

BUSY  
*FOR SELF*  
LAZY  
*FOR GOD*

*Meditations on Proverbs  
for Diligent Living*

▼  
NAM JOON KIM

*Translated by Charles Kim & Pierce T. Hibbs*

*With an introduction by Peter A. Lillback*

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*Busy for Self, Lazy for God: Meditations on Proverbs for Diligent Living*  
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## FOREWORD

The Rev. Nam Joon Kim is an extraordinary pastoral and theological leader from Seoul, South Korea. It has been my privilege to have fellowshiped with him not only at Yullin Church in Seoul where he ministers, but also to have traveled with him in Europe for educational and lecturing opportunities. I am grateful for Rev. Kim for his earnest interest and engagement with the legacy and vision of Westminster Seminary.

Rev. Kim traces his theological roots back through his professors in Korea to a Westminster student who was taught by founding Professor John Murray. Nam Joon Kim is a Westminster man by legacy, friendship, and theological affinity. If there is any doubt about that, one has only to visit his theological library, one of the finest pastor's libraries I have ever seen.

As our friendship has grown, it has become clear to me that Rev. Nam Joon Kim is not a man who is busy for self and lazy for God! His ministry includes family life, pastoring, teaching, itinerate ministry, as well as writing and publishing a host of books and articles. In other words, his life and commitments are precisely of the nature that allow him to write such a pointed and strategic book that aims at the slothful hearts and minds of so many in our postmodern world. In this study, he explores the ancient teachings of the book of Proverbs that address laziness and diligence, emphasizing how devotion to God can be lost in the busyness of life

requiring that God's people reestablish energetic priorities pleasing to the Lord.

I heartily recommend this book to readers in the English-speaking world. I do so not only because of my deep respect for the author and his ministry, but also because this book is already a substantial bestseller in Korea and in the Chinese speaking world. Thus, it is an honor to have *Busy for Self, Lazy for God* translated into English through the work of Westminster Seminary and published by Westminster Seminary Press. It is my hope that his study will be celebrated in the English-speaking context as it has been in the Korean and Mandarin languages.

Please read this book knowing that the Holy Spirit through His Word seeks to equip us to be earnest in our service to the Lord. The wisdom of the ancient Scriptures calls on us to engage our daily lives eagerly to the glory God. My prayer is that these faithful reflections by the busy pastor, the Rev. Nam Joon Kim, will encourage you to strive to live your life to the glory of God and thereby enjoy Him both now and forever.

Sincerely in Christ's service,

Dr. Peter A. Lillback,

President, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I could never have imagined that this book, the fruit of very intense personal wrestling and reflection, would have been received so well in such a short amount of time. As one lives out the days of his life ordained for him, there are three things that he should consider to make his remaining time effective and productive: (1) he must pour his time into critical matters rather than into trivialities; (2) he must seek out ways to become more competent and skilled in his calling; and (3) he must make every effort to live diligently not for himself but for God. This is because, in the context of human depravity, one is diligent in achieving his self-centered desires while he is lazy in completing and fulfilling his God-given duties. That is why one cannot break free from laziness without a spiritual transformation.

The reason for the release of this revised edition in such a short amount of time was in response to the overwhelming demand of many readers who desired a more popular version that could be taken and read anywhere. During the preparation of this revised edition, I made some small updates on the contents of the later portions of the book. I pray that this book may be used in a way that is truly beneficial for those who desire to live a holy life.

A servant of Christ,  
Nam Joon Kim  
November 10, 2003

# Introduction

The person who has loved me the most in my lifetime has been my late grandmother. My parents' business was in a rural area, while I started elementary school in the metropolitan city of Seoul. So, from the moment that I began school until the moment I married and started my own family, my grandmother was the one with whom I spent the majority of my time; she basically raised me. As I was growing up, the one thing my grandmother mentioned more than anything else was my laziness. Whether I woke up a little later or was passing the time doing nothing, she would always remark, "How do you expect to accomplish anything later on if you're this lazy right now?"

