

# Trusting God in the Tension: Growing a Business While Maintaining Life-Work Balance

John Scroggins, May 2025

I remember my work habits of the first few years of the nonprofit (The Baton Exchange) I founded. Working crazy hours. Not taking enough time to rest. Wondering how the bills were going to get paid and if the doors would remain open. The excitement of new ideas percolating in my mind at all hours of the day and night, jumping out of bed to write them down in my work journal so as not to forget them.

But then I put together a weekend leadership retreat for our members about sabbath. As is often the case when you teach something, I learned something- and was challenged to personally apply it. What did I learn? That a crucial part of keeping sabbath was trusting God with what did get done, for sure, but especially for what didn't happen because I was intentionally disengaging so that I might rest. So that I might re-create. So that "my" organization was again intentionally put into its proper place: it was God's, and I was the steward, not the owner. I could trust God to do as He wished. He's not a slavedriver, and He is a provider.

I remember looking back at a busy week and praying, "God, I've put in a good week of work. However, I didn't get everything done that I wanted to- or needed to. If it's important, please make it happen. Amen." Time and again He came through. I learned to rest. Those crazy hours and being consumed with what needs done still occasionally happen, but they aren't an ongoing pattern, even though I constantly see opportunities to try this or that to grow the organization.

I still see personal areas of growth opportunities for me and how they are tied to trusting God for my work. Like not seeing exercise as an interruption to my work day, but as an integral part to being fit to work with excellence. And that's going to again require trusting God with what's not getting done while I'm working on my health.

The entrepreneurial journey is both exhilarating and exhausting. Starting and growing a business demands long hours, tough decisions, and relentless pursuit of growth. Yet for believers, there's a deeper layer of complexity—how to grow without compromising the rhythms of family, rest, and spiritual health. During this tension, God calls us to something greater than hustle. He invites us into trust.

## **The Call to Build and the Call to Rest**

Many Christian entrepreneurs feel a divine call to create. Business, when aligned with God's principles, can serve as a platform for influence, generosity, and impact. But the same call that inspires us can, if unchecked, lead to burnout. The need to grow, hit metrics, and please clients can quietly take priority over the need to spend unhurried time with God, be present with loved ones, or simply rest.

At the heart of this tension is a question of trust: *Do we believe that God is ultimately responsible for our success, or do we subtly begin to believe it all depends on us?*

## **Growing Through Surrender**

In the early stages of a business, it often feels like everything rides on your shoulders. You're making sales, sending invoices, troubleshooting issues, and doing all the things that keep the business afloat. As the business begins to grow, the pressure increases—more employees to lead, more revenue to chase, more complexity to

manage. It's easy to justify putting God on hold, even with the best of intentions. "I'll pray later. I'll Sabbath when things calm down."

But Scripture reminds us of a better way:

*"Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain."* – Psalm 127:1

Growing a business is not inherently wrong—growth can be a good and godly thing. But when growth comes at the expense of God's guidance, we labor in vain. Surrender is not passivity. It is the intentional choice to trust that God's way leads to sustained success, even when it seems counterintuitive.

### **Practicing Trust in the Tension**

How do we practically trust God while growing? It starts with rhythm. The Israelites were commanded to rest every seventh day and trust that God would provide. That same principle applies today. Establishing rhythms of rest—daily prayer, weekly Sabbath, family dinners, intentional time away from screens—is not a luxury. It's a declaration that God is in control.

Here are a few ways to live this out:

#### **1. Begin Each Day With God, Not Goals**

It's tempting to start the day checking emails or reviewing KPIs. But beginning with Scripture and prayer re-centers your heart. It reminds you that your identity is not in your output. It helps you operate from a place of peace, not panic.

#### **2. Define Success Biblically**

The world measures success by revenue and reach. God measures success by faithfulness and fruit. Are you loving your employees well? Are you operating with integrity? Are you making space for your family? If your business is booming but your soul is dry and your relationships strained, is that really success?

