

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES FOR THE WORKPLACE

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Life is a mission to fulfill, not a job to complete.

Life is an adventure to be enjoyed, not a series of boring tasks.

Life is for worship of the eternal God, not just busyness with the mundane.

Life is a journey of multiple stops, not a halt at one destination.

Life is to know the great Creator,
not just an accumulation of information about His creation.

Life is to share what we have, not a race for self-aggrandizement.

Life is to steward what is entrusted to us, not a dissipation on fleeting indulgences.

Life is for friendship with those around, not a selfish pursuit for I, me, and myself.

Life is to pause and enjoy each moment, not a frantic rush to the top of the ladder.

Life is to live, to live well, to live for His purpose.



TIMELESS PRINCIPLES FOR THE WORKPLACE

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Introduction

We spend most of our lives in the workplace engaging in businesses or other professional activities. Many of us prepare and continually equip ourselves through our education, professional experience, seminars, conferences, and other training opportunities for improved performances in the workplace. Concepts, theories, and ideas about management, organizational development, entrepreneurship, leadership, employee motivation, and numerous areas surrounding the workplace keep on evolving. This is indeed necessary as the marketplace is constantly changing.

Amidst this continuous change, there are some constants. There are principles that transcend time, place, people, and culture. We refer to these as **"Timeless Principles."** They hold true regardless of the variants of "when," "where," "what," and "why". The Bible presents to us such timeless principles relevant to the workplace. In this book, we attempt to collate these principles in an easy-to-read format. Our intent is that through the application of these timeless principles, you will personally benefit in your professional journey. Regardless of your sphere of involvement in the marketplace—whether a small business, a multinational corporation, whether you are in education, government, media, entertainment, or some other industry—you will find these timeless principles relevant and useful.

An organization is its people. To transform an organization, we must transform its people. Discovering, understanding, and applying these timeless principles do just that. Organizations are transformed as their people assimilate and apply these timeless principles.

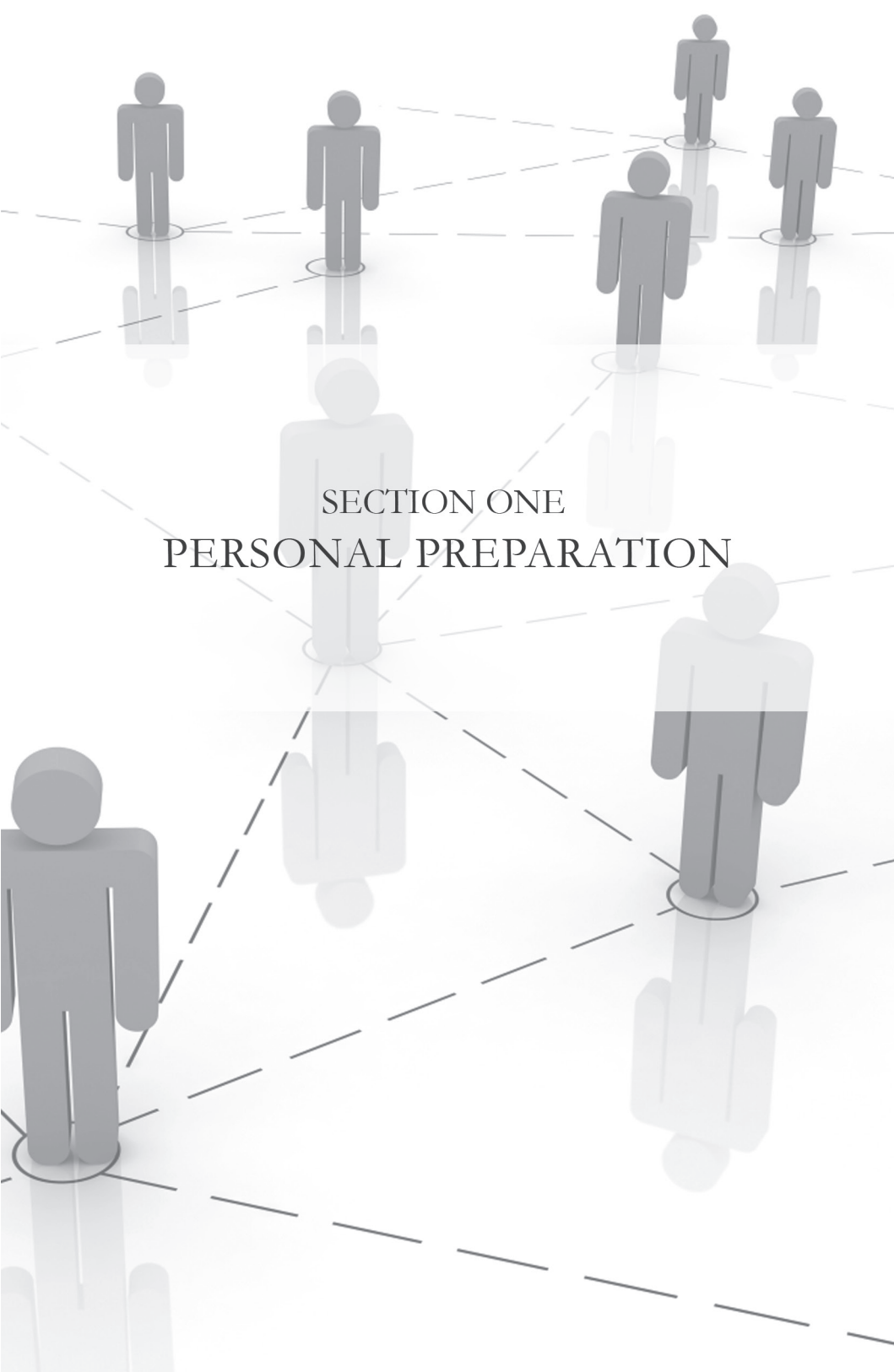
At the workplace, we encounter numerous challenges—corrupt sales processes, accounting malpractices, unscrupulous bosses, questionable advertising methods, employment terminations, the challenge of time for family, struggles with work-life balance, and many other situations. We need underlying principles to guide our professional practices and our daily lives. Principles that we can use always and in all situations!

"Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches" (Proverbs 24:3,4). Wisdom builds, understanding strengthens, and knowledge prospers. We need all three. This book attempts to present the wisdom and understanding given to us in Scripture to undergird the professional knowledge we have.

In addition to wisdom and understanding, we must be open to experiencing the supernatural in the workplace. God is in the garden, and as we do our work, He is there to release His empowering, wisdom, insight, solutions, ideas, creativity, favor, and miraculous power. Let His glory be revealed through you in the workplace!

"Let your servants see what you're best at - the ways you rule and bless your children. And let the loveliness of our Lord, our God, rest on us, confirming the work that we do. Oh, yes. Affirm the work that we do!" (Psalm 90:16,17, The Message).

God bless!
Ashish Raichur



SECTION ONE
PERSONAL PREPARATION

1
Personal Vision and Purpose

God designed you uniquely for a purpose.
Part of the unfolding of that purpose may include the workplace.
Hence, who you are and what you do in the workplace are important.
Who you become and what you accomplish in the workplace are greatly influenced by your personal vision and purpose.

We begin our journey in discovering **"Timeless Principles for the Workplace"** by considering areas of personal preparation. Some of us may be in school or college and looking ahead to enter the workplace soon. Some of us may have already been in the workplace for several years now. However, regardless of where we are in our professional journeys, here are some basic principles in relation to personal vision and purpose that we need to constantly review and consider.

You were made for a purpose; Discover it! Live it!

Ephesians 2:10 (GNT)
God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do.

God has designed each of us for a purpose. There is the general purpose of God where every person has been created to know God personally, worship God, walk in reverence before Him, serve Him, and live for Him. Additionally, there are the specific purposes of God for each of us as individuals that He has planned for us to walk in. These specific purposes of God include what we become and what we do professionally.

Psalm 139:15,16 (GNT)
15 When my bones were being formed,
carefully put together in my mother's womb,
when I was growing there in secret,
you knew that I was there—
16 you saw me before I was born.
The days allotted to me
had all been recorded in your book,
before any of them ever began.

Our work-life is not separate from God's specific purpose for our lives, but an integral part of it. It is important at the beginning of our professional careers, and each step after that, that we live our professional lives intentionally with this sense of divine purpose.

If you know the "why," the "what" and the "how" will follow. The "why" describes our purpose, our reason for doing what we are doing or pursuing what we are pursuing. Once you get a sense of purpose, then determining how to go about it and what you need to get there will follow.

Foundation—what you build on matters

Matthew 7:24-27
24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:
25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.
26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:
27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

What you build on—your foundation—matters. Your spiritual foundations are important. We must hear and do the things the Lord Jesus has taught us. Similarly, a good foundation for your professional life is important. Take the time and effort to lay a good foundation professionally. In each transition in life,

as you move from one phase to the next, prepare and lay a good foundation for the next phase so that you can build well.

Proverbs 24:27 (GNT)
Don't build your house and establish a home until your fields are ready, and you are sure that you can earn a living.

Do the important work first, and then plan for the comforts. As you prepare to pursue your personal vision and purpose, ensure you lay a good foundation professionally. There are certain professional skills that are relevant and useful regardless of which area of work you may engage in. These include communication (verbal and non-verbal), professional writing, time management for personal productivity, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Additionally, in some areas, a basic understanding of finance and accounting, negotiation skills and basic management skills involving planning, organizing, and leading are useful. Gain knowledge and develop skills relevant to the workplace and aligned to your vision and purpose.

Your personal priorities are foundational

Mark 12:30
And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is* the first commandment.

In addition to laying a good spiritual and professional foundation, remember that personal character, values, and attitudes are also very important. Knowing and establishing your personal priorities are important. These are foundational and will help determine what you choose to do professionally. If loving God, worshipping Him, and serving Him are priorities, then you will keep them central and try to work your professional activities around these priorities. If family is important, then you will make choices that give precedence to your family over other opportunities that may take your time away from family. You

need to know what is important for you and be clear about your own list of priorities.

Be clear about your non-negotiables

Luke 9:62
But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

There are some things you cannot sell out on for the sake of more money or other professional benefits. Be clear of what these are to you. These are areas where you have set your hand to the plow for the Kingdom of God and you will not turn back. These are your non-negotiables. These areas of your life are not up for bargain. These would include things like integrity, honesty, dealing fairly, honoring God with your money, and treating people with respect. You have probably heard it said before, "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything." So be clear about what your non-negotiables are. Stand by them without compromise.

Both your personal priorities and your non-negotiables are sure to be challenged as you make your way through the workplace. You will have people questioning you, bosses asking you to do things in violation of these, tricky decisions—sometimes with significant consequences, and other small and big situations where you will be challenged. But this is where you will have to draw your strength from your strong spiritual foundations to help you withstand pressure and refuse to relent on principles you live by.

Develop a life plan; review it continuously

Proverbs 21:5 (The Message)
Careful planning puts you ahead in the long run; hurry and scurry puts you further behind.

Once you have a general sense of your life's vision and purpose and have understood your priorities and non-negotiables, you can develop a **life plan**. A **life plan** is a high-level view of what you feel God wants you to do in life and how you intend on getting there. It is the big picture of what you feel you are going to do with your life. The God who designed you will also reveal to you your life's purpose as you seek Him. He has promised, *"Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own"* (Jeremiah 33:3, The Message). You will not have all the details, but you do have a sense of direction. This helps you live life with purpose and meaning.

In drawing up a **life plan**, you need to consider three key facets.

- **The PERSON whom you believe you will become.** What is the big picture of the kind of person God wants you to be? The Person you become is connected to your grace and skills. For example, you have a passion for teaching, and you see related skills you have discovered and developed. You see yourself being an educator.
- **The PLACE in which you believe you should position yourself in and occupy.** What is the Place (or places) where God wants you to be positioned? These could be geographic, professional, societal, etc. For example, you see yourself as a professor in a university interacting with students from around the world.
- **The PURPOSE that will be released through your life.** What is it that God wants to release through your life to bless others and further His Kingdom here on earth? You see yourself being a professor who instills a passion for learning in students by making difficult subject areas exciting and leading them in scientific research and discovery. You engage meaningfully with them and can impact their lives not only in terms of education but also to point them to the things of eternal significance.

Your **life plan** is connected to the PERSON God wants you to become, the PLACE He wants you to be positioned in, and the PURPOSE He wants to release through you.

Let us look at Abraham as an example.

Genesis 12:1-3
[1]Now the Lord had said to Abram:
"Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.
[2] I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
[3] I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

From what God promised Abraham, we can identify the following:

ABRAHAM	
PERSON	You will be the father of a great nation.
PLACE	You will inherit a land that I will show you and give to you and your descendants.
PURPOSE	You will be a blessing. Through you, all the families of the earth will be blessed.

When Abraham began this journey, while he had a sense of the PERSON, PLACE, and PURPOSE God had called him, he still did not know all the details. He had to journey into this by faith.

Hebrews 11:8
By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Similarly, a **life plan** gives you a sense of the PERSON, PLACE, and PURPOSE God has called you to. You discover and develop into this PERSON through a process of growth. You journey into this PLACE (or places) through a series of transitions. You increase in releasing this PURPOSE incrementally as you progress through time.

Keep reviewing your **life plan** at least once a year, and keep refining it as things become clearer.

Key Principles

1) You were made for a purpose. Discover it! Live it!
2) Foundation—what you build on matters.
3) Your personal priorities are foundational.
4) Be clear about your non-negotiables.
5) Develop a **life plan**. Review it continuously.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- What are some things you would personally consider as priorities and non-negotiables?
- With the understanding you have at present, try to state in one or two sentences each of the three key facets of a **life plan**.

ME	
PERSON What is the big picture of the kind of person God wants you to be? The person you become is connected to your grace and skills. **You discover and develop into this person through a process of growth.**	
PLACE What is the place(s) where God wants you to be positioned? These could be geographic, professional, societal, etc. **You journey into this place (or places) through a series of transitions.**	
PURPOSE What is it that God wants to release through your life to bless others and further His Kingdom here on earth? **You increase in releasing this purpose incrementally as you progress through time.**	

Action Steps / Personal Journal

Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

2
Career Plan

In many areas of life, we first decide on our destination and then begin the journey. Before a building is built, somebody creates a blueprint.

Before a product is made, somebody thinks about its design. So also, in our professional journey in the workplace, it is good to start with a plan in mind.

There may be detours, there may be unexpected situations, good and bad, that can alter the course and hence, bring about revisions to the plan.

But overall, journeying with a plan is so much better than starting off without one.

Having a **life plan** is a starting point. Your **life plan** is the big picture. Now you must develop a professional roadmap or a career plan on how you will grow into the PERSON, arrive at the PLACE (or places), and increasingly fulfill that PURPOSE that God has for you.

Your **life plan** includes several areas of life—spiritual life, personal health, education, profession, family, finances, and ministry. In fact, as I keep reviewing my **life plan**, I look at each of these areas in the light of what God wants me to do. Professional life is one of these areas and we will discuss it in this chapter.

Know your grace, gifts, and skills

Romans 12:6-8 (GNT)
6 So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have;

[7] if it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we should teach;
[8] if it is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do it cheerfully.

God has graced and gifted each of us. **Grace** is God's empowering in our lives that often expresses itself through godly inclinations and passions that prompt us to do something meaningful and impactful. **Gifts** are abilities that we discover where we can spontaneously and almost naturally do certain things. **Skills** are abilities and knowledge we develop or gain through learning, training, discipline, and practice. Our grace, gifts, and skills (knowledge and abilities) together make up our core competencies or strengths.

As we faithfully operate in our areas of grace and exercise our gifts and skills, we grow in these. Grace can increase. Gifts can mature. Skills can develop.

We will, over time, discover and develop new areas of grace, gifts, and skills. This personal development and growth are important.

Me today	
Grace: What are some areas you are drawn to, inclined toward, and passionate about?	
Gifts: What are some things you do well?	
Skills: What are areas where you are knowledgeable about?	

Explore opportunities; get input; draw up a plan

Proverbs 11:14
Where *there is* no counsel, the people fall;
But in the multitude of counselors *there is* safety.

You now begin to explore opportunities that are aligned to your **life plan** (PERSON, PLACE, PURPOSE) and where you can leverage your GRACE, GIFTS, and SKILLS.

Of course, not all of these will bring monetary rewards. So, there may be some things you do as a hobby, as recreation, or as a voluntary service to contribute to a certain cause. You also select an area that does bring monetary reward and helps you move toward fulfilling your **life plan**. This will often become your professional career.

In the early stages of your professional career, or even before you start out, it is always good to explore opportunities. Get to know what is out there. You can do this by reading, researching online, talking to people who are experienced, and even by volunteering or interning in organizations.

Consider the encouragement the Scripture gives us to get counsel or input from people.

Proverbs 15:22
Without counsel, plans go awry,
But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

Proverbs 19:20
Listen to counsel and receive instruction,
That you may be wise in your latter days.

Proverbs 24:6
For by wise counsel you will wage your own war,
And in a multitude of counselors *there is* safety.

With this information about yourself and the opportunities around you, you can now outline a career plan. While you may

not be able to identify all the stages and transitions you will be making, you should be able to at least identify the current stage and the one after that.

Life is lived in seasons (or stages) with transitions that help you move from one season to the next. You need to recognize the season you are in, do what needs to be done in that season, and prepare for the next. At the right time, you need to transition into the next season.

Whether you are starting out professionally, or already well into your professional journey, it is useful to consider where you are and think of what could lie ahead in the context of your **life plan** (PERSON, PLACE, PURPOSE) and your core competencies (GRACE, GIFTS, SKILLS).

Professional career plan			
	PERSON	**PLACE**	**PURPOSE**
Current stage	What are the grace, gifts, and skills (knowledge and abilities) you are developing and using?	What industry are you in and what are your roles and responsibilities?	In what ways are you contributing to your organization, serving God's Kingdom, and what are the personal benefits you receive?

Professional career plan			
	PERSON	**PLACE**	**PURPOSE**
Transition	What must you learn and what skills do you need to develop to transition to the next stage?	Would you need to change your industry, role, and responsibilities for the next stage? How can you prepare for this?	In what ways will your contribution to the organization, service to God's Kingdom and personal benefits be enhanced through this transition?
Next stage	What are the grace, gifts, and skills (knowledge and abilities) you will be developing and using?	What industry would you be in and what would your roles and responsibilities be?	In what ways could you contribute to your organization, serve God's Kingdom, and what are the personal benefits you would receive?
Transition	What must you learn and what skills do you need to develop to transition to the next stage?	Would you need to change your industry, role, and responsibilities for the next stage? How can you prepare for this?	In what ways will your contribution to the organization, service to God's Kingdom and personal benefits be enhanced through this transition?
Next stage			

Get started—pray, listen, step out!

