

## From Profit to Mission: An Exegesis of Acts 18:1-5 and the Biblical Foundations of Christian Entrepreneurship in the Online Economy

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Acts 18:1-5,  
Kewirausahaan Kristen,  
Ekonomi Online

*Received :* 10 December 2025

*Revised :* 15 January 2026

*Accepted:* 30 February 2026

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### ABSTRACT

This article aims to reconstruct a Biblical theology of Christian entrepreneurship based on Acts 18:1-5 by positioning work as participation in God's mission. The study examines the concepts of work, income, mission, and Kingdom orientation through a qualitative exegetical method within a canonical framework, correlating it with Matthew 6:33, 6:24, and 2 Corinthians 5:15. The analysis focuses on the narrative context of Paul's tentmaking ministry in Corinth as the primary data unit. The findings indicate that profit is subordinate to Kingdom purposes, business serves as a space for testimony, and income supports mission. This study proposes a missional entrepreneurship model that is relevant for digital economy practices and contemporary theological ethics

## **INTRODUCTION**

The development of the digital economy over the past two decades has transformed patterns of production, distribution, and consumption globally, including in Indonesia. Platform-based trade (e-commerce), social media, and marketplaces allow individuals to become business actors without significant geographical limitations. Southeast Asia's digital economy continues to experience significant growth, with the e-commerce sector as the main contributor (Google, Temasek, 2023; Secretariat, 2023). This growth encourages more people to view online business as a means to improve personal and family welfare. In this context, profit orientation has become the dominant paradigm shaping ways of thinking, strategies, and business goals. In other words, the digital economy is not merely a technological phenomenon but also a phenomenon of values and life orientation.

However, amidst this growth, a fundamental theological issue arises. In the daily practice of many believers, faith is often separated from economic activity. Ministry is understood primarily as church-related activities, such as preaching, teaching, or being involved in the organizational structure of the church, while business is considered a neutral realm mainly concerned with material needs. In fact, theologically, work and vocation are never separate from the relationship with God. Volf emphasizes that the separation between faith and work is a form of modern dualism that ignores the theological dimension of economic activity (Volf, 2001). Thus, business that is not theologically reflected upon has the potential to become a space detached from the orientation of God's Kingdom.

This tension becomes even clearer when compared with the testimony of the Bible. Christian life is called to be centered on God and His kingdom, as emphasized in Matthew 6:33, which states that believers must first seek the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, the same text warns of the danger of making wealth a master competing with God (Matt. 6:24). A life orientation redeemed in Christ also requires believers to no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and was raised for them (2 Corinthians 5:15). When the economy becomes the center of life and the main goal, there is a shift from theocentrism to economocentrism. It is here that the tension between faith and profit orientation needs to be critically and biblically re-examined.

Therefore, a theological reconstruction is needed that does not stop at business ethics, such as honesty or integrity, but rather touches the very purpose of the economy itself in the light of the *missio Dei*. From this perspective, economic activity is not only evaluated based on how it is carried out, but also on its direction and orientation. Bosch emphasizes that God's mission encompasses the entire life of His people, not just formal church activities (Bosch, 2011). If so, then Christian entrepreneurship in the context of the online economy needs to be understood as a potential participation in God's work in the world.

As the biblical basis for this reconstruction, this study focuses on Acts 18:1-5, which records Paul's tentmaking practice in Corinth. This narrative shows that tentmaking was not merely a survival strategy, but part of the dynamics of ministry and gospel proclamation. Using a literary exegesis approach, this study

raises two main questions: (1) how Paul's tentmaking practice in Acts 18:1-5 is understood as an integral part of God's mission; and (2) how this principle reconstructs the purpose of Christian entrepreneurship in an online economy that tends to be profit-oriented. The aim of this study is to formulate a biblical foundation that guides Christian entrepreneurs to transform a profit-oriented mindset into conscious participation in God's mission within the contemporary workplace.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. The Concept of Work and Economics in Christian Theology

In Christian theology, work is not understood merely as an economic activity, but as a calling from God that encompasses all dimensions of human life. A calling is not only related to church ministry, but also to everyday professions carried out in responsibility to God and others. Contemporary studies in the theology of work indicate that the concept of calling needs to be restored as a human existential orientation, so that work is understood as a response to God's initiative in the world (David Kristanto, Hengki B. Tompo, Frans H.M. Silalahi, Linda A. Ersada, Tony Salurante, Moses Wibowo, 2024). Thus, work is not spiritually neutral, but becomes a space where faith and practical life intersect.