#### **3. Embrace the Gift of Limits**

One of the hardest truths for entrepreneurs to accept is that we have limits. You cannot be everywhere, solve every problem, or answer every email. God created you with limitations on purpose—to remind you that He is God, and you are not. Embracing your limits is a spiritual discipline. It opens space for God to move.

#### **4. Invite God Into Strategic Decisions**

Don't just ask God to bless your plans. Ask Him to shape them. When you're hiring, investing, or considering expansion, pray. Listen. Wait. God is not just concerned with your heart but with your decisions. He cares about who you hire, what clients you take on, and how you grow.

#### **5. Build a Business That Serves, Not Consumes**

God gives us influence so we can bless others. A business aligned with His purposes will value people over profit, rest over burnout, and integrity over shortcuts. That kind of business is sustainable and honors God in the process.

### **When the Balance Breaks**

Even with the best intentions, there will be seasons where the balance tilts. A major launch, a financial crisis, or a leadership transition can demand extra time and attention. God is gracious. He knows our limitations and understands our seasons. The goal is not perfection, but attentiveness. When you feel the grow tipping too far, use it as a sign to pause and re-align.

Check in with your soul:

- Am I growing more anxious or more at peace?
- Are my closest relationships flourishing or fraying?
- Is God a partner in my work or an afterthought?

These questions don't bring shame; they bring clarity.

### **Trust Is Not Just a Feeling—It's a Framework**

Trusting God isn't only about feeling peaceful. It's about building your business on the framework of His wisdom and ways. It's refusing to sacrifice your family on the altar of ambition. It's honoring the Sabbath even when emails pile up. It's choosing patience over panic when growth feels slow. It's choosing faith over fear when taking bold steps forward.

In the kingdom of God, rest and results are not enemies. They are partners.

Jesus modeled this beautifully. He was immensely productive—healing, teaching, leading—but never hurried. He often withdrew to quiet places to pray. He napped in storms. He never let the urgency of others dictate the pace of His purpose. That's our model.

### **Final Encouragement**

If you're in the thick of growing your business and feel the weight of tension between growth and rest, know this: God is not asking you to choose between success and faithfulness. He's inviting you to trust Him *in* the tension. He's not a silent observer of your work; He's the sustaining force behind it.

As you grow, root your business in something deeper than strategy—root it in surrender. When you trust God with both your business and your boundaries, you'll find that growth doesn't have to come at the cost of your soul.

Your business can thrive. Your family can flourish. And your faith can deepen—all at the same time.

Trust the One who called you to build. He will carry you through every season of growth.

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**Quote:** “Busyness makes us stop caring about things we care about. But do you play enough? Do you risk enough, and bask in God's creation enough, and do some things for no reason other than that you'll be dead soon enough anyhow, so why not live a little now? The worst hallucination busyness conjures is a conviction that I am God. All depends on me. How will the right things happen at the right time if I'm not pushing and pulling and watching and worrying.” Mark Buchanan, author of *The Rest of God*

### **ASK YOUR MENTOR**

1. Can you resonate with the tension between rest and work?
2. In what ways have you attempted to trust God with the need for rest with the demands of running a business?
3. What if any boundaries have you created to help you not be consumed by your business?
4. What do you know now that you wish you would have known earlier?
5. What might be other things that you have learned about this topic?

**Reflect & Respond/Self-Rate- MENTEE**

Rate the degree to which you practice trusting God in the tension. 5 = frequently

	1	2	3	4	5
Begin Each Day With God, Not Goals					
Define Success Biblically					
Embrace the Gift of Limits					
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Build a Business That Serves, Not Consumes					

**Go Do**

1. Ask God, "What do you think I should prioritize the above?" Listen. What would it look like to trust God with this?
2. Practice. How I will practice or what I will do with this over the next month:

**Sources & Resources**

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