Proverbs 13:4
The soul of a lazy *man* desires, and *has* nothing;
But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

Sometimes, we do all the preparatory work of praying, listening to God, and planning, but then never get started. If you just desire, plan, and dream but don't act on it, you will accomplish nothing. You've got to step out, act, and work as per the plan. Start learning and developing the skills you need. Then start knocking to make an entry into the PLACE you should move into. Pray, listen to God, and then step out!

Knock for doors to be opened

Proverbs 16:1
The preparations of the heart *belong* to man,
But the answer of the tongue *is* from the Lord.

Whether it is your entry into the workplace or a transition, very often, you will need to knock for doors to be opened. If an opportunity comes to your door without you having to knock, that is wonderful. Just remember, this may not happen every time.

In the workplace context, knocking may mean you send out your resume to organizations where you are seeking opportunities, do the interviews, and go through the recruiting and hiring process. As you go through this "knocking" process, do your best to prepare. Preparation belongs to man and it is our responsibility. Relax and leave the actual happenings and outcomes to the Lord. We do our part—the planning, the preparing, and the knocking, but the result is from the Lord.

Don't get discouraged if the first door you knock on does not swing wide open. Trust that every closed door you face is only moving you to the PLACE where you can become the PERSON and release the PURPOSE God has for you. Learn from each experience and continue knocking.

Matthew 7:7,8
7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Expect unusual favor

Genesis 39:21
But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

The Scripture is full of accounts of people who experienced God's favor on their lives and saw the impossible become possible. Divine favor is an endowment of God that is released upon a person and gives the person influence, access to people, places, or things, unusual opportunities, exaltation, and divine intervention. Favor is a powerful blessing to have and experience as you make your professional journey.

As you knock on doors, whether for your first job or when you are making a transition from one stage in your career to the next, expect divine favor. Amazing things happen because of divine favor.

Favor is something that we should not only expect when seeking an opportunity but also all through our professional journey. In your work within the organization, in your interactions with other professionals, on your sales calls, during your presentations, and in all that you do, expect divine favor. Remember, in order to experience divine favor, we need to position ourselves and walk with wisdom. Leaders and bosses favor a wise worker.

Proverbs 14:35
The king's (leader's) **favor *is* toward a wise servant,**
But his wrath *is against* him who causes shame.

You can build only after you settle down; stop wandering

Proverbs 27:8 (The Message)
People who won't settle down, wandering hither and yon, are like restless birds, flitting to and fro.

While we have emphasized the importance of stages and transitions, please keep in mind that transitions must be done at the right time. Typically, you spend a considerable amount of time in each stage. While there is no fixed duration, generally you may spend three to four years in each stage before making a transition. This gives you sufficient time to settle down, learn, develop, grow, and make a meaningful contribution to your organization. You don't want to become like a rolling stone or as Proverbs says, a restless bird. Restless birds don't build a nest, don't lay eggs, and don't have young ones. They don't establish themselves, are not productive, and cannot multiply and increase. So, resist the temptation of jumping randomly from job to job simply for monetary benefits. You are living out your **life plan**, not running a rat race.

Sharpen your edge—your grace, gifts, and skills

Ecclesiastes 10:10
If the ax is dull,
And one does not sharpen the edge,
Then he must use more strength;
But wisdom brings success.

The ax head needs to be sharpened and kept that way for the best results. Similarly, in your professional career, your grace, gifts, and skills are your ax head, your edge. These must be continuously sharpened for success. If you don't keep your edge sharpened, you will need to expend that much more time, effort, and energy to make progress professionally. So, the wise thing to do is to sharpen your edge continuously. In each season, build your strengths. Expand your skills. Develop new skills. Learn

new things. This will help you make progress and transition toward fulfilling your **life plan**.

Take stock of things frequently—review, revise, refine

Proverbs 4:26
Ponder the path of your feet,
And let all your ways be established.

Think about the steps you are taking and where you are going. Take stock of things frequently. Pause. Reflect on how things are going in your professional life. Listen to what the Lord is speaking concerning the PERSON He wants you to become; the PLACE(s) He wants you to step into, and the PURPOSE He wants you to release. The Lord will clarify things, may lead you into new avenues, and unveil new things as you progress in your journey. As He does this, review where you are, revise and refine as required. Realign things so that you can pursue what the Lord is showing you. As you follow the Lord's leading, you may discover new areas of grace on your life, new gifts may emerge, and you may develop new skills or strengthen skills you already have. New opportunities may open. Through all of these, ponder the path you are taking. Let every step you take be firm and well thought out.

To grow, you need to change

1 Corinthians 13:11
When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Growth happens through a process of change. Spiritually, we are changed from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). Maturity, which is simply growing up, happens through change. Similarly, to progress in your **life plan**, there may be changes that you would need to make in your professional journey. Some of these changes may be simple and easy—as simple as building further on your strengths. Sometimes, these changes may be significant, rather drastic. Some of these changes may be things you anticipated and

were intentional about. Some changes may just come upon you unexpectedly. Remember, change is one thing that will happen. In fact, it must happen for growth. Learn to take changes in your stride. Enjoy the seasons of change just as much as the seasons of stability and certainty. As long as the change is moving you further in your **life plan**, go with it. Enjoy it!

Look for clarity as you keep journeying

Proverbs 4:18
But the path of the just *is* like the shining sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

There are times when things may be rather unclear. You may not have all the answers to "what," "why," "when," and "how". There may be seasons when you may seem to be in a "dead-end job," or the work you do professionally may seem completely disinteresting and unrelated to where you wish to be going. But as you keep journeying, praying, and seeking God through such seasons, things will become clearer.

Avoid the donkey and the horse syndrome

Psalm 32:8,9
[8] I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will guide you with My eye.
[9] Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule,
***Which* have no understanding,**
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,
Else they will not come near you.

God has promised to instruct, teach, guide, and watch over us in life's journey. This includes what we do professionally. He will instruct, teach, and guide us as we make our journey through the workplace. However, God tells us not to be like the donkey or the horse. The donkey can be stubborn, reluctant, or even refusing to move. The horse on the other hand wants to run ahead, run around randomly, and needs to be reined in. So, in our professional journey, we must remember to walk in step and

in time with God. Don't be like the donkey, unwilling to follow God in His leading. Don't be like the horse, running ahead of God and off in a direction He may not want you to take.

Psalm 25:12
Who *is* the man that fears the Lord?
Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.

Your steps are ordered by the Lord

Psalm 37:23,24
23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the Lord,
And He delights in his way.
24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down;
For the Lord upholds *him with* His hand.

One of the powerful truths you can rest in is that God delights or closely engages Himself in the path you are taking. He skillfully guides you. Your steps are directed by Him. Even if you make a mistake and fall, He upholds you. If you feel like you have made a wrong turn, and are trapped, He can still make a way out.

Psalm 25:15
My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net.

Trust God, you can't figure out everything

Proverbs 3:5,6 (The Message)
5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.

In as much as we prepare and plan, we must understand that we cannot control everything that happens. The unexpected does happen. That is why life is like a great adventure. There are surprises along the way. Sometimes, transitions happen unexpectedly. Things change unexpectedly in an organization due to various reasons, and this may affect you in some way.

That is why in spite of all the planning we do, we must always rely on the Lord and continuously walk by faith. Our planning and preparation are an expression of our stewardship toward God. It is us responding with gratitude and sincerity to what we have been entrusted with. And yet, our eyes always remain focused on the Lord. We keep trusting. We keep listening. And as we do, we know He will keep us on track.

Proverbs 21:31
The horse *is* prepared for the day of battle,
But deliverance *is* of the Lord.

Psalm 37:4,5
4 Delight yourself also in the Lord,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
5 Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.

In everything you do and every step you take, commit matters to Him, trust in Him, and He will unfold His highest and best for you.

Step up to your mountain

Joshua 14:12
Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fortified. It may be that the Lord *will be* with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said."

In general, there are seven spheres or mountains of society that are the pillars of any society. These seven mountains are as follows:

1) **Family:** The institution set up by God
2) **Religion**: The Church, the people of God
3) **Education:** Schools, colleges, universities, academic and professional training, or education.

4) **Media:** All forms of public communication, print and electronic, newspaper, TV, Internet
5) **Arts & Entertainment (Celebration):** Arts, entertainment, and sports, all forms of celebration within a culture
6) **Business (Economy):** Innovations in science and technology, and includes all forms of business transactions and activities.
7) **Government:** All the three branches—judicial (system of justice), legislative (establishing law), and executive (operation of government systems)

There are literally thousands and thousands of sub-groups in all the seven broad spheres mentioned above.

Find out on which of these mountains God wants you to be positioned on. On every mountain, there are "giants". There are challenges. Don't shy away from any mountain just because of the challenges. You prepare yourself to bring about change and transformation on the mountain(s) where you will be positioned. The Lord will be with you and you will be able to affect change.

Key Principles

1) Know your grace, gifts and skills.
2) Explore opportunities. Get input. Draw up a plan.
3) Get started—pray, listen, step out!
4) Knock for doors to be opened.
5) Expect unusual favor.

6) You can build only after you settle down. Stop wandering.
7) Sharpen your edge—your grace, gifts and skills.
8) Take stock of things frequently. Review. Revise. Refine.
9) To grow, you need to change.
10) Look for clarity as you keep journeying.
11)Avoid the donkey and the horse syndrome.
12) Your steps are ordered by the Lord.
13) Trust God. You can't figure out everything.
14) Step up to your mountain.

Reflection



In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

1) Take some time to pray, reflect, listen to God, and then write out your grace, gifts, and skills.
2) Take some time to pray, reflect, listen to God, and then draw up a professional career plan based on where you are presently and the transitions you can make into the next stage or the next few stages that you can envision.

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

3
Right Workplace Attitudes

Attitude is our way of looking at things. It influences our choices, actions, behaviors, and habits. Our attitude describes who we are and to a great extent determines who we become. Our call is to maintain a biblical attitude in the workplace.

Not all work environments are the same. There are some work environments that are very friendly, healthy, supportive, and exciting to be in. You would love to be at work! Then there are work environments that are very hostile with people trying to undercut and outsmart each other. There is gossip, office politics, and high drama about every little thing. Such work environments are torture. Work becomes a grind. You feel drained emotionally and physically at the end of each day.

Your professional journey may take you through different work environments. One thing you will need is the ability to maintain a good attitude regardless of what is going on around you. A good attitude is a winner. It will always put you on top of the storms that rage around you. Attitude is a choice. It is how you decide to look at things. It is how you decide to act and react. It is a choice you make to stay positive, cheerful, kind, loving, and encouraging. Attitude is contagious. You can begin to influence those around with your good attitude. People like to hang out with those who are positive. So, when you get to work, walk in with a good attitude. Every day, do your work with the right workplace attitudes.

Individual workplace attitudes influence the organization. Employee attitudes shape the work environment which influences

employee morale, collaboration, performance, and productivity. With the right workplace attitudes, you can contribute to your organization positively.

Your attitude almost always determines your altitude

Daniel 6:3
Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

Daniel stood out because of *"an excellent spirit in him."* He was good at his work and he went about it with a good spirit or attitude. Daniel served in the government of three world empires—first the Babylonians, then the Medes, and then the Persians. These were difficult environments to be in. There were colleagues at work who tried to get him out. Yet, they could find nothing about Daniel because of his work and the way he went about it. In fact, while his enemies were looking for ways to get him out, the king was considering promoting him.

In addition to the grace, gifts, and skills that you bring to the workplace, your attitude sets you apart. It gets the attention of your superiors. It makes people want to be around you. It opens up opportunities that otherwise may not come your way. People will want you on their team. It is that good attitude with that smile on your face that will help you and your team to get through the day on many occasions.

Proverbs 15:13 (The Message)
A cheerful heart brings a smile to your face; a sad heart makes it hard to get through the day.

Do all to the glory of God

1 Corinthians 10:31
Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Motivation is important. Our motivation is what drives us. Our motivation inspires us, stimulates us, and keeps us going when the going gets tough, filling us with enthusiasm and energy each day. While there may be several things that can serve to motivate us, including the professional incentives offered to us as we pursue our professional careers and do things in the workplace, at the very core, we must be motivated to glorify God through all we do. If you have ever tried to live life motivated by this one thing—**to do everything to glorify God**—you will find this to be a powerful motivator. You are empowered to carry His name, represent Him, and display His wisdom, excellence, virtue, and greatness through your work. You look at your work as a channel and means to glorify, magnify, exalt, and speak for Him. When you work with this as your core motivator, everything changes. Your perspective of why you need to go the extra mile, why you keep calm under pressure, why you serve your demanding customers with a smile, why you are being courteous when others are being rude to you, why you insist on excellence takes on a different reason. You are doing all to glorify God.

Jeremiah 9:23,24
[23] Thus says the Lord:
"Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might,
Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches;
[24] But let him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I *am* the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.
For in these I delight," says the Lord.

Keep your ambition Kingdom focused

Matthew 6:33
But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

First things first. The Lord Jesus said that we must put the Kingdom of God and doing what is right as our top priority, then all these other things concerning our life on earth will be taken care of. Seeking the Kingdom of God is desiring and welcoming the rule and dominion of the King to be extended in and through our lives. To seek His righteousness means that we seek to do what is right in His sight. So, this instruction of the Lord Jesus then becomes the core of our ambition in the workplace. It becomes the focus of our dreams, goals, and pursuits of what we wish to become and accomplish professionally. In everything we do and become, we desire, welcome, and extend God's rule, reign, and righteousness in us and through us.

Always remember, there is more to life than just making money

Proverbs 11:28
He who trusts in his riches will fall,
But the righteous will flourish like foliage.

One of the basic things we must remember is that money, wealth, and riches are not everything in life. There is more to life than the accumulation of riches. Your professional life is more than earning money and making it to the top of the corporate ladder. While these are not inherently bad, these should not become our all-consuming purpose in life. There are many intangibles such as meaningful relationships, serving people, solving problems, fulfilling divine purpose, and glorifying God that give a fuller meaning to why we do what we do in the workplace.

Remember, God is your Master, money is your slave. You serve God. You use money. *"No servant can be the slave of two masters; such a slave will hate one and love the other or will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money"* (Luke 16:13, GNT).

Proverbs 23:4,5 (GNT)
4 Be wise enough not to wear yourself out trying to get rich.
5 Your money can be gone in a flash, as if it had grown wings and flown away like an eagle.

If making more money becomes the sole motivator, then people end up violating rules, using crooked means, and even hurting people simply to make more money. God calls us to keep our motives right.

Proverbs 16:2 (GNT) (also see Proverbs 21:2)
You may think everything you do is right, but the Lord judges your motives.

Micah 6:8 (GNT)
No, the Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.

Always walk in the fear of the Lord

Proverbs 15:16
Better *is* a little with the fear of the Lord,
Than great treasure with trouble.

To walk in the "fear of the Lord" is to walk in reverence and honor of the Lord our God. This means that we are conscious every moment of who the Lord is, what He would want us to do, and align ourselves to do what is right in His sight. In the workplace, there will be numerous sources of pressure, temptation, and distractions that can cause us to wander away from the fear of the Lord and off the paths of righteousness. Hence, we must consciously walk in the fear of the Lord. Train yourself in the small things to honor God. In the professional decisions you make, in what you communicate, in the way you interact and in all your professional activities, do a quick inside-check. Ask yourself, "Does this honor God? Does this demonstrate reverence for my God? Is it right in His eyes?"

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10; also see Psalm 111:10). It is when we walk in the fear of the Lord that we gain entrance into godly wisdom and understanding. This is the starting point, the entry into wisdom (skilled living) that comes from above. Here is the key that unlocks the door into godly wisdom and understanding. It is to walk in the fear of the Lord.

"The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility" (Proverbs 15:33). The fear of the Lord is not only the starting point of wisdom but also the schooling in wisdom. As we walk in the fear of the Lord, we are instructed (schooled, taught) in the ways of wisdom. We are now able to walk in the wisdom of God in our professional and daily life situations. Godly wisdom and understanding help us determine proper resolutions to problems, birth creativity, give us insight, foresight, and the ability to determine the right course of action.

"He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, But he who is perverse in his ways despises Him" (Proverbs 14:2). Walking in uprightness is a demonstration that we are walking in the fear of the Lord. Choosing to do what is right, just, fair and in equality is an expression of the fear of God in our hearts.

"The fear of the Lord leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil" (Proverbs 19:23). Living a life in reverence and honor of the Lord is the path to real living, to a life that brings true fulfillment and completeness, and preserves us from the evil that eventually catches up with wrongdoing.

Proverbs 22:4
By humility *and* the fear of the Lord
***Are* riches and honor and life.**

Ecclesiastes 12:13,14
[13] Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man's all.
[14] For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.

The fruit of the Spirit is winning attitudes; walk in the Spirit

Galatians 5:22,23 (GNT)
[22] But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
[23] humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these.

The presence and work of the Holy Spirit bring about a transformation in who we are—our character, our attitudes, and our entire personhood. He produces in us the fruit of the Spirit—products or results of His indwelling presence and work in us. As we walk yielded to Him (walking in the Spirit), we can have these fruit in our lives. Consider these nine traits. Each has been expanded and the corresponding phrase from the MESSAGE Bible has been included as well.

1) **Love**—demonstrating compassion, care, concern, and affection for others
2) **Joy**—a positive, happy, passion, enthusiasm, and exuberance about life
3) **Peace**—a sense of calm, poise, composure, and serenity
4) **Patience**—firm endurance, commitment, and a willingness to stick with things
5) **Kindness**—gentleness in word and deed, a sense of compassion in the heart
6) **Goodness**—demonstrating benevolence and generosity
7) **Faithfulness**—sincere and dependable, loyal commitments
8) **Humility**—meekness, not needing to force our way in life

9) **Self-control**—self-governing ability, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely

Imagine being a person with these nine powerful qualities or attitudes. These would make you someone others would readily appreciate and want to interact with. These are winning attitudes. Walk in the Spirit even at the workplace.