However, the Bible also warns about the dangers of distorting work orientation. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus states that a person cannot serve both God and money. Money is not just cash, but a symbol of a value system that makes profit the center of life. For this reason, work can become worship, but it can also turn into the worship of material things. Studies on the relationship between faith, work, and poverty in Pauline thought show that economic activity is always connected to faithfulness to God in real life (Wu, 2024). Thus, the economy is never truly neutral, but always points toward a certain form of devotion.

The new orientation of Christian life is further explained in 2 Corinthians 5:15, which states that believers no longer live for themselves, but for Christ. This verse affirms the transformation of human existential purpose after redemption. Economic activities, including business and profit, fall within the scope of this changed purpose. Therefore, work is not merely a means to fulfill needs, but a part of life directed toward Christ. This perspective shows that the Christian calling shifts the focus of success from ownership to service, making the economy a medium for witnessing faith (David Kristanto, Hengki B. Tompo, Frans H.M. Silalahi, Linda A. Ersada, Tony Salurante, Moses Wibowo, 2024). Thus, economic success in the Christian faith cannot be separated from the relationship with Christ.

The principle of life orientation reaches its climax in the Gospel of Matthew 6:33, which commands believers to seek first the Kingdom of God. Within this framework, the economy does not become the center of life but is placed under God's governance. The theology of work perspective asserts that the relationship with God reorganizes the purposes of human work so that work becomes a means of participating in God's work in the world (Wu, 2024). Thus, Christian theology of work moves beyond merely engaging in livelihood

activities towards a theocentric orientation that interprets the economy as a space for faithfulness in obedience.

## **2. Missional Theology (Missio Dei)**

Modern mission theology understands that mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but rather the work of God Himself in the world. The concept of *missio Dei* affirms that God is the primary sender, while the church and believers participate in this work. Bosch explains that the church does not have a mission; rather, it is God's mission that has a church (Bosch, 2011). This perspective broadens the meaning of ministry from liturgical activities to the entire life of believers. Thus, mission is not limited to church programs, but encompasses the entire existence of God's people in the world.

This understanding is further emphasized in contemporary mission studies which see that the identity of the church is inherently missionary. In the context of digital and global social change, the church is called to be present transformatively in various areas of life, including virtual and economic spaces (Mpofu, 2021). This shows that mission does not stop at verbal proclamation but involves presence and witness within continuously evolving social dynamics. Thus, the missionary dimension of the church is contextual and extends to all structures of modern life.

Within this framework, every dimension of life, including work and the economy, exists within the context of mission. Therefore, professional activities cannot be separated from the missionary identity of believers. A missiological approach to the world of work emphasizes that the church is present in the world not only through institutions but also through believers who work and create amid society (Cronshaw et al., 2024). Thus, work is not merely a means of earning a living, but a space for the presence of God's Kingdom in the midst of society.

Furthermore, the relationship between mission and daily life shows that participation in the *missio Dei* involves ethical, social, and spiritual responsibilities in the public sphere. When work is understood as part of God's sending, the economy is no longer outside the realm of mission, but becomes an arena for participation in God's work of redemption in the world. This perspective affirms that the missionary identity of believers is not limited to the church space, but is manifest in the world of work and everyday social interactions (Cronshaw et al., 2024; Mpofu, 2021). Thus, missional theology opens a conceptual space to understand entrepreneurship as part of participation in God's work.

### 3. Entrepreneurship in Christian Studies

Christian entrepreneurship studies generally emphasize business ethics: honesty, social responsibility, and integrity. This approach is important because it reinforces the moral testimony of believers in the economic world (Ante & Sutrisno, 2025). However, the ethical focus often stops at proper behavior in business without addressing the theological purpose of the economic activity itself.

These limitations create a need to view entrepreneurship not just as a moral practice, but as an instrument of participation in God's mission. When the economy is understood as a calling and commissioning, business becomes not only a field of integrity but also a means of witness and service. Thus, the relationship between faith and business does not stop at "how to do business correctly," but develops into "for what purpose to do business within God's plan."

Based on the study above, the conceptual framework of this research is formed as follows: Economy → Vocation → Mission. Economic activity is understood as a divine calling (vocation), and that calling is a participation in God's mission (*missio Dei*). This framework serves as the theological basis before entering the exegetical analysis of the Biblical texts that are the focus of the research.