I came to realize how dangerous laziness is when my relationship with God became deeper and more intimate, and when I truly yearned to live for his glory. Although I knew that I was saved and God had adorned me with his unconditional love, it was not until later that I came to see how limited and short our lives on earth

## 2 Introduction

really are, and even if one has a burning desire to live for God's glory, that desire will never spread unless sufficient time is given to develop it. Also, I began to understand that laziness is not a simple issue to deal with, but is a very complex issue because the root rotting one's soul is self-love, and self-love is complex matter, reaching into every corner of our lives. Another thing that made things more difficult for me was that it seemed that my lazy nature could at any time rear its ugly head and make the struggle and fight to become more holy even more difficult.

After experiencing revival in my life, I began to abhor laziness. However, I was frequently reminded of its presence in me, as the new man in me would fight with the old man constantly. As I continued to hate laziness, I made sure to give life my all every day and tell myself that this is not my day or time, but God's, which also forced me to become better and wiser at using my time. However, I can still see remnants of laziness lurking inside me. I hate this about myself, but I am certain that God hates it even more than I do. He loves *me* unconditionally, but he does not love *my laziness*.

There were many times when I was exhausted because of the internal struggle I had with laziness, but thinking about the life of Jesus brought great comfort and strength, and straightened me out whenever I was sick and tired of putting up a fight to live diligently. When we consider the life of Jesus, it amazes me how he never had a place to lay down his head, and how he completely devoted himself to his mission; laziness and Christ's life were clearly worlds apart. What's more, I consider his life to have been a liquid one. What I mean is that Jesus shed his blood, sweat, and tears for us. He poured himself out. That is what we must strive for.

We must have the same heart and attitude that George Whitefield had, who once exclaimed, “I had rather wear out than rust out.”<sup>1</sup> We must be willing to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily (Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). We must model our lives on the liquid life of Christ.

This book is an attempt to introduce in words a portion of my epiphany on how laziness is a secret and great enemy that stands in the way of the Christian pursuit of holiness. Although many Christians are willing to sacrifice much and take ownership of their sanctification, unfortunately very few realize how great an enemy laziness is. This causes much failure and heartbreak, which is the reason why I wrote this book. Rather than being a sweet and delightful treat for your soul, this will more likely be akin to a very bitter spoonful of medicine, like it was for me a long time ago when I also tasted it. Nonetheless, as you read this book, I urge you to join me and many followers of Christ in becoming a diligent seeker of truth, one who faithfully follows Jesus. May this book enrich, enlighten, convict, and challenge you to become a more holy follower of our Lord.

A servant of Christ,  
Nam Joon Kim  
August 7, 2003

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1 Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1995), 505.

**PART I:**

To Those Very  
Familiar and  
Intimate with  
Laziness

# Laziness and the Christian Life

## Sinful Remnants of Lethargy

It is a strange truth that spiritual travesty can bring us to grin when we should grieve. Some years ago, after preaching in a church that had been planted in a developing city, I enjoyed a meal with my hosts. As we ate, we shared our thoughts about the gospel and discussed, among other things, how it seems that the majority of Korean churches no longer preach the good news—the true, life-altering gospel of Christ. Nor do they facilitate its accompanying spiritual transformation in the lives of believers. At one point in our discussion, one of the hosts said, “Reverend Kim, even though Korean pastors preach the gospel from the pulpit, and reinforce its importance in the pews, when we visit church members and see how they live, it seems the gospel isn’t worth a penny to them.” At this, everyone at the table burst into laughter.

But then the laughter tapered off into silence, and the mood went from merry to melancholy.

How can a believer overlook the riches of the gospel? How can a Christian's life not be bursting at the seams with spiritual joy? Perhaps it is because he does not make the effort to become more holy. This may seem like an odd conclusion to draw, but joy and holiness are not distant relations; they are brothers, at least for Christians. A life of holiness is a life of joy, and vice versa. Holiness never increases to our detriment; lasting joy never comes at the cost of sanctification. The two go hand in hand.

Now, perhaps we miss the family resemblance between joy and holiness not because it is difficult to see, but because we do not *want* to see it. We are far more comfortable forgetting that Christ did not come into this world—he did not sweat, suffer, and die for our redemption—only to see us maintain the status quo of our spiritual languor. He came to give us life to the fullest (John 10:10). But such life is a cruciform life (Luke 9:23), a life built upon our Spirit-empowered, grace-infused efforts to become more like Christ and to lose our very lives for his sake (Luke 9:24). This does not necessarily mean martyrdom, but it does mean the death of the old, sinful self, a self that was too often guilty of spiritual laziness.