Do your work obediently, sincerely, willingly, and cheerfully

Ephesians 6:5-8 (GNT)
5 Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling; and do it with a sincere heart, as though you were serving Christ.
6 Do this not only when they are watching you, because you want to gain their approval; but with all your heart do what God wants, as slaves of Christ.
7 Do your work as slaves cheerfully, as though you served the Lord, and not merely human beings.
8 Remember that the Lord will reward each of us, whether slave or free, for the good work we do.

In Bible times, they had "slaves" and "masters". That was way back in the "agricultural age." Today, we have employees, managers, presidents, CEOs, and other titles we give to people in different positions and roles in the workplace. There are key instructions given to the person who works for or under someone else. We note the following—obey, be sincere, wholeheartedly or willingly, and cheerfully. God instructs us to engage in the workplace with these attitudes.

- "Obey" means to follow instructions with reverence and a yielded heart. Stay aligned to what has been asked of you.
- "Be sincere" means to do it with a genuine interest even when you are not being watched.
- Do things willingly with all your heart into what you are doing.
- Do things cheerfully and gladly with enthusiasm and without holding back. In all things, work as an employee of Christ

doing this as unto Him and for Him and looking to Him for your reward.

Philippians 2:14,15 (GNT)
[14] Do everything without complaining or arguing,
[15] so that you may be innocent and pure as God's perfect children, who live in a world of corrupt and sinful people. You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky,

Loyalty is essential; be faithful

Proverbs 3:3,4 (GNT)
[3] Never let go of loyalty and faithfulness. Tie them around your neck; write them on your heart.
[4] If you do this, both God and people will be pleased with you.

To be loyal or faithful means you are committed to serving the vision and purpose of the organization or the team in which you work. As long as you are part of the organization, you serve the interests of the organization, stay aligned to its mission, values and culture and seek the growth and advancement of the organization. While your professional goals and personal needs are important, you do not undermine the organization in any way for the sake of your own personal interests. You are reliable and dependable. You can be trusted and counted upon to do what is best for the organization.

Titus 2:9,10 (The Message)
[9] Guide slaves (employees) **into being loyal workers, a bonus to their masters - no back talk,**
[10] no petty thievery. Then their good character will shine through their actions, adding luster to the teaching of our Savior God.

Loyalty is not easily found these days. Most people tend to place personal interests ahead of the name, growth, and well-being of the organization and its stakeholders. This often leads people into all kinds of malpractices, accepting bribes, kickbacks, and other wrong activities that serve their own interests while jeopardizing the organization itself.

The Lord Jesus narrated the story of an irresponsible manager who ran his owner's business into a loss because of his misdealing. The Lord Jesus then stated the following in conclusion, *"Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones; whoever is dishonest in small matters will be dishonest in large ones. If, then, you have not been faithful in handling worldly wealth, how can you be trusted with true wealth? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to someone else, who will give you what belongs to you?"* (Luke 16:10-12, GNT).

There are key principles in relation to faithfulness and loyalty.

- Faithfulness in small matters demonstrates your ability to be faithful in larger ones.
- Faithfulness in handling money (financial integrity) positions you to be entrusted with handling other things.
- Faithfulness in what belongs to someone else will position you to have what is your own.

"A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished" (Proverbs 28:20). Your faithfulness will be rewarded. The person who puts selfish interests first and hastily seeks personal advancement while jeopardizing the organization will face the consequences.

This does not mean that once you join an organization you will remain in it till you retire. There will be several reasons why you may need to leave an organization and join another, but as long as you are employed in an organization, you remain loyal and faithful to it.

Be accountable at all times even when you are not asked for it

Luke 12:42-48 (GNT)
42 The Lord answered, "Who, then, is the faithful and wise servant?

He is the one that his master will put in charge, to run the household and give the other servants their share of the food at the proper time.
43 How happy that servant is if his master finds him doing this when he comes home!
44 Indeed, I tell you, the master will put that servant in charge of all his property.
45 But if that servant says to himself that his master is taking a long time to come back and if he begins to beat the other servants, both the men and the women, and eats and drinks and gets drunk,
46 then the master will come back one day when the servant does not expect him and at a time he does not know. The master will cut him in pieces and make him share the fate of the disobedient.
47 "The servant who knows what his master wants him to do, but does not get himself ready and do it, will be punished with a heavy whipping.
48 But the servant who does not know what his master wants, and yet does something for which he deserves a whipping, will be punished with a light whipping. Much is required from the person to whom much is given; much more is required from the person to whom much more is given.

When you go to work, you bring your grace, gifts, and skills to serve the organization. The organization provides you with resources (time, tools, training, people, money, infrastructure, etc.) to get certain things done at a certain measurable standard within a stipulated period. You are also expected to work as part of the organization collaborating with others to deliver the expected outcomes. Accountability is using the resources entrusted to you in a responsible manner as you pursue accomplishing what has been assigned to you. You are always ready to provide a response as to how you have been using the resources entrusted to you. Always work with a sense of accountability using resources in a profitable manner to accomplish desired objectives. Don't waste what belongs to the organization. Always ask if this is the best use of the resources put at your disposal. Be accountable even if you have not been explicitly asked to do so. Ultimately, be accountable to your real Boss, God Himself, who is watching you all the time.

Colossians 3:22-25 (GNT)
22 Slaves (employees)**, obey your human masters in all things, not only when they are watching you because you want to gain their approval; but do it with a sincere heart because of your reverence for the Lord.**
23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people.
24 Remember that the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve.
25 And all wrongdoers will be repaid for the wrong things they do, because God judges everyone by the same standard.

Be passionate; if your heart is not in it, get in or get out

Proverbs 11:18 (The Message)
Bad work gets paid with a bad check; good work gets solid pay.

It is very easy to tell when someone does a job because it is a "job" and their heart is not in it. Sooner or later, their lack of passion will show. There is nothing more painful for a boss or wasteful for an organization to have someone fill up a spot on the employee roll, get paid every month, and not deliver what is expected of them.

Be passionate about your work. *"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might"* (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Always give it your best. Go the extra mile when needed.

If you are not passionate about your work, you must either make changes in your attitude and get on board 100% or get out and find something else to do. Don't become a burden to your team, manager, or organization for them to just take you along while you are "half-hearted" about what you are doing. If the reason for your lack of enthusiasm has to do with the work environment, mistreatment by bosses or colleagues, office politics, or other work-related matters, it is best to talk this out with whoever oversees you. Clear the air and see if things can be resolved so that you can be at work with passion.

Maintain integrity and truthfulness always in all things

Proverbs 10:9
He who walks with integrity walks securely,
But he who perverts his ways will become known.

The Bible has a lot to say about walking in integrity and uprightness. Integrity is doing what is right—morally, ethically, and legally. In your professional work, speak the truth, state the facts, and do what is right. Great leaders have fallen and large organizations have crumbled simply because of a lack of integrity. Whether you are making a sales presentation, reporting on a project, or working on the financials, always do what is right.

Proverbs 4:24
Put away from you a deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips far from you.

Proverbs 12:22
Lying lips *are* an abomination to the Lord,
But those who deal truthfully *are* His delight.

Proverbs 11:3
The integrity of the upright will guide them,
But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.

Proverbs 11:5
The righteousness of the blameless will direct his way aright,
But the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.

Proverbs 28:20 (GNT)
Honest people will lead a full, happy life. But if you are in a hurry to get rich, you are going to be punished.

Work hard; there is no substitute for diligence, no place for laziness

Proverb 10:4
He who has a slack hand becomes poor,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

Diligence is thoroughness, meticulousness, carefulness, and attentiveness. It involves working hard, being industrious, going the extra mile and putting in the extra effort to get the work done.

"The hand of the diligent will rule, But the lazy man will be put to forced labor" (Proverbs 12:24). Bosses recognize those who work hard and who are diligent. Diligence positions you for promotion and being entrusted with leadership roles.

"If you are lazy, you will never get what you are after, but if you work hard, you will get a fortune" (Proverbs 12:27, GNT). Laziness procrastinates. Laziness goes half the way but does not complete the job, but diligence causes a man to possess the full benefits of his work.

"The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich" (Proverbs 13:4). Desire is a good thing, but it must be coupled with diligent work to possess what you are after.

"How long is the lazy man going to lie around? When is he ever going to get up? "I'll just take a short nap," he says; "I'll fold my hands and rest a while." But while he sleeps, poverty will attack him like an armed robber." (Proverbs 6:9-11, GNT) Laziness opts for what is easy, convenient, and comfortable. Laziness keeps you from stretching, putting in that extra effort, and from stepping out of what is convenient. Laziness attracts poverty.

"A lazy person is as bad as someone who is destructive" (Proverbs 18:9, GNT). People who do not work hard are wasteful, a liability and detrimental to the health of the organization.

"A lazy man buries his hand in the bowl, And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again" (Proverbs 19:24). Laziness is self-destructive. Even when resources are placed in your hands, laziness keeps you from making the most of them.

1 Thessalonians 4:11,12 (GNT)
[11] Make it your aim to live a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to earn your own living, just as we told you before.
[12] In this way you will win the respect of those who are not believers, and you will not have to depend on anyone for what you need.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 (GNT)
[10] While we were with you, we used to tell you, "Whoever refuses to work is not allowed to eat."
[11] We say this because we hear that there are some people among you who live lazy lives and who do nothing except meddle in other people's business.
[12] In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we command these people and warn them to lead orderly lives and work to earn their own living.

Don't just be busy, be productive; even God looks for it

John 15:1,2,8 (GNT)
[1] "I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener.
[2] He breaks off every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will be clean and bear more fruit.
[8] My Father's glory is shown by your bearing much fruit; and in this way you become my disciples.

The Lord Jesus, in John 15, is referring to our lives in Him. A point that is clearly made is that it is not sufficient to be attached to Him, but we must be productive and bear fruit. If we are not productive, we risk being severed. If we are being productive, He does what is needed to increase our productivity. And it is through us being productive—bearing much fruit—that God's glory is displayed through us as His disciples.

Our professional lives are an integral part of our walk of faith and not detached from it. What we do at work is as important to God as what we do in Church or in the prayer closet because all things we do is for Him. It is therefore only right for us to conclude that God would desire for us to be productive in what we do at work professionally.

It is wrong to think that showing up at work and doing something to be busy is all that is required at the workplace. Your goal is not just to be busy but to be productive, delivering results, getting things done on time, and working to build the organization.

God has promised to bless all the work we do so that we can be productive. *"They are like trees that grow beside a stream, that bear fruit at the right time, and whose leaves do not dry up. They succeed in everything they do"* (Psalm 1:3, GNT). It is up to us then to work with God to become what He has promised.

When we are productive, God's beauty and affirmation is to be seen through the work we do. *"And let the loveliness of our Lord, our God, rest on us, confirming the work that we do. Oh, yes. Affirm the work that we do!"* (Psalm 90:17, The Message)

What you do with your time is up to you; don't waste it

Proverbs 28:19 (GNT)
A hard-working farmer has plenty to eat. People who waste time will always be poor.

Part of being a good and diligent worker is to make the most of your time. Learn the skills to improve your management of time, your efficiency and productivity. Use your time wisely. Cut out wastage of time by discarding unnecessary tasks or things that are unrelated to work during work hours.

The same is applicable to our Christian walk. We are called to be watchful and cautious and make the most of the time we have. We should apply this same principle to our time at work. *"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil"* (Ephesians 5:15,16).

Have a passion for excellence

Proverbs 22:29 (The Message)
Observe people who are good at their work - skilled workers are always in demand and admired; they don't take a back seat to anyone.

Develop a passion for excellence in your work. Be good at what you do. Excellence takes both skill and hard work. Develop your skills so that what you do is good and excellent. Work hard, have endurance and push for excellence. Don't settle for mediocrity. The attitude of "just getting by" will rob you of an attitude of excellence. There is joy in completing a task well knowing that you have given it your best. And most of all, you have given your best as unto the Lord and for His glory.

When you are skillful in your work, excellence will cause you to be in demand. People will want you to be part of their team. You will be admired. Promotion will come to you.

Never stop learning! Never!

Proverbs 1:5
A wise *man* will hear and increase learning,
And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

Stepping into the workforce does not mean an end to your education. In fact, your real learning has just begun! Your learning happens every day on the job. Continuously grow your knowledge and skills. Acquire new skills. Listen to people. Read. Go through training that is available. Increase your learning and skill in areas where you may be weak.

Ask a lot of questions and then listen attentively with a genuine desire to learn. Don't ask questions just to pretend to be "smart" or "curious". Be genuine about wanting to learn. Welcome feedback, especially the ones that tell you where you need to improve. Take on new challenges. Experiment. We learn by doing. Be quick to learn from mistakes.

Watch others. Observe. Learn from what they are doing. Learn from their successes as well as their mistakes.

Proverbs 15:14 (GNT)
Intelligent people want to learn, but stupid people are satisfied with ignorance.

Proverbs 18:15 (GNT)
Intelligent people are always eager and ready to learn.

Proverbs 19:27 (GNT)
My child, when you stop learning, you will soon neglect what you already know.

Stay calm, stay focused when the unexpected happens

Proverbs 3:25,26 (The Message)
[25] No need to panic over alarms or surprises, or predictions that doomsday's just around the corner,
[26] Because God will be right there with you; he'll keep you safe and sound.

One of the strengths you need to develop is the ability to manage your emotions and stay calm in unexpected situations. Depending on the industry you work in and the kind of work you do, the unexpected can be frequent. The alarms, the surprises, and the bad news can come anytime and from anywhere. In every situation, we must remember that God is with us right there at that moment. He is there to see us through.

"If your ruler (boss) *becomes angry with you, do not hand in your resignation; serious wrongs may be pardoned if you keep calm"* (Ecclesiastes 10:4, GNT, "boss" added). Don't overreact when things go wrong, and your boss gets angry with you. Stay calm. Resolve matters peacefully and objectively.

Anchor yourself in God even in the face of bad news. *"He is not afraid of receiving bad news; his faith is strong, and he trusts in the Lord"* (Psalm 112:7, GNT). This kind of emotional stability based on your trust and strength in God will help you to

see things clearly, press toward solutions, diffuse the tension that may be mounting, build confidence in your team members and overall, see things move ahead in a positive manner.

Psalm 46:1-3 (GNT)
[1] God is our shelter and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.
[2] So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken
and mountains fall into the ocean depths;
[3] even if the seas roar and rage,
and the hills are shaken by the violence.

Jeremiah 17:7,8
[7] "Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the Lord,
And whose hope is the Lord.
[8] For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters,
Which spreads out its roots by the river,
And will not fear when heat comes;
But its leaf will be green,
And will not be anxious in the year of drought,
Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

Key Principles

1) Your attitude almost always determines your altitude.
2) Do all to the glory of God.
3) Keep your ambition Kingdom focused.
4) Always remember, there is more to life than just making money.
5) Always walk in the fear of the Lord.
6) The fruit of the spirit is winning attitudes. Walk in the Spirit.
7) Do your work obediently, sincerely, willingly, and cheerfully.
8) Loyalty is essential. Be faithful.
9) Be accountable at all times—even when you are not asked for it.
10) Be passionate. If your heart is not in it, get in or get out!
11) Maintain integrity and truthfulness always, in all things.
12) Work hard. There is no substitute for diligence, no place for laziness.

13) Don't just be busy, be productive. Even God looks for it.

14) What you do with your time is up to you. Don't waste it.

15) Have a passion for excellence.

16) Never stop learning! Never!

17) Stay calm, stay focused when the unexpected happens.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- If you are the only one on your team trying to maintain the right workplace attitudes and you feel the negativity all around you, how would you continue to maintain these biblical attitudes and how can you impart these to the rest of your team?
- List some of the right workplace attitudes you feel you need to improve on and how you can go about developing these.

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.



SECTION TWO
IN THE WORKPLACE

4

Corporate Vision, Mission, Values, and Culture

People should work in an organization not just for professional growth and pay, although these are essential. People should believe in the vision, join in the mission, embrace the values, help create and enjoy the culture of the organization. The vision, mission, values, and culture make the organization what it really is.

The "corporate vision" describes what you wish to become as an organization and may include why you wish to become that. It is something to be pursued over time. The "mission" describes "the how"—the specific things that will be accomplished to pursue the vision. "Values" describe what the organization stands for and the ethical standards it subscribes to and maintains. "Culture" describes the intangible component of the work environment and describes how people work together within the organization to pursue the vision and carry out the mission while adhering to the values of the organization.

In general, people are looking for more than a job that brings home a pay. People are looking for organizations that are pursuing a vision that is meaningful, inspiring, challenging, and more importantly, aligned to something that matters to them. In addition, people are looking for an alignment of values where organizational values are aligned to personal values. They are looking for an organization whose work culture is something they would really enjoy being a part of. After all, this would be the environment in which they would spend a quarter of their entire week and a large part of their waking hours. Essentially,

people want to work in and for an organization that they can be proud about, that is credible, supportive and an enjoyable place to be in.

Your vision influences productivity

Proverbs 29:18
Where *there is* no revelation, the people cast off restraint;
But happy *is* he who keeps the law.

The word "revelation" refers to an inspired dream or vision. Where there is no inspired dream or vision, the people have nothing that compels them into a course of action. They wander around aimlessly and end up unproductive but a compelling vision captures the imagination, grips the heart, fires up passion and inspires action. It describes the future. It creates focus. It births ideas. It influences thought. It guides decisions. It provides direction. It rallies people together. All these result in a productive organization.

The challenge is to capture this vision and communicate it to people. This is often done in what is called a **vision statement**. A vision statement is usually a single sentence that is compelling, inspiring, and descriptive of the vision. Additionally, we may use pictures, images, logos, or even a word-phrase to describe the vision. Your corporate vision statement is therefore, very important.

Vision—write it, repeat it, repeat it again

Habakkuk 2:2,3
[2] Then the Lord answered me and said:
"Write the vision
And make *it* plain on tablets,
That he may run who reads it.
[3] For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time;
But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.
Though it tarries, wait for it;
Because it will surely come,

It will not tarry.

In the day-to-day routine of work and all that needs to be done, the corporate vision could be easily forgotten. Vision vaporizes if it is not repeated. Hence, it is important to find ways and means to keep the vision constantly refreshed in the minds of people. Write it, talk about it, display it, and in many other ways, keep the vision before the people. Between the "now" and the time the vision takes shape and comes into fruition, a constant reminding of the vision will keep people motivated and propelled into action. As the vision begins to unfold, continuous repetition of the vision excites people that the dream is now beginning to take shape. It energizes people to press further into seeing the vision accomplished in greater measure.

