

## Biblical Foundations for Missional Enterprise

Missional enterprise is not a novel idea. There are many examples of it throughout missions history. It is also based on examples and principles in Scripture. Here are a few Biblical foundations for missional enterprise.

The account of Creation in Genesis 1 lays the foundation for enterprise. God demonstrates His entrepreneurial nature by creating raw materials and a biological system in which He places humans whom He expects to be fruitful and multiply. We are stewards of creation and are to be enterprising to produce returns for God.

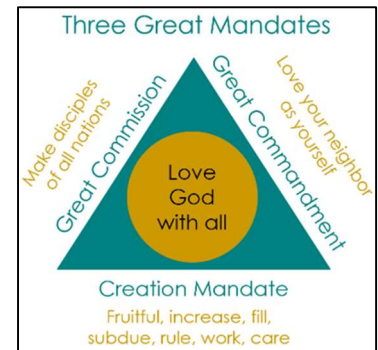
Enterprise is also encouraged when the Israelites were forced into exile. In Jeremiah 29:4-7, God charges those in exile to build houses, plant gardens, and seek the welfare of the city where He sent them. This indicates an active involvement in commerce and the economy of the city. Again, God desires us to be enterprising.



The parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 supports the entrepreneurial nature God desires of us. He has given us talents and resources from which He expects a return. It takes creative entrepreneurship to use what He's given and produce a return on His investment in us.

The most basic description of missional enterprise is the Triple Bottom Line of financial sustainability (*Make Money*), spiritual transformation (*Make Disciples*), and social/environmental impact (*Make a Difference*). These outputs are built on the three Great Mandates of Scripture:

1. **The Creation Mandate** in Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 – these seven verbs, be fruitful, increase, fill, subdue, rule, work, and care, speak to producing a return on what God has provided. Creating prosperity for all stakeholders in a business—including owners, employees, suppliers, etc.—reflects God's desire for enterprise. We also want to make a difference by caring for His creation.
2. **The Great Commandment** in Mark 12:30,31 – loving God with all we have is at the center of missional enterprise as we live out His kingdom values and principles. Loving our neighbor as ourselves moves us to make a difference for the marginalized and needy of the communities in which we operate.
3. **The Great Commission** in Matthew 28:19,20 – is our charge to make disciples of all nations in business.



These three mandates drive our desire and inform our strategies to intentionally practice the Triple Bottom Line in our enterprises.

Lastly, the Apostle Paul lived out missional enterprise as a tentmaker. In his business, he disciplined Aquilla and Pricilla, who in turn disciplined Apollos (see Acts 18:1-4, 26). In 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12, Paul describes how he labored, working night and day to not be a burden. He did this to offer himself as a model for them. Paul gave them an example of how to work in a business and make disciples.

These are a few passages that form the Biblical foundation for missional enterprise. There is much more in the Scriptures on the value and role of enterprise and work. But these provide a starting point for demonstrating the value and legitimacy of missional enterprise.