### METHODOLOGY

This study uses a literary exegesis method within the framework of biblical-theological analysis, which involves reading the biblical text historically, literarily, and canonically before contextualizing it. This approach is employed because the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles not only reports events but also shapes practical theology through the concrete actions of the apostolic figures. Narrative interpretation requires reading that pays attention to the storyline, characters, and the theological purpose of the author so that the message of the text is not reduced merely to practical morals (Pabisa & Pratiwi, 2024). Thus, theological meaning arises from the structure of the story itself.

The first step is an analysis of the historical context of Acts 18:1-5, particularly the life and work background of the Apostle Paul and his relationship with the community. Understanding Paul's life background helps to see why he integrated work and ministry as part of his ministry strategy (Budiman & Doma, 2021). Second, a narrative structure analysis is conducted to find the connection between manual labor activities and the preaching of the Gospel within the pericope's flow. Third, the theological meaning of Paul's actions is interpreted as an integration of faith and work with a missionary character (Yeniretnowati & Angin, 2021).

Fourth, the research conducts a canonical correlation with other apostolic texts to ensure the consistency of the theology of work in the New Testament. Fifth, the results of the exegesis are synthesized into a biblical theological framework of work as a divine calling related to wellbeing and the testimony of faith (Purwanto, 2025). Finally, this theological framework is contextualized into the online economy so that entrepreneurship is understood not merely as a profit

activity, but as participation in God's mission today. This approach ensures that contemporary applications remain rooted in the message of the text.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Narrative Context of the Acts of the Apostles 18:1-5**

The narrative of Acts 18:1-5 shows an important phase in Paul's ministry journey when he arrived in the city of Corinth, a strategic trading hub in the Roman world. Corinth was known as a cosmopolitan city with high economic activity, significant population mobility, and strong cultural pluralism. This situation was not just a geographical backdrop, but also a theological setting, as Paul's ministry strategy was always connected to the socio-economic conditions of the place he was in. Contextual research shows that Paul was able to adapt his missionary approach to the social environment of the community without altering the core of the Gospel, even amid the pressures and cultural complexities of the city of Corinth (Budiman & Doma, 2021). Thus, from the beginning of the narrative, it is evident that the economic sphere became a natural part of the ministry space.

Upon arriving in Corinth, Paul met Aquila and Priscilla, a Jewish couple who also worked as tentmakers. This meeting was not a narrative coincidence, but rather a pattern of ministry. He stayed and worked with them because they shared the same profession. This fact shows that working relationships served as a means for forming a community of faith. Paul's background as a worker was not seen as diminishing his apostolic authority, but rather became a model for God's servants in ministering contextually within society (Budiman & Doma, 2021). In other words, the community was formed through a shared profession before developing into a community of faith.

Paul's reason for working was not merely economic, but rather a mission strategy. He served in the synagogue every Sabbath while maintaining his job on regular days. This pattern shows that manual work is not a distraction from ministry, but part of the ministry itself. Paul's mission approach demonstrates social adaptability so that the Gospel could naturally be present in people's lives (Pabisa & Pratiwi, 2024). Work becomes a bridge for the presence of the Gospel. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul began to focus more on preaching the word, indicating that his previous work served to support his ministry. This strategy demonstrates a flexible mission model: the economy sustains the Gospel, and the Gospel provides direction for the economy. Therefore, in its narrative context, working is not merely a practical necessity, but a theological choice, namely to present God's testimony through daily life within the community.

## 2. The Meaning of Paul's Tentmaking

Paul's tentmaking practice in Acts 18:1-5 cannot be reduced merely to an effort to survive in the city of Corinth. Although historically the work of making tents was a common skill among Jewish rabbis, Luke's narrative places this activity within a broader mission framework. Paul worked alongside Aquila and Priscilla not due to a lack of support, but as part of his contextual approach. Research on Paul's contextual mission shows that his ministry strategy always considered the local social and economic dynamics so that the Gospel could be received without unnecessary cultural barriers (Pabisa & Pratiwi, 2024). Thus, Paul's manual labor became an incarnational means of presenting the Gospel within the real-life context of urban society.

Furthermore, tentmaking is not merely a financial strategy to avoid dependence on the congregation. In his letters, Paul emphasizes that he had the right to receive support but chose to work so as not to be a burden and to maintain the credibility of his ministry (cf. 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8). The background of Paul's life and ministry shows that this decision was rooted in a sense of calling, not economic pressure (Budiman & Doma, 2021). Choosing to work actually strengthened the integrity of his apostleship in a society sensitive to the economic motives of itinerant teachers. Therefore, the financial aspect exists within the framework of testimony, not as the primary goal.