If you want people to keep running with the vision, repeat it and repeat it again.

A compromised vision leaves people confused

Matthew 6:22,23
22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.
23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

If you have a clear vision, you have light. You can move ahead knowing where you are going. A blurred vision leaves one in darkness. When the vision is unclear or compromised in some way, people don't really know which path to take. They stumble. They could go off in wrong directions. They could remain stationary in one place not knowing how, when, or where to take the next step.

If people don't really understand the vision and are unable to see the vision in their imagination, the vision is blurred.

If the organization is steered into a direction not aligned to the vision, the vision becomes compromised.

If the leadership say, do things, or make decisions that are not aligned to the vision, the vision becomes compromised.

A blurred or compromised vision leaves people confused and it is likely that they will become disillusioned, lose focus and zeal. Productivity drops. The organization is affected. The cause is a compromised vision. The remedy is to restate, clarify, and realign to the original vision.

State your mission loud and clear

Luke 4:18,19 (GNT)
18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed
19 and announce that the time has come
when the Lord will save his people."

The Lord Jesus came to be the Savior of the world to save it from sin, satan, sickness, and eternal death. How was He going to go about doing this? As He launched His earthly ministry, He announced loud, bold, and clear some of the things He was going to do and how He would do these. There was no ambiguity in what He was going to do. His mission was stated boldly and clearly. From then on, people saw Him do the very things He said He would do. He acted on His mission. The 12 disciples followed Him and so did the crowds. It became quite apparent that if you wanted to hear good news, if you wanted to experience liberty, receive sight—spiritual and physical—and be set free from oppression, then all you needed to do was go to Jesus. The mission He stated and the work that followed drew great crowds to Him wherever He went.

State your mission loud and clear. Follow through with corresponding actions.

Values—clarify what you really stand for

1 Corinthians 14:8
For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?

In ancient times, the sound of the trumpet was a call to battle. It mobilized people to enter into a high-risk engagement calling them to bold and fearless action. However, if the sound of the trumpet was not clearly heard, the call to battle was uncertain, and people would not know if they had been summoned to action or not.

Similarly, organizations need to call people to stand for certain values. These are values embraced by the organization and hence, by everyone working in the organization. These values must be clearly understood, and people must know how to apply these values in their professional activities.

While many things around us keep changing, the organization's value system remains constant. While the organization itself grows, expands, and changes over time, its core values do not change. Whether an organization overtly states itself to be a value-based organization or not, an organization should have a set of core values that guides its activities. These values must be defined, understood by everyone, and applied at all levels and in all forms of organizational activity. Whether stated or not, all good leadership is in some way "value-based leadership" with underlying principles or values such as integrity, equity, and social responsibility.

When an organization consistently operates in accordance with its value systems, an organization's core values can then serve as a powerful competitive advantage.

Core values must not just be nice slogans to use in promotional materials or for hiring purposes. Core values are "core"—central to what the organization is. Employees must personally know, understand, and apply these core values. Customer's experience with the organization must match the organization's stated values.

Here are some sample core values.

Our core values

INTEGRITY
We value integrity over profit. We refuse to make profit while sacrificing integrity.

EXCELLENCE
We have a passion for excellence in all we do.
We are here to win.

PEOPLE
We value people over policies. We do our utmost to treat people well.

CREATIVITY
We pursue creativity in everything without getting blinded by the routine.

UNITY
What we accomplish together is more important than individual accomplishments.

Create a culture aligned to your vision, mission, and values

Nehemiah 2:20
So I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem."

The city of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. About 445 B.C., Nehemiah, who at this time was serving in the court of the Persian king, was burdened to rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem. He obtained permission and the support of the Persian king to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls. Nehemiah was one man with a big vision, but he could not do this alone. So, this is what he did.

VISION: Nehemiah shared the vision with the people in Jerusalem. He shared how God had led him thus far giving him favor and support from the Persian king. The vision was compelling. People were inspired to join in on the vision.

MISSION: Nehemiah then planned out how the reconstruction work was to be done. The work was divided according to the 10 gates of the city of Jerusalem, and each group of people was assigned to work on the section of the wall nearest to each of their own houses so that they were personally involved in the work.

VALUES: First, everyone believed that the "*God of heaven will prosper us*" (Nehemiah 2:20). God was on our side. This was powerful. Second, everyone believed that they had to do their part. "*We will arise and build"* (Nehemiah 2:20). Third, they knew opposition or hindrance would come, but everyone was determined that nothing will stop them. They were all the same mind that the enemy had no right or say in what they were doing for their own city.

Three powerful values (beliefs).

1) God is on our side.
2) We will all work.
3) Nothing can stop us.

CULTURE: Under Nehemiah's leadership, the people worked together as one strong community. Nehemiah set the tone and shaped, and preserved a strong culture of work, support, generosity, and humility through his personal example.

- **Everyone worked.** People of all trades, of all ages, men, and women worked for the rebuilding of the walls. Everyone—the priests, goldsmiths, perfumers, district leaders, the Levites, gatekeepers, merchants, and common people—all did their part.
- **They worked hard with all their heart and mind.** *"So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work"* (Nehemiah 4:6).
- **They supported each other.** Knowing that they were under threat from the enemy, some worked and the others stood guard. *"So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah"* (Nehemiah 4:16).
- **Rulers were urged to be generous.** Nehemiah set the example of generosity by giving to those in need. He then urged others to absolve debts owed to them by common people who had borrowed from them. Nehemiah said, *"I have let the people borrow money and grain from me, and so have my companions and those who work for me. Now let's give up all our claims to repayment. Cancel all the debts they owe you—money or grain or wine or olive oil. And give them back their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and houses right now!" The leaders replied, "We'll do as you say. We'll give the property back and not try to collect the debts." I called in the priests and made the leaders swear in front of them to keep the promise they had just made."* (Nehemiah 5:10-12a, GNT)
- **Nehemiah led by example**. Through his life example, Nehemiah birthed and fueled the culture of the community. He worked. He refused the rights and benefits of a leader. Nehemiah stated, *"During all the twelve years that I was*

governor of the land of Judah, from the twentieth year that Artaxerxes was emperor until his thirty-second year, neither my relatives nor I ate the food I was entitled to have as governor. Every governor who had been in office before me had been a burden to the people and had demanded forty silver coins a day for food and wine. Even their servants had oppressed the people. But I acted differently, because I honored God. I put all my energy into rebuilding the wall and did not acquire any property. Everyone who worked for me joined in the rebuilding." (Nehemiah 5:14-16, GNT)

- **The people saw great success.** *"After fifty-two days of work the entire wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul. When our enemies in the surrounding nations heard this, they realized that they had lost face, since everyone knew that the work had been done with God's help."* (Nehemiah 6:15,16, GNT)

Here are sample statements that describe culture. It is good to think through and talk about the culture you wish to create in your organization. Then model it. Encourage others to model it. Culture is not just a concept. It is what you do. It is what you live out. It is what people create and experience within the organization. Your culture then becomes a norm—a way of life within the organization.

Our Culture

A CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

We pave the way, we do what has not been done before, we take ownership.

A CULTURE WHERE PEOPLE CONNECT, COOPERATE AND COLLABORATE

We are a team and we work as a team. When we win, we all win together.

A CULTURE OF BEING TRANSPARENT AND HONEST

We are open and honest in sharing information, opinions, ideas, and learning.

A CULTURE OF EQUALITY AND RESPECT
God made us all equal and so we treat each other that way with respect for every person.

A CULTURE OF SHARING AND CARING
Work is more than a job we do. We participate in each other's lives.

A CULTURE OF FUN AND LAUGHTER
We believe work must be fun.
We find things we can laugh about together.

The culture you create will help determine several characteristics of your organization—creativity, ownership, agility, responsiveness, and community. The expressions of culture may change over time as the organization adapts to changing circumstances. For instance, when the organization is about 20 people, there is a strong sense of community where everyone knows each other and comes together to celebrate each one's birthday. However, when the organization grows to 200 people, everyone may not know everybody else, and getting 200 people together for each birthday would be impractical. Instead, this sense of community may happen within smaller teams that people are a part of. People within the teams celebrate each other's birthday. And this same sense of community will hold even when two people within the organization who do not know each other meet and interact as needed.

History is important—capture it, repeat it

Judges 2:7-11
7 So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel.
8 Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died *when he was* one hundred and ten years old.

9 And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.
10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.
11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals;

While we do not live in the past, we must not forget the past. The lessons we have learned, the experiences that we have been through, the successes, and the failures are all valuable. History is important. We must know history to interpret the present and decide for the future. It would be foolish to repeat the mistakes of the past and go around in circles. History also helps us see the progress we have made (or have not made). Every small success inspires us to press forward for more. Our lack of progress should cause us to evaluate, examine, and strategize for change that may be needed to bring about growth.

At opportune moments, tell relevant stories. Narrate stories from the past. Laugh about mistakes made in the past. However, always remember to narrate stories in a positive manner. Never repeat stories to put people down, malign their reputation, or to gossip about them. Use stories as teachable illustrations.

However, history must not become a deterrent to taking risks or attempting new things. Simply because we tried new things in the past and failed, does not mean we should not try new things again. Similarly, we cannot live in the glories of the past. What matters is where we are today and where we are headed. Past successes must be left behind. Hence, we must understand how to use history correctly. Use it to learn from. Use it to spur action. However, never permit the past to hold you captive.

Success stories are invigorating; share them

Proverbs 25:25
***As* cold water to a weary soul,**
So *is* good news from a far country.

When the organization experiences success, share these stories. Celebrate people. Celebrate teams. Celebrate progress. Let individuals and teams know they are recognized and appreciated for their contribution. Doing this will inspire and invigorate the organization.

Key Principles

1) Your vision influences productivity.
2) Vision—write it, repeat it, repeat it again.
3) A compromised vision leaves people confused.
4) State your mission loud and clear.
5) Values—clarify what you really stand for.
6) Create a culture aligned to your vision, mission and values.
7) History is important. Capture it. Repeat it.
8) Success stories are invigorating. Share them.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- What are the values embraced by the organization you work for? Are these clearly stated? Do employees know these values and are these values applied in all professional activities taking place in the organization?
- Think about how the culture within an organization affects performance and outcomes at an individual level and at an organizational level. Is having a healthy and supportive organizational culture important?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

5

Competitive Advantage and Strategy

What makes your organization different and better than others who are doing the same thing? Know your key differentiators that give you a sustainable competitive advantage over others in the same industry. Remember that at times, it is the invisible elements of divine favor, supernatural intervention, faith, or a word of wisdom that cause you to stand out even when you are dwarfed by giants all around.

Competitive advantage is what makes your product, service, or offering different or better than competitors. Common differentiators include speed (faster), greater value, cheaper (lower cost), greater benefits, superior product (features, durability, reliability, design, etc.), location, higher skill, source of raw materials or labor (local versus imported), social cause (for example, engaging underprivileged people), and other factors. Some of these are achieved through innovation, creativity, and operational efficiency. You then devise a competitive strategy to build and sustain a competitive advantage. Typical competitive strategies include cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy, innovation strategy, and operational effectiveness strategy. Competition and market conditions are never stationary. They keep changing rapidly. Hence, organizations need to remain agile and adapt to staying competitive.

In this chapter, we look at biblical principles that can undergird our professional knowledge and practice of competitive advantage and strategy.

Know what you are against

Luke 14:28-33 (GNT)
28 If one of you is planning to build a tower, you sit down first and figure out what it will cost, to see if you have enough money to finish the job.
29 If you don't, you will not be able to finish the tower after laying the foundation; and all who see what happened will make fun of you.
30 'You began to build but can't finish the job!' they will say.
31 If a king goes out with ten thousand men to fight another king who comes against him with twenty thousand men, he will sit down first and decide if he is strong enough to face that other king.
32 If he isn't, he will send messengers to meet the other king to ask for terms of peace while he is still a long way off.
33 In the same way," concluded Jesus, "none of you can be my disciple unless you give up everything you have.

Whether it is following Jesus Christ or other matters in daily life, every pursuit involves a cost. Every battle puts lives at stake. In a similar way, the pursuit of an organizational vision involves cost. So, it is important to have a clear understanding on what it takes to pursue the vision. Do you have the required internal and external resources to work toward the vision? In most cases, you would also consider competitors who are doing a similar thing. It is important to determine how your organization can do things better or different from what competitors are already doing.

Compete clean and fair

2 Timothy 2:5 (GNT)
An athlete who runs in a race cannot win the prize unless he obeys the rules.

It is not enough to cross the finish line first, what is equally important is whether you obeyed the rules. So also, businesses and organizations that do not compete fairly, sooner or later face the consequences. Time has shown that many corporate losses and collapses were due to mismanagement, misuse of funds, deceptive innovation, cheating customers, financial fraud, etc. For a short period of time, things looked good until the truth was

revealed and everything came tumbling down. Build success through the quality of your product or service, innovation, and other key metrics, but never through unfair business practices. Always compete clean and fair. Compete vigorously, but fairly. Any other way is sure to be doomed. Comply with prevailing competition laws in each market (also referred to as "antitrust" laws, for example, see Competition Commission of India - **cci.gov.in**) that are intended to preserve free and open competition, and to promote a competitive marketplace. When markets operate freely, consumers benefit through high-quality goods and services at fair prices.

Jeremiah 17:11 (GNT)
The person who gets money dishonestly
is like a bird that hatches eggs it didn't lay.
In the prime of life he will lose his riches,
and in the end he is nothing but a fool.

Develop a winning strategy

Proverbs 24:5,6 (The Message)
5 It's better to be wise than strong; intelligence outranks muscle any day.
6 Strategic planning is the key to warfare; to win, you need a lot of good counsel.

"Strategy" is a military term essentially meaning the art of war, planning the movement of troops and ships into favorable positions; plan of action or policy in business or politics (adapted from the Oxford Dictionary). To win, you need a strategy, a well-thought-out plan for reaching your goals. Get a lot of good input as you work on developing a winning strategy. Talk to experts in your field if possible. Survey the market. Talk to customers.

Proverbs 20:18 (GNT)
Get good advice and you will succeed; don't go charging into battle without a plan.

Goliath is not your real enemy, fear is

1 Samuel 17:10,11,24
10 And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together."
11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.
24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid.

An entire army of trained soldiers was left immobilized when they saw Goliath. Fear robbed them of their ability to venture out to fight. Part of your competitive strategy is to never let fear hold you back from executing your ideas. The fear of failure. The fear of the unknown. All of these can leave us in a place of inaction. Your real enemy is not your competition. One good idea can make you a winner. Your real enemy is fear that holds you back from stepping out on that idea. Conquer fear. Step out in faith.

Leverage your experience with lions and bears to face Goliath

1 Samuel 17:32-37 (GNT)
32 David said to Saul, "Your Majesty, no one should be afraid of this Philistine! I will go and fight him."
33 "No," answered Saul. "How could you fight him? You're just a boy, and he has been a soldier all his life!"
34 "Your Majesty," David said, "I take care of my father's sheep. Any time a lion or a bear carries off a lamb,
35 I go after it, attack it, and rescue the lamb. And if the lion or bear turns on me, I grab it by the throat and beat it to death.
36 I have killed lions and bears, and I will do the same to this heathen Philistine, who has defied the army of the living God.
37 The Lord has saved me from lions and bears; he will save me from this Philistine."
"All right," Saul answered. "Go, and the Lord be with you."

The odds were heavily against David as he offered to go fight Goliath. A shepherd up against a trained soldier. No one

in his "right mind" would think of doing something like this but David tapped into his history with God. He tapped into those small successes he had when he did his daily routine of taking care of his father's sheep. He had killed lions and bears. As far as David was concerned, Goliath was no different. He had a competitive advantage that others could not see, but nonetheless was very valid.

Every small success you face adds to your competitive advantage. Build on every small success.

Sometimes, just one pebble is all it takes

1 Samuel 17:40,49,50 (GNT)
40 He took his shepherd's stick and then picked up five smooth stones from the stream and put them in his bag. With his sling ready, he went out to meet Goliath.
49 He reached into his bag and took out a stone, which he slung at Goliath. It hit him on the forehead and broke his skull, and Goliath fell face downward on the ground.
50 And so, without a sword, David defeated and killed Goliath with a sling and a stone!

David's strategy against Goliath was simple. David used what he was good at. There was a skill and precision that David had with the sling and stone, which no one expected. It was unconventional. It was not exactly what the competition expected.

What looked like a disadvantage was really David's competitive advantage. And most of all, David moved out in faith empowered by God.

Competitive strategy then, is leveraging your core competencies and doing what you are really skilled at in order to outdo the competition. You don't have to be big to be better if you can outdo competition in other areas such as skill, agility, innovation, efficiency, service, etc.

Psalm 20:7
Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses;
But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

Get the Lord's counsel—your key to competitive advantage and strategy

2 Samuel 5:22-25 (GNT)
22 Then the Philistines went back to Rephaim Valley and occupied it again.
23 Once more David consulted the Lord, who answered, "Don't attack them from here, but go around and get ready to attack them from the other side, near the balsam trees.
24 When you hear the sound of marching in the treetops, then attack because I will be marching ahead of you to defeat the Philistine army."
25 David did what the Lord had commanded, and was able to drive the Philistines back from Geba all the way to Gezer.

Consult the Lord. Get His counsel. There are times God will reveal specifics on how to go about doing things differently and better than what is already out there. The Lord engages with us in the work we do.

The story of Jacob in the Old Testament has a record of God intervening in Jacob's work life in an unusual way. Jacob was working for Laban, his uncle. His uncle cheated him and changed his wages 10 times but God spoke to Jacob in a dream. God revealed to Jacob what He would do, and Jacob developed a strategy to align his work with the Word God had revealed to him. Jacob prospered immensely.

Genesis 31:6-12 (GNT)
6 You both know that I have worked for your father with all my strength.
7 Yet he has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not let him harm me.
8 Whenever Laban said, 'The speckled goats shall be your wages,' all the flocks produced speckled young. When he said, 'The striped goats shall be your wages,' all the flocks produced striped young.
9 God has taken flocks away from your father and given them to me.
10 "During the breeding season I had a dream, and I saw that the male

goats that were mating were striped, spotted, and speckled.
11 The angel of God spoke to me in the dream and said, 'Jacob!' 'Yes,' I answered.
12 'Look,' he continued, 'all the male goats that are mating are striped, spotted, and speckled. I am making this happen because I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.

