Throughout the past decade, there has been a massive surge in the technology that has amounted to more technology being produced than in the last century combined. Due to the rise in technology being invented, marketed, and purchased by consumers, there is a greater need for legal teams to serve as a safety net to organizations that produce said technologies. It is crucial that these legal teams have a sound understanding of intellectual property and what it means to defend and protect the property of the organizations they are representing. The most recent lawsuit in today’s society was between Apple and Samsung. "Samsung infringed on Apple’s design patent on the black rectangular face and rounded corners of the iPhone and its’ colorful grid of 16 icons (Liptak and Goel, 2016).” This patent infringement cost Samsung $399 million dollars paid out to Apple. Throughout this discussion, we will dive deeper into the meaning of intellectual property, how a for-profit company balances the needs of the business with the needs of the consumer, an organization’s responsibility to themselves as well as the customer, and how as a believer we are to run such a company when stuck in a situation like this.

**Intellectual Property**

According to our text, intellectual property is “the intangible property that is the product of one’s mind and not one’s hands (Kabusek et al, 2016).” Not only does our society have laws and regulations that protect real and personal property that is property you can physically touch and is tangible, but we also have the same rules and regulations to protect the creative ideas inside our minds. As seen with Apple and Samsung, stealing intellectual property can come with great consequences. Having patents in place protects companies and organizations from theft from one another, but can also cause monopolies to occur. When an organization holds a patent, they hold ownership. They have the choice to keep hold of that property or to sell their patent. According to the Computer and Communications Industry Association, “patents are defined by federal statute as a private regulatory right. The patent owner has the power to exclude others from manufacturing, distributing, selling or merely using an inventions.” (CCIA, 2019) While intellectual property is not tangible and cannot be held with two hands, it still holds great worth in the creative world.

            Stealing is not only a worldly concept but also a biblical principle. Just as God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, one of them being “thou shalt not steal”, or as Jesus taught his disciples that stealing breaks the heart of the Father, the same principle applies to us as believers. Scripture states, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10, ESV) Individuals who defraud and steal from another break the heart of God, as what they are doing is not with good intentions. Within this passage Jesus is teaching his followers that He came so that they may have life. As believers we know that every action we make causes a reaction, and every action has a consequence. In Corinthians 6:10 it says, “Nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” While this is true that there is punishment for our actions, at the same time there is also redemption. We serve a God who is forgiving, redeemed, and filled with grace and mercy.

**How should a for profit corporation balance its business needs with the needs of its customers?**

            It is well known that a for profit organization has a clear duty and responsibility to ensure that the needs of the business as well of the needs of the customer reach equilibrium, and one not being more important than the other. A for profit organization has the intent to make a profit from customers purchasing their product, however they also strive to meet the needs of their customers because an organization is not going to thrive if they have poor customer satisfaction. Reaching an equilibrium of business needs and customer needs when first taking a look at it might seem as if it is an easy thing to accomplish, but it is much more complicated than what meets the eye. Customer satisfaction is what keeps customers coming back and brings new customers in. In an article by Harvard Business Review, through independent studies and conversations they had with executives they found that the majority of them defined business as, “maximizing shareholder worth (Williams and Scott, 2012)” Shareholders are the owners of a company, however a company cannot survive on shareholders alone. Research at both Harvard and Stanford University in the business world found that, “the most successful companies both in profitability and longevity, are the ones who recognize the absolute necessity of profits as well as the equally high necessity of having a purpose beyond shareholder wealth (Williams and Scott, 2012).” Companies need to invest in their consumers, just as the consumers are investing in the company. While companies might understand this concept between financial needs and customer satisfaction, it is the action that these companies take that is going to make all the difference.

**Lives depend on products created by some companies. Do these companies have a greater responsibility to work to benefit the consumer more than themselves?**

            In today’s society, drug companies have continued to raise the cost of prescription drugs simply because they can. For a period of time, generic prescription drugs had becomes significantly cheaper than any name brand. For people that have health conditions who require prescription drugs for survival, this can cause a huge financial hardship on them. My sister falls into this category of people. My sister about three years ago was diagnosed with hypothyroidism. Hypothyroidism is a condition where the thyroid gland does not make enough thyroid hormone for the body to function properly. In my sister’s case, her thyroid levels are undetectable which means her thyroid is not producing any of the hormones it needs to. For my sister due to this condition, she was experiencing extreme fatigue to the point where she couldn’t make it out of bed, loosing clumps of hair at a time, no appetite, and severe weight loss. Thankfully, there were prescription drugs out there called Synthroid and Levothyroxine to help make up for what my sister’s thyroid could not do. My sister was taking synthroid until prescription medication costs skyrocketed, and then had to switch over to levothyroxine, which is the generic form of synthroid. Without insurance, my family would have had to pay several hundred dollars each time my sister needed a prescription refill. From my own personal experience and seeing how a company has taken responsibility to care for my sister has shown me how crucial it is that companies must benefit the consumer even if they are risking a profit. Regardless of the cost, a human life is more valuable than the profit a company may make from a sale. While I would not wish a medical condition or hardship or anyone, it has opened my eyes to see how fortunate we are to have modern medicine and how great our God is who has given us these tools to heal. When I see what drug companies have done for my sister in creating medication that allows her to go about her everyday life, I am reminded of the great sacrifice that Jesus has made for us. Isaiah 53:4-5 says, “Surely he has borne out griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5, ESV)” Jesus gave his life so that we may be healed, not just from our physical, mental and emotional wounds but by our spiritual wounds as well. He allowed broken people to become whole again. Just as the companies who create the medication by sister takes for her hypothyroidism has healed her from the inside out.

**Look at the issue from a Biblical worldview. How would you respond if you were running such a company?**

            If I were in the position of being head of a medical prescription drug company and I had the choice of increasing prices to generate higher profits for our stakeholders or to keep prices as affordable as possible but risking optimum profits to meet the greatest need of people possible, I would choose the latter. Being a person who is a believer in Jesus’ teaching and firmly believing in the truth that is scripture, I believe that we are called to a higher standard and to first love God, and second to love people. Luke 6:38 states, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” For everything we give selflessly is then returned to us tenfold. Scripture commands us to love one another as Jesus loved us, all the way up until his death on the cross. John 15:13 is a perfect picture of this. No one has loved another soul greater than to lay down their own life for that of their friends. If I was the head of a prescription drug company, this is the mentality I would always have when thinking of others in need. I would be willing to sacrifice profits and possibly stakeholder relationships to ensure that my consumers were taken care of. Throughout the process of finding investors and stakeholders for my company, I seek the Lord’s guidance, wisdom and discernment in making decisions on whom to support my company. I would pray or the individuals investing so that they would see my mission to help and serve those in medical need as their mission. Lastly, I would cover the company, investors, and the consumers in prayer. All perfect and good gifts are from above, and once we realize this we would be able to put ethical standards and practices into effect and show others the light of Christ through meeting their medical needs.

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