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**Fellowship of Companies for Christ
 East of the River Chapter
 January 20, 2016**

- Welcome! Opening prayer and praise reports
- **Today's topic: You Gain when you Retain**

“A gracious woman retaineth honor, and strong men retain riches.” --Proverbs 11:16

As a “minister in the marketplace” for 30+ years, I’ve always preferred being involved with, and leading, ministries that serve working men and women. After all, the workplace consists of about 50% males and 50% females. Why would I deliberately limit my ministry to half of the people I’m called to serve?

With that said, our culture has become excessively unisex to the point of being ludicrous--in fundamental denial of the reality that God created men and women to be *different*. In this small group, we have business owners who are men and women. Does our sex make us “different” business owners in the Lord? I would suggest yes. *Not based on deep-rooted biases or prejudices*, but on the core fact that men are men and women are women. Distinctive characteristics of each sex should be considered.

To retain = to keep, to hold (as in place, condition or position)

Gracious = kind, merciful, compassionate, modest, humble, courteous, prudent, wise

Honor = esteem, respect, distinction

Strong = energetic, industrious, valiant, robust, healthy, durable, difficult to break

Riches = wealth, value, abundance

Please don’t bristle about or misconstrue where I’m going today. As we look at definitions of gracious and strong, these characteristics are not mutually exclusive. It doesn’t mean that men don’t need to be gracious or that women don’t need to be strong. To try to discern the distinctions, look at the opposites:

Ladies, what is the opposite of being gracious?

Gentlemen, what is the opposite of being strong?

If female business owners excelled in graciousness, and male business owners excelled in strength, would that help them to retain their walk with the Lord and retain their businesses? Let’s chat about it.

Evaluate your biz from 1 (weak) to 10 (strong) in terms of graciousness (F) and strength (M).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits might you enjoy by being more gracious (F) or stronger (M)?										
What specific actions can you take to do so?										

- Next meetings: God Willing, on February 3 and February 17
- Upcoming events/news
- Closing prayer