God can speak and reveal to us what He is about to do or what is about to happen in the economy. He can provide us with specific instructions for our business and strategies to implement. Act on it and see the results.

Be open to unusual strategies

Joshua 6:1-5 (GNT)
1 The gates of Jericho were kept shut and guarded to keep the Israelites out. No one could enter or leave the city.
2 The Lord said to Joshua, "I am putting into your hands Jericho, with its king and all its brave soldiers.
3 You and your soldiers are to march around the city once a day for six days.
4 Seven priests, each carrying a trumpet, are to go in front of the Covenant Box. On the seventh day you and your soldiers are to march around the city seven times while the priests blow the trumpets.
5 Then they are to sound one long note. As soon as you hear it, all the people are to give a loud shout, and the city walls will collapse. Then the whole army will go straight into the city."

There are times when God will give you unusual strategies. He has done that in the past and when people acted on it, they saw unusual success. Who would have ever devised a strategy of marching around the city walls to bring them down? But that is the strategy God gave Joshua to take Jericho. Who would have thought of sending a band of worshippers before an army into battle? But that is what God instructed Jehoshaphat to do and they saw an unusual victory (2 Chronicles 20:21,22). These unusual strategies are an invitation to obey and trust. As you work on these unusual strategies, God moves on your behalf to cause unusual victories. However, when expecting unusual strategies

from God, don't forget to do the normal task of thinking through, planning, and executing strategies for competitive advantage. Generally, you will have more of the normal than the unusual. Both the normal and the unusual are important.

Down, but not out; come back with a new strategy

Often when pursuing an organizational vision or a specific goal, you will not taste success in the first attempt. You will need to try and keep trying each time with a new strategy. In Judges 20, the Israelite soldiers while going against one of the tribes, the tribe of Benjamin, faced defeat on two consecutive days. They were discouraged but the Lord directed them to go back into battle for the third time. On the third day, they went back into battle but had a strategy that routed the enemy. They won, and they won decisively. The battle was over. When you are down and out, don't quit. Work on your strategy. Sometimes we fail because we are doing things, but not strategically. A winning strategy can make all the difference. Develop a winning strategy. Get up, and try again.

Time and chance happen—be alert, act quick, capture the moment

Ecclesiastes 9:11
I returned and saw under the sun that—
The race *is* not to the swift,
Nor the battle to the strong,
Nor bread to the wise,
Nor riches to men of understanding,
Nor favor to men of skill;
But time and chance happen to them all.

Understand that timing and circumstances are important. Good times and good circumstances, bad times and bad circumstances come to all. In business, you will see both. What is required is wisdom to handle both. Recognize the opportune time and the circumstances, and capture the moment. Act quickly.

Ecclesiastes 8:5b,6a
5And a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment,
6Because for every matter there is a time and judgment,
Though the misery of man increases greatly.

1 Chronicles 12:32a
of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do,

Develop a competitive strategy that maximizes the time and opportunity that is before you. Your ability to recognize the moment—the opportunity that is before you—and then to quickly develop a right strategy on what to do will give you a huge competitive advantage. Stay alert!

Key Principles

1) Know what you are against.
2) Compete clean and fair.
3) Develop a winning strategy.
4) Goliath is not your real enemy, fear is.
5) Leverage your experience with lions and bears to face Goliath.
6) Sometimes, just one pebble is all it takes.
7) Get the Lord's counsel—your key to competitive advantage and strategy.
8) Be open to unusual strategies.
9) Down, but not out. Come back with a new strategy.
10) Time and chance happen. Be alert. Act quick. Capture the moment.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- What are some of the "lions and bears"—small successes in the past—that you can leverage to your advantage to give your organization a competitive edge for the work you are doing within your organization?
- What are some things you can do to ensure that you remain alert…

a) to recognize the moment—the opportunity that is before you and then

b) to quickly develop a right strategy on what to do?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

6

Organizational Structure and Design

The management and operations of an organization are usually differentiated into several subdivided units of specialization. These business units are also integrated to ensure synergy so that the organization's goals are achieved. While there are a variety of generic organizational structures, most organizations would use the structure that best serves their current strategy and stage of growth for optimal performance while readying it for transition into what lies ahead. As internal and external factors change and growth is pursued, the organizational structure may be continuously re-designed. God is a God of order, structure, and design.
The world around us and the vast universe speaks of this.

Competitive strategy, organizational structure and design, organizational culture, and execution of the organization's goals, among other things, are important for the success of the organization. Organizational structure and design must enable the organization to respond quickly to changing market conditions. Structures, systems, and processes within the organization must eliminate bottlenecks, make the environment easy to work in, facilitate cooperation and collaboration across all units and promote rapid sharing of knowledge, ideas, and information. Of course, organizational structure and design is only as good as the people within it. Get the right structure and design and the right people in the right positions, and you have an organization that is ready to win!

Structure, order, and design are godly virtues

1 Corinthians 14:33,40
33 For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.
40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

God is a God of structure, order, and design. We see this in all of His creation. There is design, structure, and order in creation. God instituted the Church. He also instituted marriage and family. In both these institutions, God has established order and calls us to maintain this order. When we maintain structure and order, there is peace, harmony, and the purpose of the institution is accomplished.

Structure, order, and design are an expression of wisdom. Where there is right structure, order, and design, we know that wisdom has gone into conceiving it. It did not happen at random. It was intentional. That is why we must give much thought into the structure and design of the organization.

Structure, order, and design help fulfill purposes. We do not put together an organizational structure just because we are supposed to have one. Whatever organizational structure that is put in place must be designed to fulfill the purpose(s) of the organization.

Align organizational structure to strategy

Numbers 1:52 (GNT)
The rest of the Israelites shall set up camp, company by company, each man with his own group and under his own banner.

Numbers 2:34 (GNT)
So the people of Israel did everything the Lord had commanded Moses. They camped, each under his own banner, and they marched, each with his own clan.

Numbers 10:13,14 (GNT)
13 They began to march at the command of the Lord through Moses,

[14] and each time they moved, they were in the same order. Those under the banner of the division led by the tribe of Judah started out first, company by company, with Nahshon son of Amminadab in command.

It is interesting to see the instructions God gave Moses to lead 600,000 people in an orderly manner across the wilderness in their journey to the Promised Land. Each of the 12 tribes had one leader who reported directly to Moses. When they camped, three tribes camped on each of the four sides of the Tabernacle. The instruction for which tribe on which side of the Tabernacle and in which order was clearly given. When they moved, there was a proper order, tribe by tribe, in how they moved as they journeyed. They also had different kinds of trumpet sounds—one kind of trumpet blast to gather the leaders, another kind of trumpet blast to gather the entire community, and another kind of blast to start the movement of the camp. This entire organizational structure was aligned to a clear strategy on how to make this journey and fulfill the vision of entering the Promised Land.

Organizational structure and design that determines where people are positioned, chain of command, systems, processes, lines, and modes of communication, all of these must be aligned to organizational strategy.

Organizational design affects strategic capability and sustainability

1 Chronicles 16:4,37 (The Message)
[4] Then David assigned some of the Levites to the Chest of God to lead worship - to intercede, give thanks, and praise the God of Israel.
[37] David left Asaph and his coworkers with the Chest of the Covenant of God and in charge of the work of worship; they were responsible for the needs of worship around the clock.

David, once he became king, brought the Ark of the Covenant—a symbol of God's presence—and placed it under

a tent covering in Jerusalem. He desired for non-stop worship to go on in this tent. So, David organized 4000 people to attend to the Tabernacle, 4000 musicians and 288 prophetic singers to serve at the Tabernacle. They were organized into 24 smaller units, groups, or teams of musicians and singers who had a daily schedule to follow. Leaders were appointed to maintain order in everything. All the musicians and singers were highly skilled so that there was excellence in all that was done. The most amazing thing was that this organizational structure gave strategic capability and sustainability. The worship at the Tabernacle of David went on around the clock, 24x7 for about 33 years. Something that had never been done before!

Good organizational structure and design not only provide competitive advantage, but also provide strategic capability and sustainability.

Have the right teams in place

1 Chronicles 12:17,18,21,22 (GNT)
17 David went to meet them and said, "If you are coming as friends to help me, you are welcome here. Join us! But if you intend to betray me to my enemies, even though I have not tried to hurt you, the God of our ancestors will know it and punish you."
18 God's spirit took control of one of them, Amasai, who later became the commander of "The Thirty," and he called out,

"David son of Jesse, we are yours!
Success to you and those who help you!
God is on your side."

David welcomed them and made them officers in his army.
21 They served David as officers over his troops, because they were all outstanding soldiers. Later they were officers in the Israelite army.
22 Almost every day new men joined David's forces, so that his army was soon enormous.

David was Israel's most successful king politically, administratively, militarily, and spiritually. The nation thrived in every way during his reign. One of the things we see David

do is to assemble the right teams, build capacity, and organize them into strong units. As David built his army, he assembled outstanding soldiers to lead his troops. David had a special set of 37 warriors who oversaw his army. Out of these, there were "The Famous Thirty" and there was "The Three" who were the most valiant of David's soldiers (2 Samuel 23).

As part of the organizational structure and design, you also need the right teams of people in the right places. The team with people who are good at what they are doing and know how to work well together will eventually succeed.

Getting the right people and putting the right teams in place is not an easy task. It takes time. There can be some ups and downs in this journey but eventually, you will arrive at having the right people in the right place and the right teams carrying out what each unit in your organizational structure was designed to do.

Sometimes, your best team begins with the most unlikely

1 Samuel 22:1,2 (GNT)
[1]David fled from the city of Gath and went to a cave near the town of Adullam. When his brothers and the rest of the family heard that he was there, they joined him.
[2] People who were oppressed or in debt or dissatisfied went to him, about four hundred men in all, and he became their leader.

Early on, David was at a low point in his journey in life. Although destined to be king, at this point, he was a homeless fugitive wandering and living in caves. At this time, 400 men decided to join him and come under his leadership. They knew David's capabilities. David welcomed them. This is where David's mighty army began—at an unlikely moment in his life, at an unlikely place, starting with some unlikely men.

In your professional journey, whether you are building a team, or a strategic business unit of building an organization, you may not always have the opportunity to start out with everything just being perfect. Sometimes, your journey into your best begins at the most unlikely moment in an unlikely place and with the most unlikely team.

Believe in your team; see beyond their current struggles

Mark 16:9-15

[9] Now when *He* rose early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.
[10] She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.
[11] And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.
[12] After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country.
[13] And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.
[14] Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.
[15] And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

It is quite interesting to note that the 11 men closest to Jesus during His work on earth initially did not believe that He had been raised from the dead. Just three days prior, they had seen Him being crucified and His dead body placed in a securely sealed tomb. Prior to that, He had spoken to them often stating that He will rise from the dead. However, three days after His crucifixion, they were unbelieving. In their minds, He was dead and gone and could never rise again. They did not believe the initial reports that came in from people who saw Him alive. However, these were the chosen disciples. These were the men closest to Jesus whom Jesus had personally trained. They were His team.

What is quite amazing is that to these same 11 men who did not believe, the Lord Jesus appeared, He corrected them for their unbelief and it was to them that He gave the Great Commission, this big vision of going into the whole wide world and making sure everyone heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus believed in His team. He saw beyond their present struggles. He knew that once they got past this moment and had been equipped and empowered, they will give their lives for the vision and mission He was placing before them. He could count on them.

Believe in your team. You have invested in them. You have positioned them. Don't quit on them. See beyond their present struggles. Your trust in them will encourage them to rise up.

With just the right people, you can overcome the odds

Judges 7:7 (The Message)
God said to Gideon: "I'll use the three hundred men who lapped at the stream to save you and give Midian into your hands. All the rest may go home."

From 32,000 men who came out to fight as part of Gideon's army, 22,000 were fearful and afraid. God had Gideon send these men home. Out of the remaining 10,000 men, God picked out 300 and sent the rest home. These 300 men were picked out based on a test on how they drank water at the river. These 300 men scooped water up with their cupped hands using a posture that demonstrated alertness and readiness to go into action if needed. Gideon went into battle with just these 300 men. God stepped in and Gideon and his 300 men routed the vast Midianite army and brought peace to the land of Israel for 40 years.

You don't necessarily need a large "army" of people to outdo the competition. With just the right people, you can overcome the odds and fulfill your vision. Get the right people on board.

Design for maximized function and performance

1 Corinthians 12:18,20,25 (The Message)
18 As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.
20 What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own.
25 The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't,

One of the institutions set up by God is the Church. The human body is a picture of how God intended for this institution to be organized and to function.

Each unit is of the right size for it to function properly. Each unit is put in its proper place.

Each unit is intended to collaborate with other units.

Organizational structure must be designed for maximized function and performance.

Design right.

- The right size—not too big.
- The right function—doing what they are best suited for.
- The right position—placed in the optimal location.
- The right collaboration—with everyone doing their parts and contributing, sharing, and working together.

Break it down only to the necessary levels; stay lean, stay flat

Exodus 18:13-26 (GNT)
13 The next day Moses was settling disputes among the people, and he was kept busy from morning till night.
14 When Jethro saw everything that Moses had to do, he asked, "What is all this that you are doing for the people? Why are you doing this all alone, with people standing here from morning till night to consult you?"

15 Moses answered, "I must do this because the people come to me to learn God's will.
16 When two people have a dispute, they come to me, and I decide which one of them is right, and I tell them God's commands and laws."
17 Then Jethro said, "You are not doing this right.
18 You will wear yourself out and these people as well. This is too much for you to do alone.
19 Now let me give you some good advice, and God will be with you. It is right for you to represent the people before God and bring their disputes to him.
20 You should teach them God's commands and explain to them how they should live and what they should do.
21 But in addition, you should choose some capable men and appoint them as leaders of the people: leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They must be God-fearing men who can be trusted and who cannot be bribed.
22 Let them serve as judges for the people on a permanent basis. They can bring all the difficult cases to you, but they themselves can decide all the smaller disputes. That will make it easier for you, as they share your burden.
23 If you do this, as God commands, you will not wear yourself out, and all these people can go home with their disputes settled."
24 Moses took Jethro's advice
25 and chose capable men from among all the Israelites. He appointed them as leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.
26 They served as judges for the people on a permanent basis, bringing the difficult cases to Moses but deciding the smaller disputes themselves.

Moses had a challenge. He had to disseminate God's commands down to each individual among a population of about 600,000 people. He had to ensure that disputes were resolved peacefully and in accordance with God's standards. In addition, Moses had to go before God to pray for the people. The right thing to do then was to create an organizational structure with the right amount of delegation and to the right people so that the objectives could be accomplished. Moses focused on what was important for him to do. The delegated leaders had access to him on important matters as required.

As time progressed and other areas of need had to be addressed, other leaders were appointed. Eventually, we see the following organizational structure in place under Moses' leadership.

- **Judiciary process**: Leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens (Exodus 18).
- **Journey coordination**: 12 captains, one over each tribe (Numbers 1).
- **Governance**: 70 elders appointed to govern and address daily needs (Numbers 11).
- **Special task force**: 12 captains, one from each tribe, to go spy out the land of Canaan to plan entry (Numbers 13).
- **Priests**: Responsible for religious worship and services at the Tabernacle.
- **Levites**: Assisted the priest in the services at the Tabernacle.

Part of arriving at the optimal organizational structure and design is to break things down for efficiency, productivity, and peak performance. Delegate and empower people to be self-governing. Keep things as flat as possible so that access to people, knowledge, and information is readily available.

Key Principles

1) Structure, order and design are godly virtues.
2) Align organizational structure to strategy.
3) Organizational design affects strategic capability and sustainability.
4) Have the right teams in place.
5) Sometimes, your best team begins with the most unlikely.
6) Believe in your team. See beyond their current struggles.
7) With just the right people, you can overcome the odds.
8) Design for maximized function and performance.

9) Break it down only to the necessary levels. Stay lean. Stay flat.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- Does your team, unit or organization need redesigning? If you were to rethink and restructure things, what would you do?
- *"Sometimes, your best team begins with the most unlikely"*—have you experienced this? How did you journey through it and what was the outcome?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

7

Innovation and Creativity

Discovering, inventing, creating, solving problems, and generating new ideas fuel new products and services that organizations deliver. While there are several well-thought-out processes to train people in innovation and creativity, ultimately, we recognize that God is the great Creator. He is the Source, the Fountain Head of all creation. Pure wisdom flows from Him bringing into us the capacity to see what He has already placed in creation. He has hidden it for us to discover, endowed us with the ability to invent, explore, research, and create, and thus in many ways, give expression to the fact that we have been made in His image.

In the workplace, we understand the need for innovation and creativity. Whether it is solving a problem or coming up with a game changer, a breakthrough idea, we look for ways and means to innovate. How do we get or seek out inspiration? What do we do when we get "stuck," when there seems to be some sort of a brain block and ideas just don't seem to flow? How do we keep ourselves inspired so that ideas keep flowing? There are many practical steps we can learn and use (exercise, rest, do something different, read, expose yourself to a wide range of cultures, travel, reflect, listen, observe, be curious, and many others). Formal training and frameworks are also available. In this chapter, we examine some biblical possibilities for innovation and creativity for us to tap into.

God reveals, instructs, and teaches; so ask Him

Isaiah 28:23-29 (GNT)
23 Listen to what I am saying; pay attention to what I am telling you.
24 Farmers don't constantly plow their fields and keep getting them ready for planting.
25 Once they have prepared the soil, they plant the seeds of herbs such as dill and cumin. They plant rows of wheat and barley, and at the edges of their fields they plant other grain.
26 They know how to do their work, because God has taught them.
27 They never use a heavy club to beat out dill seeds or cumin seeds; instead they use light sticks of the proper size.
28 They do not ruin the wheat by threshing it endlessly, and they know how to thresh it by driving a cart over it without bruising the grains.
29 All this wisdom comes from the Lord Almighty. The plans God makes are wise, and they always succeed.

In man's process of the discovery of nature, how it works and how to harness it, in this case, specifically for the farmer discovering farming, the Scripture tells us that this wisdom comes from God because God has taught the farmer. God knows everything about His own creation—when, why, how, and where—and reveals, instructs, and guides people in this process of discovery.