Furthermore, the meaning of tentmaking in Paul should be understood as a missionary strategy. The integration of faith and work in Paul's ministry shows that the workplace is a legitimate and effective mission field (Yeniretnowati & Angin, 2021). Work becomes a point of relational encounter, builds social networks, and opens a space for faith dialogue. Moreover, theological reflection on work from a biblical perspective affirms that work is part of the divine calling oriented toward well-being and witness in the public sphere (Purwanto, 2025). Thus, tentmaking is not merely an economic activity parallel to ministry, but a form of active participation in the *missio Dei*.

In this exegetical light, Paul's work in Corinth represents an integrative model: work supports the Gospel, and the Gospel gives meaning to work. This strategy is relevant for rethinking the relationship between profit and mission in the context of the contemporary economy.

## 3. Work Relationships and Evangelism

Acts 18:1-5 shows that Paul's ministry in Corinth took place alongside his work activities. He worked on regular days with Aquila and Priscilla, and then testified in the synagogue on the Sabbath. This pattern indicates that the proclamation of the Gospel was not separated from economic routines, but occurred within them. The integration of faith and work is understood as a mission strategy that presents the Gospel through everyday life, not just through formal preaching (Yeniretnowati & Angin, 2021). Thus, work becomes a medium of existential witness that builds the credibility of the messenger before the message is delivered verbally.

This relationship also shows that economic activity supports the independence of the mission. Paul chose to work so that his ministry would not be suspected as an attempt to gain personal profit, especially in the context of the

Greco-Roman world, which was familiar with many itinerant teachers motivated by financial gain. Research on Paul's life background indicates that his decision to work strengthened the integrity of his apostleship and safeguarded the purity of his preaching motivation (Budiman & Doma, 2021). Therefore, economy does not eliminate the mission, but rather protects the mission from compromising its motivation. This financial independence allows the Gospel to be preached freely without the pressure of social patronage.

Furthermore, the workplace opens relational opportunities for the Gospel. Paul did not start his ministry from a religious structure, but from a working community: a tent-making house. Professional relationships create social closeness that allows faith dialogue to develop naturally. This approach aligns with contextual mission theology, which sees social life as the primary place for the Gospel to encounter people (Pabisa & Pratiwi, 2024). In other words, the Gospel is present through networks of relationships before it is present through institutional structures. The workplace becomes an incarnational space where the message of faith is translated into shared life experiences.

The theological reflection on work also emphasizes that work is part of the divine calling that bears witness to God within society (Purwanto, 2025). Therefore, work and mission do not stand as two parallel activities, but as a single integrated reality. Within this framework, proclaiming the Gospel is not merely a verbal church activity, but a presence in life that can be seen, trusted, and then heard. Paul's model shows that the Gospel is conveyed through the integrity of work, economic independence, and authentic social relationships.

#### **4. Theological Synthesis of the Pericope**

The exegesis of Acts 18:1-5 shows an integrated theological pattern between work, economy, and mission. First, work appears as a means of the presence of the Gospel. Paul does not see his tent-making activity as outside his apostolic calling, but rather as an incarnational medium to bring faith into everyday life. Contemporary theology of work emphasizes that the Christian calling is not limited to the church space, but takes place in the public sphere through real professional practice (Purwanto, 2025). Thus, work is not merely a neutral context for faith, but an arena where the Gospel becomes visible before it is verbally proclaimed.

Second, income is understood as a support for the mission. Paul worked not because he rejected the support of the church, but to maintain the purity of the preaching and relational freedom in proclaiming the Gospel. The integration of faith and work is understood as a missionary strategy that allows ministry to continue without suspicion of economic motives (Yeniretnowati & Angin, 2021). This principle shows that economic resources have a theological function: supporting the sustainability of ministry. From this perspective, profit is no longer the ultimate goal, but an instrument of participation in the work of God.

Third, profession becomes a space for testimony. The working relationship of Paul with Aquila and Priscilla shows that mission develops through everyday social networks, not just through formal religious activities. A contextual mission approach views social spaces as points of encounter between

the Gospel and people, so professional interactions become natural pathways for testimony (Pabisa & Pratiwi, 2024). Therefore, a profession not only supports biological life but also shapes an authentic space for faith dialogue. In fact, research on Paul's life confirms that the integrity of life and work becomes the foundation of apostolic credibility in the eyes of society (Budiman & Doma, 2021). This means that testimony arises from a life that is seen before it is heard.