Because we have been redeemed, that old, sinful self has been crucified with Christ. By the devil's schemes we had been held in bondage to sin and death, but now we are set free. We are declared righteous before the Judge of all. What's more, we have become his children through adoption (Eph 1:5). So, after all that he has given for us—after the blood he shed in order to bring us into his holy

bloodline—why would we conclude that we are now free to do whatever we want? Does that sound like the response of a person just saved from an eternity of isolation? Certainly not. Yet perhaps it is helpful to remember here that we are not so different from the prodigal son, who came back from his wild ventures and fell down before his father. The happy homecoming of the prodigal did not mean that his body would not be affected by the consequences of his previous lifestyle. Likewise, our old selves are still affecting our new, regenerated selves. We are still shaking free of the prodigal's servile chains, even as we are united to the Prophet, Priest, and King of creation.

It is in light of this union that we trust completely in the triune God of the Bible, harkening to his every word in Scripture, experiencing the grace of the Holy Spirit. Such grace works in us to conform us to the image of God's sinless Son, to burn away the dross of indwelling iniquity so that we might better resemble the purity of Christ. This work of the Spirit is what transforms us—our character, our personality, our life—so that our souls, which once sought to smother the flame of the truth, can let the Spirit's breath ignite it in our daily lives. The flame God kindles in us is our newfound, Christlike identity. And nothing—not even time itself and the pervasive corruption of the world—can snuff it out. In Christ, our holy identity burns in eternity.

But the mere fact that our identity cannot be threatened does not mean that laziness is a fitting response to our God-given holiness. In fact, laziness is itself spiritual impurity, part of the dross of sin that should be burned up. If we do not make an effort, by and through the Spirit, to identify and destroy the root of laziness,

then our flame, our Christ-conforming identity, will only dwindle. If we are not daily diligent in understanding God's Word and in *living it out*, we cannot expect to grow spiritually. And plenty of biblical examples confirm this for us, as do men and women in church history. No one who is deeply respected for having extraordinary faith earned such respect through laziness. God always worked through such people, and they took every opportunity to work for God.

### **Work before Sin, in Sin, and after Sin**

Even before we consider great heroes in Scripture who labored diligently in the faith, we should remind ourselves that work was always a part of humanity, even before sin fractured our relationships and corrupted creation. The calling of Adam and Eve was to serve God through their work. They were instructed, as stewards of God's creation and inhabitants of the garden of Eden, "to work and keep it" (Gen 2:15). Such work was a testament to the quieter growth and vivacity that surrounded them. From seeds came saplings, infant trees, which then matured and bore fruit (Gen 2:9). Rivers rushed through the garden (Gen 2:10–14), carrying the riches of life to the surrounding plants and animals. And, on the basis of the curses later pronounced in 3:17–19, we know that beneath them, the soil was home for roots and organic life, supporting everything that grew. In short, all creation, spoken into being by the triune God, worked symbiotically and diligently to maintain the good order of God's world. Adam and Eve, however, held a special place as stewards.

In light of what Genesis 2–3 reveals about work, we must begin our discussion of diligence by remembering that work is a God-ordained, and hence God-honoring, endeavor. People today might think that work is a result of the fall. Had sin not entered our reality (we might think), we could all relax, rolling over on the grass beds that God breathed into being. This is far from the truth. Work is actually a blessing from God. In fact, it is a call to participate in what God has made, a call to image God as the one who always works for our good.

The negative associations we have of work come from the toil and uncertainty of fruitfulness that was brought about by sin.

Now, if what we said earlier is true, if joy and holiness go hand in hand as members of the same family, then we know that Adam and Eve's joy before the fall was complemented by holiness: diligent and attentive work. This complementation follows us even after the fall. If laboring is truly God's blessing and brings abundant joy, then our work today is still a blessing that can—with our obedience to God's Word (which is a result of his saving grace)—bring us spiritual joy.

And the story does not end there. When we who have been brought into Christ by the power of the Spirit are finally finished with our earthly pilgrimage, we will have eternal communion with God. But that communion is not characterized by idleness and boredom; there will, in fact, be heavenly labor to carry out—labor that somehow glorifies God and reflects our sinless, loving relationship with him. For all eternity, the church, God's people, will be gladly serving him with endless praise. We do not know exactly what sort of work God has for us aside from the joy of worship,

but we can be sure that it will be “good,” just as his original work for us was “good” (Gen 1:31).