Obviously, if God has done this in the past for agriculture, He can also reveal, instruct, and guide people in their process of discovery in other areas.

Daniel 2:20-22 (GNT)
20 "God is wise and powerful!
Praise him forever and ever.
21 He controls the times and the seasons;
he makes and unmakes kings;
it is he who gives wisdom and understanding.
22 He reveals things that are deep and secret;
he knows what is hidden in darkness,
and he himself is surrounded by light.

God is a Revealer of things that are deep, secret, and hidden. He knows everything about everything. Ask Him.

Wisdom is the most important thing

Proverbs 4:5-9 (GNT)
5 Get wisdom and insight! Do not forget or ignore what I say.
6 Do not abandon wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will keep you safe.
7 Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do. Whatever else you get, get insight.
8 Love wisdom, and she will make you great. Embrace her, and she will bring you honor.
9 She will be your crowning glory."

Wisdom is having insight into the true nature of things with the ability to determine their best use. In situations where there are decisions to be made or problems to be resolved, wisdom enables one to determine the right course of action. Wisdom is also the ability to have foresight, to foresee what things might be like, and to determine what needs to be done in the present to arrive at the best results for the future.

Proverbs 8:11-31 is a passage that reveals wisdom as foundational. It is the wisdom of God that empowers, provides good counsel, common sense, good leadership, fair legislation, and brings wealth and glory. It was the wisdom of God that gave birth to all of creation. Therefore, it is wisdom that can unravel the mysteries hidden in creation.

Discovery is the act of finding or learning something for the first time. **Creativity** is the ability to make new things or think of new ideas. **Innovation** is a new idea, device, or method, or the act or process of introducing new ideas, devices, or methods. (Adapted from Merriam-Webster dictionary) Wisdom from God sparks discovery, creativity, and innovation.

James 1:5,6 (GNT)
5 But if any of you lack wisdom, you should pray to God, who will give it to you; because God gives generously and graciously to all.
6 But when you pray, you must believe and not doubt at all. Whoever doubts is like a wave in the sea that is driven and blown about by the wind.

Welcome the Spirit of wisdom to anoint you

Isaiah 11:2
The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. The Holy Spirit imparts the mind of the Lord to us. The Holy Spirit reveals things that eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, and things have not yet been thought of (1 Corinthians 2:9,10,16). So, welcome Him to work in your life. Speak to Him. Seek His guidance. Ask Him for wisdom. Tune into the Spirit. Listen to what the Spirit of God releases into your spirit. *"For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding"* (Proverbs 2:6).

There is an anointing for artistic and creative skills

Exodus 31:1-6
1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:
2 "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.
3 And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship,
4 to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze,
5 in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all *manner of* workmanship.
6 "And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you:

Here is an example of wisdom imparted by the Holy Spirit resulting in understanding and knowledge in creative and artistic skills. These men were designated by God for a specific purpose that required wisdom, understanding, knowledge and skill for artistic works and craftsmanship. The Spirit of God imparted to them what they needed to accomplish in their assigned tasks.

Keep in mind however, that even after having received this endowment from the Holy Spirit, they had to follow this up with hard work, doing their works of art and craftsmanship.

In whatever area you are engaged in, you can ask the Holy Spirit to impart wisdom, understanding, knowledge and the skill you need to solve problems and to be innovative and creative in what you do. And follow this up with diligent work.

Don't just identify the problem—bring out the solution

Genesis 41:29-40 (GNT)

[29] There will be seven years of great plenty in all the land of Egypt.
[30] After that, there will be seven years of famine, and all the good years will be forgotten, because the famine will ruin the country.
[31] The time of plenty will be entirely forgotten, because the famine which follows will be so terrible.
[32] The repetition of your dream means that the matter is fixed by God and that he will make it happen in the near future.
[33] "Now you should choose some man with wisdom and insight and put him in charge of the country.
[34] You must also appoint other officials and take a fifth of the crops during the seven years of plenty.
[35] Order them to collect all the food during the good years that are coming, and give them authority to store up grain in the cities and guard it.
[36] The food will be a reserve supply for the country during the seven years of famine which are going to come on Egypt. In this way the people will not starve."
[37] The king and his officials approved this plan,
[38] and he said to them, "We will never find a better man than Joseph, a man who has God's spirit in him."
[39] The king said to Joseph, "God has shown you all this, so it is obvious that you have greater wisdom and insight than anyone else.
[40] I will put you in charge of my country, and all my people will obey your orders. Your authority will be second only to mine.

Joseph not only interpreted the dream that described what was going to happen in Egypt over the next 14 years but also advised the king on what to do in preparation for the seven years of famine that was about to come.

God's Spirit gives us wisdom to comprehend and understand the true nature of problems. He gives us the ability to foresee situations and plan. He gives us the wisdom on solutions and the right course of action to prepare for the future. Tap into the work of the Spirit.

Step out to think and act in an unfamiliar territory

1 Chronicles 28:10-12,19 (The Message)
[10] Look sharp now! God has chosen you to build his holy house. Be brave, determined! And do it!"
[11] Then David presented his son Solomon with the plans for The Temple complex: porch, storerooms, meeting rooms, and the place for atoning sacrifice.
[12] He turned over the plans for everything that God's Spirit had brought to his mind: the design of the courtyards, the arrangements of rooms, and the closets for storing all the holy things.
[19] "Here are the blueprints for the whole project as God gave me to understand it," David said.

One of the things that hold us back from innovating is our reluctance to step into unfamiliar territory. David grew up as a shepherd boy. He gained leadership and military experience hands on during his years of running from King Saul. He had no prior knowledge of architecture or design of buildings. However, God's Spirit gave him the design of the entire temple complex and the complete plan for organizing the Levites and priests in their work of leading and ordering worship. The Spirit gave him the exact specifications for how much gold and silver was needed for each article used in the services of worship. The Holy Spirit also gave him the plan for works of sculpture that were to be in the temple. All of these were unfamiliar areas for David and yet, David received details from the Lord.

We are very comfortable with what we know but we need to learn to step out to think and act in unfamiliar territory. Part of doing this is learning to receive ideas inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Further, as you read God's Word, expect to be inspired. Expect revelation to come that will lead you to solutions for problems that you would not have considered otherwise. *"The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple"* (Psalm 119:130).

Enhance your knowledge, understanding, and skill

Daniel 1:17
As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Daniel and his friends were in exile in a foreign land. They had been selected to be among the young men who would be trained in the language and literature of the Babylonians. God stepped in. He empowered these young men as they worked on learning and acquiring knowledge, understanding and skill.

The king said to Daniel, *"I've heard about you - that you're full of the Holy Spirit, that you've got a brilliant mind, that you are incredibly wise"* (Daniel 5:14, The Message). Like Daniel, we need to learn to combine the empowering of the Holy Spirit with our acquiring knowledge, understanding, and skill. Innovation, creativity, and discovery are a combination of inspiration and inquiry.

Proverbs 19:8 (GNT)
Do yourself a favor and learn all you can; then remember what you learn and you will prosper.

Use your imagination; train your memory

2 Timothy 1:7
For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

God designed our mind. He gave us our mind to use. Our mind has faculties such as imagination, reasoning, and memory.

God intends for us to have a sound mind. This implies that we use, train, and develop the mental faculties He has given us. Use your imagination. Train your memory. As we train, develop, and use these faculties, we are readying ourselves to solve problems, create solutions and bring value to those around us.

Key Principles

1) God reveals, instructs and teaches. So, ask Him.
2) Wisdom is the most important thing.
3) Welcome the Spirit of wisdom to anoint you.
4) There is an anointing for artistic and creative skills.
5) Don't just identify the problem—bring out the solution.
6) Step out to think and act in unfamiliar territory.
7) Enhance your knowledge, understanding and skill.
8) Use your imagination. Train your memory.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- Lately, have you had the opportunity to step out to think and act in unfamiliar territory? How did you navigate through this experience?
- Can you identify some areas where you think you should work on expanding your knowledge and skill? How can you go about doing this?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

8

People, Processes, Performance and Rewards

Human Resource Management (HRM) or managing people is an important part of any organization. It is a very strategic organizational function. Employee motivation, commitment, resolving conflicts, performance evaluation, employee rewards and employee retention are all key areas addressed by this function. Essentially, people make the organization. If you lose good people, you lose the organization. There isn't much of a price tag you can put on the value of having good people.

Given the global trends today, even a small business can have employees, consultants, and other people it engages spread across several countries. People can work remotely from any part of the world. This adds to the complexity of the human resource management function having to understand and work across different cultures and norms.

In this chapter, we cover some foundational principles presented in Scripture on treating people in the workplace.

Pay fairly based on contribution and value to the organization

Colossians 4:1
Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Pay your employees what is just and fair for the work they do, the experience and knowledge they bring, and the value they add to your organization. This, of course, will also depend

on what the organization can afford to pay. Sometimes, people may opt to work for an organization for a lower pay due to other intangible benefits such as supportive work environment, work flexibility, proximity to home, etc. As long as there is a mutual understanding that the remuneration being offered is just and fair, we are doing what the Scripture teaches us to do.

People need to be paid for their actual contribution and value to the organization and not purely on position and years. While the number of years of prior work does matter, in many situations, that is not a good indicator of the present contribution to the organization. Their current knowledge, skill, creative ability, ability to solve problems, leadership, and decision-making skills are also very important. Also take into account the intangible value people bring—the ability to be aligned to the vision, mission, culture, and values of the organization; the ability to hold people together within the organization; the ability to take on new challenges; the ability to move flexibly in uncertain conditions and other similar behaviors that may be extremely valuable in some organizations. If two people are doing similar tasks (work), but one offers a whole lot more in terms of their contribution and value, that person needs to be paid much more than the other. As long as there is a clear understanding on why there is this difference and the opportunity for others to grow into that same level of remuneration, things are just and fair.

Never permit a culture of entitlement to set in. The moment people operate with the idea that they have a right to be in the organization and inherently deserve their role, position, and pay in the organization irrespective of their current performance, they are operating out of a sense of entitlement. This impairs performance, fosters lethargy, and demoralizes others. Everyone in the organization is in the organization because they are aligned to the vision, mission, culture, and values, and they make a meaningful contribution toward these each day.

Ensure people are paid on time

Leviticus 19:13 (GNT)
"Do not rob or take advantage of anyone. Do not hold back the wages of someone you have hired, not even for one night.

Deuteronomy 24:14,15 (GNT)
14 "Do not cheat poor and needy hired servants, whether they are Israelites or foreigners living in one of your towns.
15 Each day before sunset pay them for that day's work; they need the money and have counted on getting it. If you do not pay them, they will cry out against you to the Lord, and you will be guilty of sin.

Typically, organizations pay their people on a monthly cycle and in some organizations, there may be salary payments made once every two weeks. It is important to ensure that people are paid on time. Individuals, families, spouses, and children depend on the salary coming in on time. A delay can be painful for all members of the family. The Scripture presents any violation in this regard as sin.

It is true that there may be occasions when an organization is cash strapped and may not be in a position to make salary payments. This is understandable but it is the organization's responsibility to keep its employees informed to make supportive arrangements to the extent possible, and make sure all outstanding salary payments are done as soon as possible. If the organization has the funds and still delays or holds back paying its employee(s) on time without good reason, this is not acceptable in God's eyes. Similarly, pay vendors, consultants, and other service providers on time. *"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so"* (Proverbs 3:27).

Don't exploit people; don't hold back wages

Jeremiah 22:13 (The Message)
"Doom to him who builds palaces but bullies people, who makes a fine house but destroys lives, Who cheats his workers and won't pay them for their work,

God forbids us from exploiting people, cheating employees of what is rightfully theirs, and holding back pay from people. Doing this is a certain path to disaster.

Proverbs 24:15,16 (GNT)
[15] Don't be like the wicked who scheme to rob honest people or to take away their homes.
[16] No matter how often honest people fall, they always get up again; but disaster destroys the wicked.

Never exploit the poor and powerless

Deuteronomy 24:14
"You shall not oppress a hired servant *who is* poor and needy, *whether* one of your brethren or one of the aliens who *is* in your land within your gates.

One of the dangers among those who are wealthy is the tendency to oppress and exploit the poor and needy who work for them. The poor and needy work for meager wages and are powerless to do anything else. They are utterly dependent on those who employ them. Hence, the tendency is for employers to exploit and take advantage of their helplessness. This is oppression. God's instruction is that you should not oppress or exploit the poor and needy.

Proverbs 22:22,23
[22] Do not rob the poor because he *is* poor,
Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate;
[23] For the Lord will plead their cause,
And plunder the soul of those who plunder them.

Proverbs 14:31
He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker,
But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.

Proverbs 22:16
He who oppresses the poor to increase his *riches,*
***And* he who gives to the rich, *will* surely *come* to poverty.**

Malachi 3:5 (GNT)
The Lord Almighty says, "I will appear among you to judge, and I will testify at once against those who practice magic, against adulterers, against those who give false testimony, those who cheat employees out of their wages, and those who take advantage of widows, orphans, and foreigners—against all who do not respect me.

Hire right, retain, review

Proverbs 26:10 (GNT)
An employer who hires any fool that comes along is only hurting everybody concerned.

Hire carefully because the people you hire will affect others in the organization. Hire right. Hire those who are aligned to the organization's vision, mission, culture, and values with the requisite knowledge and skills. Have a sound recruiting process in place to filter out those who may do more damage than good even though they may be highly skilled or talented. Retain the best. There are some people whom you must do everything you possibly can to retain in the organization. Of course, you cannot force people to stay, but you can make a good effort to try to retain those who are key to the organization's success. Check the exits. When people leave, use this as an opportunity to learn on how you could do things better. What areas within the organization could be improved to help retention, especially of good people. Typically, this is done through an open and honest exit interview.

Continuously learn about your own hiring and people development processes—what works and what does not work—from your employees. Look at those who are successful within the organization. What factors helped them succeed? Look closely at those who did not do so well once inside the organization. What factors hindered them? Are there things that can be changed in the organization to ensure such people can do well?

While performance reviews are fine, feedback for improvement must be done continuously, always, whenever there is an opportunity or need for this. People need to grow, improve, and correct themselves, not once a year, but all the time. Create a culture where everyone can address any matter of improvement with those involved. Everyone works for making things better, improving the way things are being done and achieving the organization's goals all through the year—not just during appraisals.

Treat people the way you would like to be treated

Luke 6:31,36 (GNT)
31 Do for others just what you want them to do for you.
36 Be merciful just as your Father is merciful.

A simple but powerful principle in working with and managing people is to do what the Lord Jesus taught us. Do for them what you would want them to do for you. If you were the employee, how would you like to be treated? If you had a problem, how would you like the organization to consider your situation and assist you? Extend mercy and compassion.

Of course, this is a reciprocating relationship. If you treat an employee well, you also expect the employee to give their 100% back to the organization. It would be wrong for the employee to keep expecting goodness and mercy shown to them and not fulfill their role with good performance, hard work, commitment, and loyalty. If you treat employees well and they fail to give back to the organization what is expected in terms of productivity and performance, then appropriate action should follow.

Warn, but never threaten or abuse

Ephesians 6:8,9 (GNT)
8 Remember that the Lord will reward each of us, whether slave or free, for the good work we do.
9 Masters, behave in the same way toward your slaves and stop using

threats. Remember that you and your slaves belong to the same Master in heaven, who judges everyone by the same standard.

Ultimately, God is our "Boss" or "Employer," and we work for Him and He will reward us for the good work we do. Employers, managers, and supervisors are instructed to treat their employees well, doing this before God sincerely, wholeheartedly and cheerfully, knowing that their reward is from the Lord for doing so. Do not threaten or abuse employees. In the workplace, we do have to state performance expectations and we do have to alert people when performance does not meet expectation and warn them of the consequences. On the other hand, a **threat** is a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action on someone in retribution for something done or not done. (Oxford Dictionary). Warn people but do not threaten or abuse them.

Empower people for high performance

Proverbs 30:24-28
24 There are four *things which* are little on the earth,
But they *are* exceedingly wise:
25 The ants *are* a people not strong,
Yet they prepare their food in the summer;
26 The rock badgers are a feeble folk,
Yet they make their homes in the crags;
27 The locusts have no king,
Yet they all advance in ranks;
28 The spider skillfully grasps with its hands,
And it is in kings' palaces.

There is a lot we can learn from God's design in creation. The ants and the locusts both teach us about empowerment, teamwork, and high performance.

Proverbs 6:6,8
6 Go to the ant, you sluggard!
Consider her ways and be wise,
7 Which, having no captain,
Overseer or ruler,

[8] Provides her supplies in the summer,
***And* gathers her food in the harvest.**

The ants are an amazing example of spontaneous teamwork. Thousands of worker ants work together without direction from a "boss" or "leader". There is no command center to tell the ants what to do, and yet, things get done—collecting food, building a nest, etc. These teach us the power of spontaneous teamwork and the fact that each ant "feels empowered" to do what is needed, and the ants work with foresight preparing for the winter during summer.

Locusts are typically solitary. However, when they are under certain conditions (for example, heavy rain or drought), they come together and swarm. A swarm of locusts can have millions of them, and they are unstoppable. When they move together in a swarm, there is no leader or captain. No locust is important. They are a swarm. They are united. Yet, they move in an orderly manner with great flexibility for movement. They are unstoppable and cause great devastation. Once again, these teach us about unity, order, spontaneous teamwork, and the amazing results that can be achieved through teamwork.

The book of Joel describes a swarm of locusts this way—*"As they approach, everyone is terrified; every face turns pale. They attack like warriors; they climb the walls like soldiers. They all keep marching straight ahead and do not change direction or get in each other's way. They swarm through defenses, and nothing can stop them"* (Joel 2:6-8, GNT).

While there is a definite place and role for leadership, both these examples, of the ant and the locust, teach us what can happen if people are empowered to work together as a team. The results that can take place are multiplied several times. Rather than having management that is restrictive, imposing, and controlling, empower people for high performance.

Empower people with freedom along with guidelines to keep them and the organization safe. When unnecessary interference from management or leadership is removed, people feel more empowered. Let them have a voice, a say in things. Empower people to be self-governing. Empower people for decision-making. Empower people with the skills, training, equipping, and tools that they need. Empowered teams yield increased productivity and high performance.