The theological synthesis of this pericope produces a framework: work presents the Gospel, earnings sustain the mission, and profession becomes a space for testimony. Within this framework, the economy no longer stands as a separate secular domain, but rather as an integral part of believers' participation in God's redemptive work in the world.

## **A. Reconstruction of Christian Entrepreneurship Theology**

### **1. Canonical Correlation**

The first canonical correlation for reconstructing Christian entrepreneurship theology is Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...". In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, this text does not reject material needs, but rather reorients life amidst economic concerns. The kingdom of God is placed as an ontological and ethical priority, while life's necessities are understood as consequences of God's provision. The kingdom of God is the mediation of God's presence in the world, realized through the practice of justice and righteousness in the concrete life of believers (Yang, 2014). The kingdom of God is not limited to a liturgical space, but requires the translation of divine values into actual social contexts, including professional and economic spheres. Thus, seeking the kingdom of God means living out God's rule in all dimensions of life.

The reflection shows that Jesus' teaching is not anti-economy, but rather against an orientation that prioritizes material concerns. The kingdom becomes the primary norm guiding all activities, while profit is subordinate. Therefore, Christian entrepreneurship must start from a theological question: does this business bring about justice, truth, and peace as signs of God's reign? Life orientation determines the direction of economic practice.

The second correlation is found in 2 Corinthians 5:15, that Christ died so that those who live 'no longer live for themselves, but for Him.' This text speaks of existential transformation as a result of the work of redemption. A new identity in Christ produces a new life purpose that is Christ-centered. The integration of faith and work within the framework of mission shows that the professional life of believers should be directed toward the interests of Christ, not merely personal ambition (Yeniretnowati & Angin, 2021). Thus, Christian entrepreneurship is not merely an economic activity, but a participation in God's work in the world through the talents and resources entrusted to them.

The theological reflection on contextual mission also emphasizes that all dimensions of life, including the economy, are spaces for the actualization of the divine calling (Pabisa & Pratiwi, 2024). Thus, a Christocentric orientation shapes a new paradigm in establishing and running a business. A redeemed purpose in life reorganizes motivation, strategy, and orientation toward success.

The third correlation is Matthew 6:24 about the impossibility of serving two masters: God and money. This text illustrates the fundamental conflict between theological loyalty and economic greed. In the context of entrepreneurship, this verse serves as a warning against the absolutization of profit. Contemporary work theology emphasizes that work is a calling, but when profit becomes the master, work turns into an idol (Purwanto, 2025). This principle aligns with the ethical reflection in Matthew 6:19-24, which stresses total devotion to God and the danger of a heart attached to worldly wealth (Tarigan, 2025). Tarigan points out that commitment to God requires undivided loyalty and complete devotion, so money should not take the position of life authority. Thus, the master conflict is not merely an individual moral issue, but a matter of the heart's structure and the orientation of the business system. Christian entrepreneurship must constantly evaluate its motivations and practices so as not to shift loyalty from God to mammon. Economic freedom is only genuine when it is under submission to God.

## **2. Economic Goal Transformation**

Exegesis of Acts 18:1-5 reveals that work in the Christian faith does not stop at economic functions, but rather undergoes a transformation of purpose. In general paradigms, business activity moves from the most basic need, namely survival. Humans work to sustain life, meet daily needs, and avoid economic uncertainty. However, Christian work theology views the provision of life as part of God's stewardship, not the ultimate goal of economic activity. The integration of faith and work shows that work is a space of obedience to God in daily life, not merely a mechanism for survival (Yeniretnowati & Angin, 2021). Thus, life's needs are met, but the meaning of work goes beyond survival.

The next stage is life comfort. In modern society, including the digital economy, efforts are often directed towards stability, time flexibility, and a better quality of life. However, when comfort becomes the main orientation, work risks losing its theological dimension. Christian work spirituality, on the other hand, places productivity as part of a missionary calling: working with good quality because of living before God and for witnessing to others (Hatta & Lie, 2022). This means that comfort is not rejected, but is positioned as a secondary consequence of obedience, not the primary goal of effort.