### **Working in a Sin-Stained World**

For the present, however, we are still on this side of paradise. As Christians, we still carry around with us our old self (Rom 6:6), who has been crucified with Christ but remains cloistered in darker corners of our lives. So, while the new self makes a Spirit-wrought effort to love and serve the Lord, the old self tries to make us spiritually lazy. We turn a deaf ear toward God’s commandments, and our minds no longer swim against the strong current of secular love. And, once we stop swimming against that current, once we feel the subtle ease of nonresistance, then our desire is no longer to obey God; rather, it is to obey the old, sinful self.

Such desires breed laziness, though its growth is hard to recognize. Indeed, our laziness is often hidden from us, which makes it all the more difficult to account for and defend against. But make no mistake: its subtlety means that it is more of an evil, not less of one. The insidiousness of lethargy marks it as one of Satan’s allies, a rogue servant of the coy snake. And so when God, as he always does in Scripture, distinguishes between a good nature and an evil nature, laziness is unequivocally grouped with the latter (Matt 25:21, 23, 26).

Just as many do not know the gravity and danger of sin, which stymies our every effort to be more holy, so we often do not consider the perils of lethargy—even when they are revealed to us. Our indwelling sin blinds us to them, as our old self tries to come back

from the dead and unite himself with us. Laziness is a part of that unholy effort, and if we become comfortable with it, then seeing it as a serious problem becomes impossible. We can forget that our soul is at stake: two parties have made a claim on it: Satan and the triune God of Scripture. As Christians, we know that only God's claim will hold, but for that very reason we must diligently guard against Satan's attempts to take what does not belong to him.

Starting right now, you and I will begin exploring the subtle sin of laziness as something that prevents us from living a holy life. We will see what we need to do to guard God's claim on our souls, and, as a result, we will discover the dark inner workings of laziness and how it reaches into our hearts and shows itself in our personalities. With the light of the Word as our guide, we will begin to see how ugly laziness is, how appalled we should be that it still haunts us. Then, when we have seen it for what it truly is, we will no longer be drawn to it. We will still have to face the painful reality of its existence in our lives, of course. But, like a cancer patient who has surgery to remove a tumor and then becomes disgusted when he sees it taken from his body, we will be ready to undergo spiritual surgery to have God himself cut out this deadly disease from our souls. Then we can continue to live a holy life before him, to our joy, and for his glory.

### **Laziness Leads to Heartache**

I would like to begin our exploration with my own context as a pastor and church leader in South Korea.

Whenever I think about my country, my heart swells in pain

for one reason: many Korean people are not really faithful; that is, they lack integrity and can often be dishonest, which has a bearing on the financial growth of the country, many times stunting that growth. In all of human history, the world has never seen a country's national income per capita (GNI) increase to \$10,000 in such a short amount of time as it did for South Korea. Currently, the GNI for developed countries is \$30,000; South Korea is not there yet, but as the country continues to advance technologically and economically, I think it is possible South Korea will reach that milestone in the near future. This may sound like good news, but we must always keep a close eye on *how* such figures are attained by an unfaithful country—by honest means or by deceitful and manipulative means. The former portend economic stability; the latter, economic precariousness. If we ever hope to see this figure rise in a stable way, we cannot continue to live unfaithfully.

In fact, I do not think it is impossible for the GNI per capita to exceed \$30,000. But if that is our desire, we must reform our thought and wake up to what is going on around us. Just look at the prevalence of dishonesty these days—particularly in real estate agents, for example. When South Korean real estate agents earn more than a million dollars and yet pay little in taxes, how can anyone expect integrity and a holy life? Integrity—being who you say you are—and holiness—being who God says you should be—are built upon the foundation of trust in God. If that foundation is replaced by materialism and greed, then integrity and holiness are distorted, if not destroyed. Integrity becomes a façade to get you the sinful things in your heart, and holiness becomes measured by the standards of the old sinful self. Rather than being who God

says we should be, we are driven to be who we say we want to be.

Too many people in Korea have fallen prey to this destitute way of life. Their lives are not characterized by faithfulness and integrity. That is why, when the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis occurred, although it was painful, I was somewhat thankful to God. Through such difficulties, many Korean citizens were awakened to the heartache that materialism offers, and they were deeply humbled. Some, by God's grace, even changed the way they thought about money and prosperity.