Remember, sweetness of the lips increases learning

Proverbs 16:21,24
[21] The wise in heart will be called prudent,
And sweetness of the lips increases learning.
[24] Pleasant words *are like* a honeycomb,
Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

Learning takes place best in a supportive, positive, and encouraging environment. We cannot force-feed learning. Continuous learning and skills development are essential in organizations. To keep employees motivated to do this, organizations need to provide an encouraging and supportive learning environment. Create an environment where people are encouraged to ask questions, critique each other's work, challenge the status quo, think outside the box, and bring in different perspectives, all in a positive healthy manner. Encourage continuous learning.

The same applies when dealing with individuals. If you really want them to grasp something, speak politely, gently, positively, and in an encouraging manner. Sweetness of lips increases learning. Pleasant words are like honey. They encourage the person, they invigorate, refresh, and inspire.

Be supportive even when people make mistakes

Proverbs 19:11 (The Message)
Smart people know how to hold their tongue; their grandeur is to forgive and forget.

All of us make mistakes. People in an organization will make mistakes, small and big. Learning how to respond when mistakes are made is very important. Part of providing a supportive and encouraging environment is not to make a big deal out of people's mistakes, but to use mistakes as teachable moments. Encourage people to experiment, to explore options, to think and act "outside the box," and support people through the process. Set guidelines to preempt costly mistakes or things that would be detrimental.

Pay attention and extend support to those who may be struggling within the organization. Sometimes, they may just need a little help to get started or be shown the pathway to develop the additional skills that they need for their work. If people are willing to learn and make an effort to grow, support them. If they are complacent, indifferent, or defensive about their poor performance, you will need to show them the exit.

One standard for all—show no partiality

Proverbs 24:23-25
[23] These *things* also *belong* to the wise:
***It is* not good to show partiality in judgment.**
[24] He who says to the wicked, "You *are* righteous,"
Him the people will curse;
Nations will abhor him.
[25] But those who rebuke *the wicked* will have delight,
And a good blessing will come upon them.

Proverbs 28:21
To show partiality *is* not good,
Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.

John 7:24
Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

It is important for a healthy work environment that the organization treats all its employees fairly and without partiality.

Correction for violation of standards of integrity, etc. must be dealt with the same way for all employees. When employees see fairness and impartiality being demonstrated, it gives them the assurance that the organization cares genuinely about the well-being of all its employees. This increases their commitment to the organization.

Listen to all sides of the story

Proverbs 18:17
The first *one* to plead his cause *seems* right,
Until his neighbor comes and examines him.

Conflicts do happen between people working in an organization. In resolving differences and conflicts, we must develop the discipline to listen to both sides involved in an unbiased way. Get the full picture and then make your decision.

Often in leadership, time is of the essence to us, and we don't want to waste our time on petty matters and listening to long-winded stories. We want to be quick and decisive, resolve the matter quickly and move on to spending our time on more important matters than on silly squabbles. However, in this sense of urgency, sometimes inadvertently, we miss out on listening to the whole story and gathering all perspectives. We could then pass a wrong judgment and end up hurting people. Given the likelihood of such things happening, it would be wise to delegate the resolution to those who can provide patient listening as well as make a wise decision on such matters while ensuring that employees remain encouraged.

To settle a dispute, quiet the quarrelsome person first

Proverbs 26:21 (The Message)
A quarrelsome person in a dispute is like kerosene thrown on a fire.

When working on resolving a dispute or misunderstanding among people, if you find someone who is quarrelsome,

boisterous, instigating, and inciting trouble, it is best to take him aside and work with him separately. Work with the rest of the people knowing that the other person is also being addressed. Once a resolution has been reached, inform everyone and move on.

Use the power of a gentle response

Proverbs 15:1
A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.

A simple approach to calm a tense or heated moment of conflict is to speak gently and peacefully to the group. Whether it is resolving a conflict or diffusing a discussion that has become argumentative, step in and speak gently to diffuse the tension.

When dealing with an individual who is agitated, aggressive, rude, or even engaging in verbal attacks, stay calm. Respond gently. You will eventually bring the tension down and then proceed to discuss matters peacefully.

Keep gossip and strife out of your work environment

Proverbs 17:14
The beginning of strife *is like* releasing water;
Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.

Proverbs 17:14 (The Message)
The start of a quarrel is like a leak in a dam, so stop it before it bursts.

Proverbs 26:20 (The Message)
When you run out of wood, the fire goes out; when the gossip ends, the quarrel dies down.

In a work environment that has gossip, strife, and other issues that typically constitute "office politics," employee morale and commitment can plummet and thus affect overall productivity. Most people would prefer to stay away from such work environments and hence, start looking for employment

elsewhere. So, it is important to keep a pulse on what is happening amongst employees, and early intervention is important if there are signs of gossip and strife.

Even if the organization is performing well, individuals affected by office gossip and strife will choose to move on. *"Better is a dry morsel with quietness, Than a house full of feasting with strife"* (Proverbs 17:1).

Show troublemakers the door

Proverbs 22:10
Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave;
Yes, strife and reproach will cease.

Having to dismiss underperforming employees or those who are causing internal problems is never an easy task. In some cases, an employee may be performing exceptionally well but just happens to be a perennial troublemaker. This is a challenging decision to make when having to choose between performance and peace. Do you need that one individual's outstanding performance, or do you want peace in the team so that several others can work productively? The team should always supersede the individual.

Key Principles

1) Pay fairly based on contribution and value to the organization.
2) Ensure people are paid on time.
3) Don't exploit people. Don't hold back wages.
4) Never exploit the poor and powerless.
5) Hire right. Retain. Review.
6) Treat people the way you would like to be treated.
7) Warn, but never threaten or abuse.
8) Empower people for high performance.
9) Remember, sweetness of the lips increases learning.

10) Be supportive even when people make mistakes.
11) One standard for all—show no partiality.
12) Listen to all sides of the story.
13) To settle a dispute, quiet the quarrelsome person first.
14) Use the power of a gentle response.
15) Keep gossip and strife out of your work environment.
16) Show troublemakers the door.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- What are some things you can consider doing to empower people for high performance in your team, department, or organization?
- What are some things you can consider doing to help encourage learning in and amongst your team, department, or organization?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

9
Workplace Relationships

In general, people spend about 40 to 50 hours a week at the workplace working with and for people resulting in the need to learn how to work with and manage interpersonal relationships. As people, we relate at several levels intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Hence, there is a definite need for individuals to know how to work with and for people, manage conflicts, eliminate friction, all of which are likely to happen in human interactions.

It takes a fair bit of understanding and skill to manage several different kinds of relationships in the workplace. This includes relating to one or more managers (or bosses), colleagues, direct reports, internal and external customers, vendors, and service providers. The quality of these relationships can affect individual performance and professional growth. Workplace relationships also affect collective performance and impact the organization.

This chapter provides scriptural truths to help walk this path with wisdom.

Maintain love—the basics of human relationships

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (GNT)
[4] Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud;
[5] love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs;
[6] love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth.
[7] Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

At work, we sometimes tend to forget the human side of things. We get so focused on tasks, meetings, deadlines, quality,

customers, and the numerous business-related things that we tend to overlook the fact that in order to achieve all this, we must work together as people. And however hard we try, we cannot easily isolate our personalities, emotions, our personal needs, and real-life challenges from who we are at the workplace. We don't drop all these at the door and walk into the office as mechanized robots. People sitting all around you at the workplace are people. Each one has a story. Each one has a personality. Each one is going through certain life experiences that in some way are affecting them. Each one has a need to know they are loved and appreciated.

So along with being skilled in your work, don't forget to walk in love at the workplace. The God-kind of love, the love that God has for us, and the love He wants us to walk in is described in the passage from 1 Corinthians 13. Be patient. Be kind. Don't be jealous of a colleague who is doing well. Don't be conceited or proud about your knowledge, skills, position, or success. Don't be ill-mannered or rude, but be kind and gentle to everyone else at the workplace. Don't keep a record of people's mistakes or ways in which they may have offended you. Forgive and forget. Don't applaud or support wrongdoing or any form of evil, but encourage and stand up for truth in a loving way. Never give up on your colleagues. Be supportive. Believe God for the best for them. Never stop loving them.

Matthew 5:9 (The Message)
"You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

When you have the opportunity to bless somebody, do it

Proverbs 3:27,28
[27] Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
When it is in the power of your hand to do *so*.
[28] Do not say to your neighbor,

"Go, and come back,
And tomorrow I will give *it*,"
When you have it with you.

Those "random acts of kindness" can light up somebody's life at your workplace. Be a helper. When you see an opportunity to help someone, and you know you can do so, do it. It may be a simple thing as offering someone a place to sit at the cafeteria while you opt to stand. Sometimes, it may be just giving a listening ear for a few minutes. Look for ways to bless your colleagues even the ones who may be highly competitive, rude, or mean. Bless them.

Be sensitive to people's feelings; your emotional intelligence matters

Matthew 7:12 (The Message)
"Here is a simple, rule-of-thumb guide for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for them...

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is simply being smart about feelings—your own and that of others. EQ includes knowing how to recognize and manage your own emotions and react or respond correctly to the emotions of others. It includes skills to manage, leverage, and direct your own emotions constructively towards tasks such as problem-solving, idea generation, etc. Your EQ affects your interactions in the workplace, your work performance, and your leadership skills.

A simple key to EQ is to be sensitive to people's feelings.

- "How would you feel if you were in their shoes?"—can give you an indication of what the other person is feeling at that moment.
- "What would you like people to do for you if you were in that situation?"—will give you an idea of what you should be doing at that moment.

- What would be the most peaceful and constructive way to manage the emotion you are feeling, or being shown by the other person, will help you determine what to do. Developing the skill to ask and think these through quickly is important.

Cheer somebody up

Proverbs 12:25 (The Message)
Worry weighs us down; a cheerful word picks us up.

Cheer people up with an encouraging word. When someone does good work, tell them. When someone goes the extra mile to get something done, appreciate them. When someone contributed a great idea, commend them for it. Appreciate people in public. Do this sincerely and not to flatter people. Do this not just for the boss to whom you directly report but do this for your peers and your colleagues. All it takes is a positive word to cheer somebody up.

Words, if used well, can make a lot of difference.

Ephesians 4:29 (GNT)
Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you.

Don't forget "please," "thank you," and "sorry"

Colossians 4:6 (The Message)
Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out.

Sometimes, we can become so formal, direct, dry, impolite, and business-focused in our communications—verbal or written—that we forget the simple things of addressing people by their names, saying "please," "sorry," "thank you," and "you are welcome." All it takes is a few additional words to be spoken or typed, but it makes all the difference in how the message is presented and received. It demonstrates kindness. It expresses

that you are making a request, not issuing a command. It expresses gratitude and appreciation for their response. Learning to apologize for mistakes expresses humility, sincerity, and a willingness to recognize areas of improvement.

Be an encourager—even of those who don't like you

1 Thessalonians 5:15 (GNT)
See that no one pays back wrong for wrong, but at all times make it your aim to do good to one another and to all people.

To support, inspire and instill confidence in a colleague at the workplace is an amazing thing to do. While the most common trend is to compete, outdo, and outperform, when you step up to be an encourager, things shift radically. Also, step out to encourage even those who seem to be hostile toward you. Doing so will break down walls and affect the work environment significantly. Speak words that encourage. "You are doing a great job" "I know you can do it" "Great work" "Keep it up!"—just these simple statements can inspire someone. Try it!

Remember, even enemies can be turned around

Proverbs 16:7
When a man's ways please the Lord,
He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

It is likely that there will be friction in some relationships at work. There may be people who are hostile; perhaps they see you as a threat to their professional growth or for some other reason are always playing the opponent even though you are both on the same team. Stay positive and stay calm in such situations. Do what pleases the Lord, and He will move on your behalf in that relationship.

Be careful who influences you

Proverbs 12:26
The righteous should choose his friends carefully,

For the way of the wicked leads them astray.

Proverbs 13:20
He who walks with wise *men* will be wise,
But the companion of fools will be destroyed.

Proverbs 27:17
***As* iron sharpens iron,**
So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (GNT)
Do not be fooled. "Bad companions ruin good character."

While the workplace provides opportunities for a variety of meaningful relationships, it unfortunately also exposes us to wrong kinds of influences. So, use your discretion on who influences you in what ways and to what extent. Keep a healthy professional distance from those who are a negative influence. People who gossip and backbite are always negative and cause trouble; they are best avoided.

Take time to be with people who can challenge you professionally and who you can have meaningful interactions with. When two iron blades rub each other, they leave each other sharper and shinier. Friends who make us "uncomfortable" with being where we are (in a good sense) are the ones who spur us upward.

Know your boundaries in corporate socializing

Proverbs 5:18-22 (GNT)
18 So be happy with your wife and find your joy with the woman you married—
19 pretty and graceful as a deer. Let her charms keep you happy; let her surround you with her love.
20 Son, why should you give your love to another woman? Why should you prefer the charms of another man's wife?
21 The Lord sees everything you do. Wherever you go, he is watching.
22 The sins of the wicked are a trap. They get caught in the net of their own sin.

Building workplace relationships in many work environments would also include informal company-related social activities. Some of these are very positive, for example, company family days, family picnics, and other celebrations that engage employees and their families. However, there may be other events where there can be a lot of celebration with alcohol, and other activities that are detrimental. Know your boundaries, stand by your priorities, and hold on to your godly standards. You don't have to do anything to please people. Guard your life. Stay away from drinking and womanizing. They have ruined many lives. While refusing an alcoholic beverage or not engaging in flirting may cause you to appear snobbish, it really is a mark of your true character and strength. You may be appreciated for your stand or hated for your stand. Remember, God honors those who honor Him. He will grace your life with honor from heaven.

Proverbs 23:29,30
29 Who has woe?
Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions?
Who has complaints?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
30 Those who linger long at the wine,
Those who go in search of mixed wine.

Honor your boss

Proverbs 27:18 (The Message)
If you care for your orchard, you'll enjoy its fruit; if you honor your boss, you'll be honored.

To honor is to respect and hold with regard. Honor your boss, your manager or team leader. They have been given charge and put in a place of responsibility. You may not know the challenges they face, the big picture they see, and the level of accountability expected of them. Treat them with respect. Give them your best support. Appreciate them for things they do well. Do not gossip about, backbite, or malign your boss in any way.

1 Timothy 6:2 (GNT)
Slaves belonging to Christian masters must not despise them, for they are believers too. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their work are believers whom they love.

Honor your boss, even the one who is harsh

1 Peter 2:18-20
18 Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.
19 For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.
20 For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God.

Yes, there are bad bosses! Some bosses may be harsh, rude, demanding, insensitive, and all the other things that make working with them difficult. God instructs us to treat such bosses with respect, and we do this to honor God. While it is never easy working with such a boss, seek God's grace and strength to be the best employee you can be to your boss. Let God move on your behalf and intervene in that situation.

Exodus 3:7-9 (GNT)
7 Then the Lord said, "I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated in Egypt; I have heard them cry out to be rescued from their slave drivers. I know all about their sufferings,
8 and so I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of Egypt to a spacious land, one which is rich and fertile and in which the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites now live.
9 I have indeed heard the cry of my people, and I see how the Egyptians are oppressing them.

Psalm 103:6 (GNT)
The Lord judges in favor of the oppressed and gives them their rights.

Develop workplace etiquette and cultural sensitivity

Proverbs 23:1-3 (GNT)
[1] When you sit down to eat with someone important, keep in mind who he is.
[2] If you have a big appetite, restrain yourself.
[3] Don't be greedy for the fine food he serves; he may be trying to trick you.

Good workplace etiquette is important. It makes it easy for people to relate to you. It makes it a pleasure to be around you. How you present yourself and how you interact does matter in a work environment. Standing straight, sitting erect, body language, eye contact, attentiveness, proper dress code, punctuality, orderliness, and personal hygiene are important. Follow some basic unspoken courtesies like keeping your mobile phone on silent mode during a meeting, not using your phone in the middle of a conversation without properly excusing yourself, etc. Always stand up when you are being introduced to someone in person. Learn to apologize if you make a mistake. Also, pay attention to culture and cultural backgrounds that people come from. What may be accepted in one culture may not go down well with another. Make a little effort to find out. Avoid religious or culturally offensive, racial, or sexist comments.

Genesis 41:14 (GNT)
The king sent for Joseph, and he was immediately brought from the prison. After he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came into the king's presence.

When you are meeting with senior leaders, walk with wisdom. It is best to take your rightful place or something lower. Don't try to promote yourself.

Proverbs 25:6,7 (The Message)
[6] Don't work yourself into the spotlight; don't push your way into the place of prominence.
[7] It's better to be promoted to a place of honor than face humiliation by being demoted.

Luke 14:7-11 (GNT)
7 Jesus noticed how some of the guests were choosing the best places, so he told this parable to all of them:
8 "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place. It could happen that someone more important than you has been invited,
9 and your host, who invited both of you, would have to come and say to you, 'Let him have this place.' Then you would be embarrassed and have to sit in the lowest place.
10 Instead, when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that your host will come to you and say, 'Come on up, my friend, to a better place.' This will bring you honor in the presence of all the other guests.
11 For those who make themselves great will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be made great."

When the heat is on, behave wisely

1 Samuel 18:13-15,30
13 Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.
14 And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the Lord *was* with him.
15 Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him.
30 Then the princes of the Philistines went out *to war.* And so it was, whenever they went out, *that* David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed.

King Saul became jealous of David's accomplishments. So, he put David in a place militarily hoping that David would be destroyed. Next, Saul tried to ensnare David by making him his son-in-law and once again have him become a target for the enemy. In all of this, David "*behaved himself wisely*" (1 Samuel 18:14). In fact, when things got worse, "*David behaved more wisely"* (1 Samuel 18:30). The phrase "*behaved very wisely*" simply means to act circumspectly, act prudently, act wisely, to prosper and be successful.

Similarly, in the workplace, there can be people, sometimes the boss or manager, who tries all kinds of political and other maneuvers to put you in a tight spot. He could be unfair, overlook

your good work, and do other things that turn the heat on. Learn to be bigger than such things. Overcome such things by walking with wisdom. Sometimes, we tend to overreact, fight for our rights, and do unpleasant things when the heat is on. This is not acting wisely.

James 3:13-18 (The Message)
13 Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here's what you do: Live well, live wisely, live humbly. It's the way you live, not the way you talk, that counts.
14 Mean-spirited ambition isn't wisdom. Boasting that you are wise isn't wisdom. Twisting the truth to make yourselves sound wise isn't wisdom.
15 It's the furthest thing from wisdom – it's animal cunning, devilish conniving.
16 Whenever you're trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others' throats.
17 Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced.
18 You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor.

