999

1. Good health.

Successful entrepreneurs must work long hours for extended periods of time. When they get sick, they recover quickly

2.A Need to Control and Direct.

They prefer environments where they have maximum authority and responsibility and do not work well in traditionally structured organizations. This is not about power, though. Entrepreneurs have a need to create and achieve by having control over events.

3.Self-confidence.

Findings showed that as long as entrepreneurs were in control, they were relentless in pursuit of their goals. If they lost control, they quickly lost interest in the undertaking.

4.Sense of Urgency.

They have a never-ending sense of urgency to do something. This corresponds with a high energy level. Many enjoy individual sports rather than team sports. Inactivity makes them impatient.

5.Comprehensive Awareness.

They have a comprehensive awareness of a total situation and are aware of all the ramifications involved in a decision.

6.Realistic Outlook.

There is a constant need to know the status of things. They may or may not be idealistic, but they are honest and straightforward and expect others to be the same.

Characteristics of an entrepreneur

7.Conceptual Ability.

They have superior conceptual abilities. This helps entrepreneurs identify relationships in complex situations. Chaos does not bother them because they can conceptualize order. Problems are quickly identified and solutions offered. The drawback is that this may not translate well to interpersonal problems.

8.Low Need for Status.

Their need for status is met through achievement not through material possessions.

9.Objective Approach.

They take an objective approach to personal relationships and are more concerned with the performance and accomplishment of others than with feelings. They keep their distance psychologically and concentrate on the effectiveness of operations.

10.Emotional Stability.

They have the stability to handle stress from business and from personal areas in their lives. Setbacks are seen as challenges and do not discourage them.

11.Attraction to Challenges.

They are attracted to challenges but not to risks. It may look like they are taking high risks, but in actuality they have assessed the risks thoroughly.

12.Describing with Numbers.

They can describe situations with numbers. They understand their financial position and can tell at any time how much they have in receivables and how much they owe.

9. Learned or Innate?

Are entrepreneurs born?

Innate characteristic	Can be learned

10. Entrepreneurs, Leaders & Managers

Are they the same?

- a. An entrepreneur is probably a good leader but a leader may not be an entrepreneur
- b. Managers manage processes and resources
- c. A manager may not be a leader and they aren't an entrepreneur, but they might become one!

11. Can Christians really be entrepreneurs? PART 2

- a. Is there really a clash with Christ like virtues?
- b. Where are the similarities/overlaps?
- c. What are the challenges?
- d. Do we see entrepreneurial characteristics in men and women in the bible?

12. Bible characters

- a. Joshua & Caleb - visionary
- b. Esther - risk taking, courageous
- c. Naomi - visionary!
- d. Daniel, Joseph - risk takers, organisers
- e. Paul - drive, urgency
- f. BUT FOR GOD'S MISSION
- g. Whatever we undertake - do as part of God's calling/mission

13. Bible teaching

- a. Industry, risk taking according to ability
- b. Laziness and fear rebuked
 - 1. Parable of the minas Luke 19v11-27
 - 2. Parable of the talents Mt 25v14-30

14. Conflicts with being a Christian?

Characteristics that resonate	Characteristics that are opposed	Characteristics where caution needed

15. Where are the opportunities?

- a. Advancing the Kingdom of God
- b. Participating in God's mission
 - 1. Business or enterprise

2. As a calling
3. As mission
4. Education
5. Evangelism
6. Righteousness
7. Justice
8. Mercy
9.

16. We need entrepreneurs in the Kingdom!

- a. Christ centred!
- b. To innovate - think out of the box
 1. Same message, new ways to communicate
- c. Create new opportunities
 1. Evangelism where missionaries not welcome
 2. Paradigm shift in mission (self sustainability)
- d. Provide employment

17. Recognising Strengths and Weaknesses

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion • Drive • Sense of urgency • Can be altruistic • Low need for status • Conceptual abilities • Attracted to challenges • Emotionally stable • Objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of attention to feelings of others • Can be poor people managers • Not good in large organisations • Want to control rather than delegate • Self confidence (vs dependence on God) • Independence

18. Challenges

- a. Pride
- b. Love of money
 1. Mk 10:17-25 The rich man
 2. Luke 16:13

3. 1 Tim 6:10

- c. Ego
- d. Success, even in Christian ministry
- e. Responsibilities to family, church

19. Personal life

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” Col 3:23-24

20. Character development the key

- 1. Ethics
- 2. Decisions
- 3. Life balance
- 4. Motivations
- 5. Guarding one’s heart & life

21. Where are you?

22. Self assessment

CHARACTERISTIC	Always	Sometimes	Never
I am goal & action orientated			
I am a self starter			
I am self confident			
I am a persistent person			
I like taking risks			
I am flexible and adaptable when necessary			
I am a problem solver			
I am a innovative thinker			
I can sell myself or my product to others			
I accept responsibility for my actions			
I enjoy networking			
I can function in an environment of uncertainty			
I like being in charge			
I am willing to devote whatever time and energy it takes to be successful			
I am able to see what needs to be done and then do it			