But a problem still remains, since Korean people, like everyone else, tend to forget things, which is both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength in the sense that Koreans can move beyond social and spiritual ills of the past. It is a weakness in the sense that sometimes those ills are useful reminders of how not to act in the future. But we tend to forget the past to our detriment, and this is all the more obvious when looking at Korean history, which twists and snakes through time like a great river. And because there are so many turns, it becomes difficult for us to even reconstruct, let alone change, the nation's historical path. And if we cannot reconstruct or change it, then it seems near impossible to gather what needs to be remembered, and to throw by the wayside what is better off forgotten.

Yet we must try to do so, or the current of the past will flow unchallenged, and we will continue drifting in the present on whatever course was set by our forebears. Only those who live their lives following the right principles can make new waves on the river and disturb the current. As this disturbance grows, it will unbalance others who have been drifting in the current, helping them to

become more aware of their surroundings so that they can change. Change will only come about with great waves on the water.

### The Witness of the Church

But who can live a life that makes such waves? Who can send ripples across a river that seems bent on its own course? Contrary to our expectations, this is not something that a prominent politician or philosopher can do, for such people are caught in the same current with everyone else. Only Christians, who should be wading *against* the current, can make the change. Only Christians who have endured much pain and have endlessly striven to live a holy life can live out their hope in faithfulness—a hope that counters the illusions of the world and sends ripples to meet the current of sloth. Therefore, I believe that our only option is to fix our eyes on the church.

Both spiritually and historically, the church needs to be its own river, a river pure and clean—the river of life (Rev 22:1)—that rushes to meet and drive back the murky river of the world, a river of lethargy. But this battle of rivers cannot be fought by one or two people; the whole body of Christ must have a hand in this, not merely paying lip service to the problem but actually addressing it, as many great Christians have already done in the past by living an upright and faithful life *with diligence*.

And as the church unites in our day to confront this great evil, we must remember the unsettling truth that a wide chasm still separates who we desire to be from who we actually are. If we do not constantly try to close that gap, the effects this will have on a

sinful, watching world are perilous. We can insult the witness of the church just as much as we can defend it.

Consider, for example, a careless Christian who is hired by a secular company, which believes that because this person follows Jesus, he will be a hard worker. But, rather than working hard on the job, the person uses company time to do church-related tasks such as making copies of bulletins or preparing for Bible studies. How can such a person expect to have a good influence on the holiness of others when he himself leaves diligence behind in the name of his religion and at the expense of his employer? Doing the right things includes doing them *at the right time*. Christians cannot proclaim to live a holy life and then treat those around them with disrespect. For, when they do this, they are no different from hypocrites. The painful reality is, however, that this phenomenon is why many non-Christians do not see the need for Christians to even exist. Does the world really need another group of people whose behavior contradicts their own words?

Put simply, if Christians want to have a positive influence on the world, they cannot live like everyone else; their words cannot war with their actions, for their integrity is the casualty. And non-Christians keep a close eye on our faults. The light of the Christian life is searing to the hearts of creatures lost in sin, so they will take every opportunity they can to drive it away. And what better way to drive back the light than to point out that those who praise its dawning are themselves full of shadow. If those who reject God find even the smallest piece of evidence that we are not who we claim to be, the glory of God will be hidden from them, and the power of true holiness will go elsewhere.

Remember this: the world is not moved and changed merely by Christians who are just as good and live just as diligently as non-Christians. If we are truly children of the heavenly Father, if the wicks of our lives burn with his light, then the lesser lights of the world should seem dark in comparison.

### **Working for Something Greater Than Money**

Notice here that we cannot separate our spiritual lives from our earthly work. We need to be just as diligent in the former as in the latter. What buds in relationship with the triune God should flower in the world of men. And when it does not, we hurt the witness of the church. For example, there was a pastor who proudly shared about a member who loved the church so much that, whenever this person was asked to come to church, the person would drop everything at work and come running. But as I was hearing this, my heart only grew heavy. For the Christian, his or her work is a mission field and calling, not something to be discarded as if it were spiritually irrelevant. It is true that the work of the church far outshines anything that the world strives after, but the purpose of the church is to be a light *in* the world, not a light removed from it. In fact, our greatest testimony to the world can often be our diligence and integrity within it, which is powered by our desire not for more money, but for something far more valuable: consistent Christlikeness.