The next orientation is wealth. The modern entrepreneurial world often measures success through the accumulation of capital. However, a faith-based perspective views wealth as a means, not an identity. Research on faith-based social entrepreneurship confirms that faith and business can go hand in hand when profits are directed toward social and spiritual impact, not just personal interest (Munir et al., 2023). Thus, wealth changes its function: from a symbol of success to a tool of divine responsibility.

This transformation leads to three new goals. First, the economy becomes a service. The integration of business and service positions enterprise as a form of devotion to God and fellow human beings, so that professional activities are no longer spiritually neutral (Eppang et al., 2024). Second, business becomes participation in God's mission. Christian work spirituality affirms that working is part of the calling to witness and bring the Kingdom of God into the public

sphere (Hatta & Lie, 2022). Third, economic activity becomes worship. When work orientation is directed to God, the entire process of production, customer relations, and profit utilization becomes a concrete expression of worship.

Thus, the reconstruction of Christian entrepreneurship theology not only improves business ethics but also transforms the teleology of economics: from survival to service, from comfort to mission, and from wealth to worship. It is this transformation of purpose that makes economic activity not just a market activity, but a practice of faith in the world.

### **3. New Paradigm: Missional Entrepreneurship**

The reconstruction of Christian entrepreneurship theology ultimately leads to a new paradigm: missional entrepreneurship. Within this framework, business is no longer primarily understood as a means of capital accumulation, but as part of participating in God's work in the world. Consequently, profit is not the ultimate goal, but an indicator of the sustainability of ministry. The perspective of integrating faith and work affirms that the profession of believers falls within the domain of divine calling, so economic success should be directed toward the glory of God, not merely personal satisfaction (Perangin Angin et al., 2021). Thus, profit has an instrumental, rather than ultimate, function.

The second characteristic is viewing work as a space for testimony. The workplace is one of the main public spaces where faith is lived out in practice. Christian entrepreneurial spirituality sees business practices, transaction honesty, product quality, relationships with customers, and social responsibility as forms of credible non-verbal gospel witness (Hatta & Lie, 2022). Testimony occurs not only through words, but also through a distinctive work ethic. Therefore, the marketplace becomes a daily mission field, not merely a location for economic activity.

The third characteristic is that income supports God's work. From the perspective of integral mission, business provides resources that enable the sustainability of ministry, whether through generosity, community empowerment, or the creation of dignified jobs. Research on faith-based social entrepreneurship shows that a faith orientation encourages the use of profits for social and spiritual impact, making business a channel of blessing for the community (Munir et al., 2023). Thus, income does not stop at personal consumption but returns to the purposes of God's kingdom.

The missional entrepreneurship paradigm reorganizes the relationship between faith and economy: business is not a competitor of church ministry, but an expansion of the church's presence in public life. When profit is positioned as a means, work as testimony, and income as mission support, business activities transform into the liturgy of daily life. This is where Christian entrepreneurship functions not only as an economic strategy, but as a contextual mission practice within modern society.

## **B. Implementation in the Online Economy Challenges of the Digital Business World**

In the practice of digital business, Christian entrepreneurial actors not only face internal economic motivations but also structural challenges inherent to the digital ecosystem. One of the main pressures is the algorithm and profit orientation that dominates the modern marketplace. E-commerce platforms and social media use algorithms to optimize visibility, interaction, and transactions, but the algorithm parameters often prioritize factors that increase engagement and profit, rather than ethical values or the common good (Saepulloh & Andi, 2025). In this context, businesses are often caught in the dynamics of "algorithmic capitalism," where the ability to compete depends on adapting to the logic of data and content monetization, rather than solely on product quality or business integrity. As a result, digital entrepreneurs face a dilemma: adapt to the logic of algorithms or uphold kingdom values that may conflict with the pattern of maximum profit.

The next challenge arises from the phenomenon of personal branding as an identity in the digital economy. Personal branding has become an important strategy to strengthen business positions and professional networks on online platforms (Baskoro & Siallagan, 2024). Self-imaging not only functions to attract customers but also shapes the market's perception of a business's value and persona. In an extremely competitive digital environment, personal branding becomes a kind of 'social currency' that can increase visibility and economic opportunities. However, this brings a moral challenge: when digital image and reputation become the primary goals, the risk of blurring personal integrity and spiritual commitment increases. In such situations, Christian businesses need to be careful so that their branding is not merely 'professionalism for profit,' but rather a reflection of a faith-based identity that directs service toward others.

