

### Case Study Part 2 – “Profit”

#### 2.2 When Profits and Calling Collide

In our modern society, money is needed for almost everything on everyday activities. Without money for the necessities of life, our earthly existence can be challenging and miserable. Money can bring comfort, convenience, and a sense of security.

How much is enough? When is enough enough? Is there a conflict between the pursuit of money and the fulfilment of our calling? How do we differentiate them, and how do we decide?

**Romans 12:2** “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” (NIV)

**Matthew 7:12** “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” (NIV)

**Mark 12:33** “To love Him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (NIV)

**Matthew 6:24** “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” (NIV)

#### Case Study

Mark, a Christian, worked for a renowned multinational pharmaceutical company generating billions in annual profits. He is a medical scientist who led a cutting-edge research division in vaccine development. Mark’s achievements have been highly acclaimed, recognised, and rewarded for his expertise and contributions. However, after 25 years with the company, tired of working for a profit-only entity, he decided to venture out, along with his four younger Christian friends, to start a new vaccine research centre and pursue his dream of doing good for humanity.

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Mark and his friends dedicated themselves to using their collective scientific knowledge and expertise for the advancement of human welfare and the common good. Mark and his four friends are members of the same church, and each holds a leadership and ministry position.

A Christian angel investor, having learned of their zeal and lofty endeavour, decided to invest US\$25 million in the newly formed company, JIL Pharmaceutical Co., in return for a 25% share. Mark retains a 55% shareholding, while each of his four friends holds 5%.

In December 2019, the world first learned of Covid-19, which quickly ravaged Asian countries, swiftly moved to the developed world, and at lightning speed, engulfing the entire globe. Hundreds of millions became infected, millions perished, and countless jobs and businesses were lost. International borders were closed, inflicting untold misery on businesses and households, healthcare services, and government finances.

Amid the global health crisis and at unprecedented speed, several world-renowned pharmaceutical companies began rolling out vaccines approved by health authorities under emergency measures, launching the most massive worldwide vaccination program the world has ever known. However, there have been serious bottlenecks. Nations have resorted to “vaccine nationalism” and banned the export of key vaccine ingredients. Poor nations, unable to pay and feeling helpless, have witnessed thousands of deaths each day.

In early 2020, Mark and his team achieved a breakthrough by developing a vaccine with 95% efficacy, which was approved for use by health authorities in many countries, including the US. Through Mark’s previous work connections, JIL Pharmaceutical identified pharmaceutical companies in Israel and Malaysia that were able and willing to use their excess manufacturing capacities to produce and ship 250 million doses every quarter. The required ingredients were available locally.

Led by Mark, JIL Pharmaceutical is willing to waive its patent rights by sharing its vaccine programs and intellectual property internationally.

For vaccines produced in the factories in Israel and Malaysia, JIL Pharmaceutical is offering to sell its vaccines at cost +5% ex- factory (US\$2 per dose). Based on JIL’s cost analysis, it is estimated that most other approved vaccines are being sold at least cost + 500%.

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JIL's humanitarian endeavour quickly drew attention, and a U.S. pharmaceutical company, without a vaccine program for Covid-19 of its own, offered to buy JIL for US\$3 billion in cash outright. The buyout requires Mark and his friends to work for the buyer for a minimum of three years and to relinquish control over the manufacturing, marketing, and price-setting for the vaccine. The buyer retains the patents and intellectual property for the vaccine intact.

Meanwhile, the virus continues to mutate, with each strain becoming more contagious and deadly, causing vaccine developers to appear to be falling behind the curve. Poor countries, even in the best of times, have poor healthcare infrastructure and are becoming desperate and helpless.

With the prospect of becoming an instant billionaire, Mark is dazzled by the surprising and uninvited offer and is going through intense inner turmoil. His angel investor and four friends are urging him to sell. Mark's wife and children support whatever decision he makes but only require that he earnestly seeks God's will. Mark, a man of God, remembers his divine calling, his mission, and commitment in starting JIL, and is fasting while seeking the counsel of the Holy Spirit. Mark is now seeking your godly advice.

### Discussion

1. Mark is your good friend and he holds you in high esteem. What advice would you give him? List out his options and their consequences, and walk him through each of these options.
2. The angel investor and four friends advised Mark that he should cash out. With billions in cash, they can do numerous good and wonderful deeds for the Kingdom of God; their contributions to society need not be restricted to the field of medicine and vaccination. Do you agree with this?