It is unacceptable to go to work simply to earn money. God wants us to be conforming to Christ's image (Rom 8:29) all the time and in every place, not just when we are in church or at prayer

meeting. Surely, time spent at work is what helps us make money, but this time is far more than a means to an end. We work in order to further conform to Christ and thus bring him into every corner of our lives.

There is a story of a politician in England who was always stressed and frustrated by his work. One day, as he pulled up to his house, he saw a street cleaner working in an alley. The cleaner was sweating, and his clothes were modest and sullied, but he was very cheerful and even sang as he was cleaning. Curious about the cleaner's disposition, the politician got out of the car and asked him, "Do you enjoy your work so much that you would sing while you labor?" The cleaner replied, "Yes, I do. For I am cleaning up a corner of the beautiful world that God has created."

I myself worked in the secular world for many years. Before I came to faith, there was a time when I was so fed up with going to work that I considered resigning. But as soon as I met Jesus and was transformed by God's grace, I became thankful for my job, and I looked forward to going to work. In the same way that God was with Joseph in his labor, God was with me. During this time, I shared the gospel as much as I could with my coworkers. We had meals together and developed great camaraderie. And instead of trying to gain an advantage over others, bribing my boss with gifts in order to receive promotions, I worked hard to be someone efficient and useful to the company. I strove to be like Christ in the sense that I would do all I could to be an asset, passionately serving the needs that the company had rather than just doing the bare minimum. I came to work earlier in the morning than others, left work later, and was more focused during the day in carrying out

my responsibilities. As I was doing all this, God was with me and with our company. And I was not just working for money. I was working to do all that I could to bring Christ into every corner of my life.

If we want to fix the world, we must seek to become instruments in the hands of the triune God—we need to be effective at addressing the world’s problems. That is the only way that our words will have weight, for actions anchor words. If I say that I am *for others* in words alone, the Jesus that I preach will be merely verbal—not the life-altering Jesus of the gospel. Wherever we are, we must seek to be those who are needed, just as Jesus was needed as a carpenter and Paul as a tentmaker.

God has built upon the occupations of his people throughout history for his own purposes—David, we remember, was a shepherd who would eventually learn how to “tend” a nation—so he continues to use our occupations to shape us for his greater kingdom purposes. We will miss out on this shaping work of God if we are foolish enough to live as if sanctification only occurs within the walls of the church. Sanctification happens everywhere and anywhere for Christians.

Do not make the age-old mistake of thinking that serving in the church is more important and precious than living in the world. Dichotomizing the church and the world is something that nonbelievers do, for they cannot see what faith has to do with daily life. But Christians who serve God faithfully in the church know that they must live faithfully outside the church as well, for God is not interested in being Lord of only a part of our lives: he wants all of us. What’s more, if we dichotomize the church and the world

because we believe that we can segregate sinners and saints, we will be sorely disappointed. Whether in the church or in the world, we are always surrounded by sinners. The world, by God's common grace, is not entirely filthy; just as the church, in God's patience, is not entirely clean.

What we really need to pursue is a life that is *in* the world but not *of* the world, a life that engages with others who reject the God of the Bible while steadily relying on and proclaiming the lordship of that God. If we reverse the former idea—if we are *of* the world and yet pretend not to be *in* it—we do irreparable damage to the church. If we put on the garment of Christ (Rom 13:14) when we tithe, for example, but then cast him aside to manipulate others on our taxes or bribe those above us, we are bringing shame on the name of Christ.

Compounded with our faithful service to Christ in the world is our commitment to him beyond explicitly “Christian” actions. The fact that you open your business with a worship service instead of a traditional shamanistic ritual does not mean that it will be a business that glorifies God. That will depend practically on whether the business functions daily in accordance with the ways of God. We must constantly have a 1 Samuel 15 mentality: to obey is better than sacrifice. Christian rituals do not *establish* Christian character; they *confirm* it. For example, many successful business owners attend Open Door Church, where I serve as pastor. These people properly report all their earnings and pay their taxes. And this is not easy. I do not know how much these people are being taken advantage of by the tax authorities, but although they endure economic and cultural challenges, they desire to be faithful