Moreover, consumerism is another significant challenge. Digital advancements have accelerated the consumption process and encouraged impulsive behavior through personalized offers and ad retargeting. This consumption pattern not only increases demand for goods but also reinforces the 'more is better' culture, which can divert business actors and customers from a broader mission-oriented focus. Consumerism in the digital marketplace can channel labor and capital toward the production of goods that do not necessarily reflect ethical objectives, but rather respond to shallow market demands. Therefore, Christian entrepreneurs need to develop critical awareness that distinguishes between consumer needs and mere consumption traps, so that their businesses can remain a means of service and testimony, not just a tool for satisfying desires.

Overall, the challenges of the digital business world, profit-biased algorithms, dominant personal branding, and intense consumerism demand that Christian entrepreneurs run their businesses with a strong awareness of kingdom values, without losing relevance in the modern market ecosystem.

### **Concrete Practices of Christian Entrepreneurs**

The transformation of entrepreneurial theology does not stop at conceptual construction but must be translated into the concrete practice of everyday business life. The first practice is the renewal of the orientation of the

heart and business motivation. From a faith-work perspective, professional activity should not be understood merely as an economic means but as a space for obedience to God. Research on Christian professional service shows that believers often separate church service and work, whereas the whole of life should be a form of holistic service to God (Haryono, 2021). Thus, the main question for Christian entrepreneurs is no longer 'how much profit' but 'how does this business glorify God.' This principle shifts motivation from competition to calling.

The second practice relates to the use of profits for the Kingdom of God. Biblically, economic resources are not the autonomous property of humans but rather a stewardship with a theological purpose. Studies on faith and work integration emphasize that when faith is integrated into the workplace, individuals tend to view work outcomes as a means of contributing to the community and service (Bruyn, 2023). Therefore, profits are no longer understood as private accumulation but as participation in God's work. Christian entrepreneurs are called to reorganize spending structures: not just consumption, but also mission.

The third practice is to view customer relationships as a space for testimony. The digital business world is based on relationships, trust, and reputation. In this context, economic interactions become existential interactions. Research in Christian entrepreneurship education emphasizes that the formation of a faith-based character must be integrated with entrepreneurial skills so that individuals are able to bring Christian values into their social relationships (Gulo & Belo, 2024). This means that service does not only occur through preaching, but also through honest transactions, fair pricing, and concern for customers. Testimony is present through a relational ethos.

The fourth practice is the comprehensive integration of faith and business. The faith-work model shows that separating the sacred from the secular weakens both spirituality and productivity, whereas integration creates deeper work meaning and a broader social impact (Neubert & Dougherty, 2015). Thus, work becomes a liturgy of everyday life. At this point, online business is no longer merely an economic marketplace but becomes a relational mission field. From these practices emerges an operational model: Online Business → Relational Mission → Kingdom Impact. Business becomes a means of encounter, encounters become testimony, and testimony produces the impact of God's Kingdom in the economic sphere.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study shows that the narrative of Acts 18:1-5 presents a theological paradigm that reorganizes the relationship between faith, work, and mission. Through the practice of tentmaking, Paul not only earned a living but also brought the Gospel into economic activities. Work becomes a medium for the presence of the Kingdom of God, income supports the sustainability of ministry, and profession opens space for relational testimony. Thus, the economy is not rejected but reoriented in a Christ-centered way: profit is subordinate to the purpose of mission. Canonical correlations with Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 5:15, and Matthew 6:24 affirm that life orientation, a new existential purpose, and vigilance against mammon form the normative foundation for Christian entrepreneurship theology.

The contribution of biblical theology in this study lies in the reconstruction of the category of work as participation in the *missio Dei*. The pericope not only speaks about Paul's personal ethics but also provides a hermeneutical model for understanding work as missionary praxis. Thus, the concept of vocation moves from individual morality to an ecclesiological-missionary framework that is relevant to the contemporary digital economy.

In practical terms, Christian entrepreneurs are called to shift the purpose of their business from survival, comfort, and wealth accumulation to service, mission participation, and worship through economic activities. Online business can be practiced as a relational mission: customer relationships become a space for testimony, profits support ministry, and transaction integrity becomes an expression of faith.

Future research can develop empirical studies on the practices of Christian entrepreneurs in the digital economy, cross-cultural studies on missional business, as well as interdisciplinary dialogue between biblical theology, business ethics, and digital economy to make this model more contextual and applicable.

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