Stay clear of meaningless arguments

Proverbs 3:30,31 (GNT)
30 Don't argue with others for no reason when they have never done you any harm.
31 Don't be jealous of violent people or decide to act as they do,

Group meetings, discussions, and collaborative work are all necessary in the workplace. Sometimes, a well-intended discussion can run wild and develop into a meaningless argument. Be sensitive when you see something going down this road. If people become aggressive, get personal, interact with a vendetta, and don't let the discussion progress any further, do not retaliate or act as they do or get into an argument. Develop the skill to tactfully bring such conversations or discussions to a

stop. Tactfully defer the discussion to another day or choose to approach the problem differently.

When a coworker underperforms or violates rules, handle it cautiously

Proverbs 30:10 (The Message)
Don't blow the whistle on your fellow workers behind their backs;
They'll accuse you of being underhanded, and then you'll be the guilty one!

There will be those awkward situations in the workplace when you need to report on a perennial underperforming teammate, or some other violations of company policy, code of business conduct or other misdemeanor. Wherever possible, take a step to first address it directly with the person(s) at fault and indicate that it is your corporate responsibility to take this matter to the concerned person, whether the boss, the HR, or the legal department as required by your organization. Then proceed to fulfill your responsibility in reporting the matter. While this may be a difficult thing to do, you must be true to your organization.

Feedback—pay attention, close attention to it

Proverbs 27:21
The refining pot *is* for silver and the furnace for gold,
And a man *is valued* by what others say of him.

Proverbs 26:16 (GNT)
A lazy person will think he is smarter than seven men who can give good reasons for their opinions.

Proverbs 25:12 (GNT)
A warning given by an experienced person to someone willing to listen is more valuable than gold rings or jewelry made of the finest gold.

Pay attention to feedback, performance appraisals, and other forms of evaluation within your organization. Do not treat feedback lightly. Feedback and input that comes to you from experienced people is extremely valuable, and you need to treat

it that way. Be willing to listen, learn, and change. Do not try to defend your shortcomings, but recognize areas of improvement, growth, skills development, and work on these areas.

Always receive correction with a good attitude

Proverbs 12:1
Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge,
But he who hates correction *is* stupid.

Proverbs 13:18
Poverty and shame *will come* to him who disdains correction,
But he who regards a rebuke will be honored.

Proverbs 29:1 (GNT)
If you get more stubborn every time you are corrected, one day you will be crushed and never recover.

Receive correction with a good attitude and a willingness to change and work on making improvements. Don't shy away from those who administer correction in your life. They are more important to you than many friends who simply tolerate your shortcomings. The people who correct you are the ones who care enough about you and want to see you grow, develop, and become a better person. Build a rapport with them so that they can continue to provide input.

Be careful before you stand as a guarantor

Proverbs 6:1-4
[1] My son, if you become surety for your friend,
***If* you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger,**
[2] You are snared by the words of your mouth;
You are taken by the words of your mouth.
[3] So do this, my son, and deliver yourself;
For you have come into the hand of your friend:
Go and humble yourself;
Plead with your friend.
[4] Give no sleep to your eyes,

Nor slumber to your eyelids.

Proverbs 11:15
He who is surety for a stranger will suffer,
But one who hates being surety is secure.

Proverbs 22:26,27
[26] Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge,
One of those who is surety for debts;
[27] If you have nothing *with which* to pay,
Why should he take away your bed from under you?

As relationships develop in the workplace, there may be times when a colleague asks you to stand as a guarantor for some purchase, loan, or other ventures they are undertaking. Evaluate this very carefully. If it is only a matter of reference with no other legal or financial obligations and you know the person well, then there probably is no harm having your name as a guarantor. However, be careful before you put your name down as a guarantor where there are financial and legal implications.

Avoid astrologers, horoscopes, fortune tellers, palm readers

Jeremiah 10:2
Thus says the Lord:
"Do not learn the way of the Gentiles;
Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven,
For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.

It is becoming a prevalent practice these days for working professionals to consult astrologers, horoscopes, and other occult practices to guide their business decisions and personal careers. Gently excuse yourself from such activities and practices. You don't want to disconnect from people or lose friendships but at the same time, you do not want to participate, support, or approve of wrong practices. There is nothing wrong in making your stand clear. Do it lovingly with humility, and not arrogantly. Do not do it in a self-righteous manner.

Deuteronomy 18:10-14 (The Message)
[10] Don't you dare sacrifice your son or daughter in the fire. Don't practice divination, sorcery, fortunetelling, witchery,
[11] casting spells, holding séances, or channeling with the dead.
[12] People who do these things are an abomination to God. It's because of just such abominable practices that God, your God, is driving these nations out before you.
[13] Be completely loyal to God, your God.
[14] These nations that you're about to run out of the country consort with sorcerers and witches. But not you. God, your God, forbids it.

Key Principles

1) Maintain love—the basics of human relationships.
2) When you have the opportunity to bless somebody, do it.
3) Be sensitive to people's feelings. Your emotional intelligence matters.
4) Cheer somebody up.
5) Don't forget "Please," "Thank you" and "You are welcome".
6) Be an encourager—even of those who don't like you.
7) Remember, even enemies can be turned around.
8) Be careful who influences you.
9) Know your boundaries in corporate socializing.
10) Honor your boss.
11) Honor your boss—even the one who is harsh.
12) Develop workplace etiquette and cultural sensitivity.
13) When the heat is on, behave wisely.
14) Stay clear of meaningless arguments.
15) When a coworker underperforms or violates rules, handle it cautiously.
16) Feedback—pay attention, close attention to it.
17) Always receive correction with a good attitude.
18) Be careful before you stand as a guarantor.
19) Avoid astrologers, horoscopes, fortune tellers, palm readers, etc.

Reflection

1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- What would you do if your boss and peers are engaging in dishonest reporting and don't tell it like it is?
- How should you react when your boss / employer shouts at you without a valid reason?
- What should you do if you have delivered great results, but your boss does not seem to notice or even care? There have been no rewards, promotions, and appreciation for your work.
- You work in a highly competitive work environment. How can you go about gaining the promotion you want without making enemies of your peers?
- You feel that there is injustice and inequity in the workplace where you and a few others are being treated unfairly. What would you do?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

10
Planning and Execution

"Execution is key" is a statement that is heard often in management circles.
A great strategy, brilliant idea, technology, and innovation are great, but without execution, they remain useless. It is important to translate strategic and operational initiatives into action to see results. Ultimately, successful execution does not depend on one individual or just a few individuals. Everyone within the organization needs to be aligned together and contribute towards seeing the goal accomplished.

In this chapter, we look at Scriptural insights on planning and strategy execution.

Determine the counsel of the Lord

Proverbs 19:21 (The Message)
We humans keep brainstorming options and plans, but God's purpose prevails.

As you plan, get God involved. Invite Him to direct the thoughts and discussions and to steer the plans that are formulated.

Get the right people involved in planning

Proverbs 20:18 (The Message)
Form your purpose by asking for counsel, then carry it out using all the help you can get.

Get key people to be involved in the planning process. Specially, people who can contribute to the discussions and people who will be responsible for the execution of the plans need to be involved.

Share the plan. Disseminate relevant information. Eventually, this information needs to reach all team members involved so that each has a clear idea of the goal(s) being pursued, decisions made, their individual tasks, and their team's deliverables. People at all levels need to have the information that they need for their tasks, and should understand the impact of their work toward the overall goal.

Look ahead; preempt the "unexpected"

Proverbs 22:3
A prudent *man* foresees evil and hides himself,
But the simple pass on and are punished.

Part of the planning process is to be preemptive. Anticipate potential threats and challenges to the execution of the plan and prepare for various contingencies. Being prepared with a course of action in the event of certain challenges will help keep the momentum going, taking the already determined recourse and avoiding unnecessary delays.

Some seasons are more intense than others

Proverbs 10:5
He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son;
He who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame.

Once all the planning and preparation are done, then comes the time for action. It is time to put in the sickle and start work on the harvest. Execution is such a time. This is the time for consistent action. However, just as during the harvest, execution can be more intense than others. You have just a specified window of opportunity and a time frame within which work must get done. If you miss that, you risk missing something important so be prepared to work hard. Get the teams ready for hard work. Intensity in execution is essential.

Execution can be messy and disruptive

Proverbs 14:4
Where no oxen *are,* the trough *is* clean;
But much increase *comes* by the strength of an ox.

When you have oxen and are working in the fields, the trough can get messy. During execution, other things tend to take on low priority because you have now set your sights on specific goals. Other things get stacked up on the low priority list. Other unimportant things get disrupted because time that was usually spent on those things is now allocated to pursue specified goals with a set time frame. Accommodating this "messy" and disruptive nature of execution is essential. Things will even out in course of time.

Stay focused; avoid distractions

Proverbs 12:11 (The Message)
The one who stays on the job has food on the table; the witless chase whims and fancies.

Focus is an integral part of the execution process. Focus on the specific goal or set of goals. Avoid the distraction to chase after every other whim and fancy that comes along. There may be other good ideas, but if you want to realize the one good idea you already have, you will need to stay focused on the goal.

Don't just talk, act! But act on what is really important

Proverbs 14:23
In all labor there is profit,
But idle chatter *leads* only to poverty.

Execution is action but action must be prioritized and applied to things that are important in progressing towards the goal.

Engage your team; together everyone achieves more

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (GNT)
9 Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively.
10 If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him.
11 If it is cold, two can sleep together and stay warm, but how can you keep warm by yourself
12 Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break.

Execution requires passionate commitment and work from everyone involved in working toward the goal. Each one takes ownership of the goal that is being pursued. Work is done in a collaborative manner. Progress is monitored and shared with everyone. Information on pending tasks, challenges, delays, and course corrections is shared. Information flows freely across organizational boundaries, vertically and horizontally. Leveraging the power of teamwork for execution is essential.

Accountability—stay the course when the going gets tough

Proverbs 24:10 (GNT)
If you are weak in a crisis, you are weak indeed.

The process of execution should include a recurring form of accountability of all team members at all levels. Teams report on work that has been completed. Progress is reviewed. Plans are laid out for the next steps to continue progress and move toward the goal. This whole cycle of reporting, reviewing, and planning is repeated, perhaps on a weekly basis. This ensures that people are accountable. This also serves to work through bottlenecks and other challenges and keep everyone motivated. This especially becomes beneficial when the going gets tough. This form of mutual accountability can keep people encouraged and motivated, believing the goal is attainable.

Some lessons learned are more valuable than the profit gained

Proverbs 3:13-17
13 Happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom,
And the man *who* gains understanding;
14 For her proceeds *are* better than the profits of silver,
And her gain than fine gold.
15 She *is* more precious than rubies,
And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.
16 Length of days *is* in her right hand,
In her left hand riches and honor.
17 Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths *are* peace.

The process of execution is a great teacher. Along the way, there will be several lessons you will learn. The experience and lessons from each strategy execution exercise are invaluable. They are perhaps even more valuable than the success you achieve in reaching the goal. Make a note of the lessons you learn, both the positives and the negatives.

Above all else, let God be in charge

Proverbs 16:3 (The Message)
Put God in charge of your work, then what you've planned will take place.

A key to staying calm through the ups and downs and tumultuous moments during the execution process is to learn to lean on the Lord. Commit the plans and execution to God. Let God be in charge and depend on Him to see you through successfully. He will.

Psalm 37:5
Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.

Key Principles

1) Determine the counsel of the Lord.
2) Get the right people involved in planning.
3) Look ahead; preempt the "unexpected".
4) Some seasons are more intense than others.
5) Execution can be messy and disruptive.
6) Stay focused. Avoid distractions.
7) Don't just talk, act! But act on what is really important.
8) Engage your team. Together everyone achieves more.
9) Accountability—stay the course when the going gets tough.
10) Some lessons learned are more valuable than the profit gained.
11) Above all else, let God be in charge.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- Successful execution depends on team engagement. Think of ways you can motivate team members to stay engaged over extended periods of time and press towards the goal.
- How does accountability help a team work through challenges, especially when the going gets tough?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

11
Profitability and Corporate Finance

For-profit corporations exist to convert allocated resources into products or services that satisfy consumers to generate profits and increase shareholder's value.

Profitability is essential without which businesses will not survive for long.

Associated with this is the function to manage financial activities of the organization.

This includes maintaining accurate books and records; reporting accurate, complete, and understandable information about the organization's business, earnings, and financial condition; management of current assets and current liabilities; inventory control, capital purchases, and investments and other financial matters.

At any point in time, an organization's financial statements, regulatory reports, and publicly filed documents must be in proper order and comply with all applicable, accepted accounting principles and statutory requirements. Employees at all levels in the organization must be instructed in the proper and timely reporting and / or recording of transactions or events. This could include activities such as work time sheets, expense reports, purchase orders, invoices, etc. Maintaining these in an accurate and complete manner is important and any fraudulent or inaccurate activity must be dealt with appropriately. In this chapter, we consider some scriptural promises and instructions related to profitability and financial management.

God leads us into profitability

Isaiah 48:17
Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
"I *am* the Lord your God,
Who teaches you to profit,
Who leads you by the way you should go.

Deuteronomy 28:8,11-13 (GNT)
[8] "The Lord your God will bless your work and fill your barns with grain. He will bless you in the land that he is giving you.
[11] The Lord will give you many children, many cattle, and abundant crops in the land that he promised your ancestors to give you.
[12] He will send rain in season from his rich storehouse in the sky and bless all your work, so that you will lend to many nations, but you will not have to borrow from any.
[13] The Lord your God will make you the leader among the nations and not a follower; you will always prosper and never fail if you obey faithfully all his commands that I am giving you today.

God is the Creator of this world, and He has given all things for our benefit. To His people living in Bible times, where they were essentially agriculturists, God promised blessings on their farming and livestock. The result is that there would be increase in grain and cattle so that they could lend to others and not have to borrow. Translating this to our times as we engage meaningfully in business, God will bless us and lead us into profitability. Having a goal for profitability is not sinful as long as we remain God-centered. He has promised to teach us and guide us into profit.

God empowers us to make wealth

Deuteronomy 8:18
"And you shall remember the Lord your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 (GNT)
If God gives us wealth and property and lets us enjoy them, we should be grateful and enjoy what we have worked for. It is a gift from God.

The empowering to make wealth is also a blessing of God. It is part of God's blessing to people who are in covenant with Him. The motivation for wealth creation should not be rejected or seen as ungodly because the blessing to get wealth is God-given. God owns all that is in the world, and we can look to Him for His empowering to bring some of it into our possession to use for His glory.

Haggai 2:8 (GNT)
All the silver and gold of the world is mine.

Psalm 50:10 (GNT)
all the animals in the forest are mine
and the cattle on thousands of hills.

Success is a blessing from God

Psalm 35:27
Let them shout for joy and be glad,
Who favor my righteous cause;
And let them say continually,
"Let the Lord be magnified,
Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."

Psalm 1:1-3 (GNT)
[1]Happy are those
who reject the advice of evil people,
who do not follow the example of sinners
or join those who have no use for God.
[2] Instead, they find joy in obeying the Law of the Lord,
and they study it day and night.
[3] They are like trees that grow beside a stream,
that bear fruit at the right time,
and whose leaves do not dry up.
They succeed in everything they do.

Proverbs 10:22
The blessing of the Lord makes *one* rich,
And He adds no sorrow with it.

Success and faith in God can go hand in hand. Abraham was the father of faith. He was wealthy to begin with and God increased him even more (Genesis 13:2; Genesis 24:1,35). The drive for success, profit and increase is not unholy when consecrated to God.

Believe God for profitability and increase

Genesis 26:12,13 (GNT)
12 Isaac sowed crops in that land, and that year he harvested a hundred times as much as he had sown, because the Lord blessed him.
13 He continued to prosper and became a very rich man.

Genesis 39:2,3 (GNT)
2 The Lord was with Joseph and made him successful. He lived in the house of his Egyptian master,
3 who saw that the Lord was with Joseph and had made him successful in everything he did.

Both at a personal level and at an organizational level, you can believe God for success, increase, and profit. Pray. Extend your faith in God to bless what you are doing and cause it to succeed. Believe God that He will enable you to continue to prosper and increase.

Offer your service or product at a fair price

Proverbs 11:26 (GNT)
People curse someone who hoards grain, waiting for a higher price, but they praise the one who puts it up for sale.

Instead of selling at a moderate profit, there were those who stored grain attempting to decrease supply, or wait for famine to set in and then sell grain at a higher price when people were at a disadvantage.

Amos 8:4-7 (GNT)
[4] Listen to this, you that trample on the needy and try to destroy the poor of the country.
[5] You say to yourselves, "We can hardly wait for the holy days to be over so that we can sell our grain. When will the Sabbath end, so that we can start selling again? Then we can overcharge, use false measures, and fix the scales to cheat our customers.
[6] We can sell worthless wheat at a high price. We'll find someone poor who can't pay his debts, not even the price of a pair of sandals, and we'll buy him as a slave."
[7] The Lord, the God of Israel, has sworn, "I will never forget their evil deeds.

There is nothing wrong in offering your product or service at a fair price. However, pricing your product or service with the intent of exploiting people who are in need of your offering and in a disadvantageous position is wrong.

In Genesis 47:13-26, initially, Joseph sold grain for cash. When people could not pay cash for food during famine, Joseph allowed them to pay by giving their cattle and later, in exchange for land. Eventually, all the land came into the ownership of the Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Once the famine was over, Joseph gave people seeds to sow into the land and set up an arrangement where one-fifth of the produce was paid back as tax to Pharaoh. Everything was done fairly, and people were happy and taken care of.

Don't cheat on product or pricing

Deuteronomy 25:16 (The Message)
Dishonest weights and measures are an abomination to God, your God - all this corruption in business deals!

Leviticus 19:35,36 (GNT)
[35] "Do not cheat anyone by using false measures of length, weight, or quantity.
[36] Use honest scales, honest weights, and honest measures. I am the Lord your God, and I brought you out of Egypt.

Proverbs 20:10 (see also Proverbs 20:23)
Diverse weights *and* diverse measures,
They *are* both alike, an abomination to the Lord.

Back in those days, a person cheated by using two different weights and two different measures, the lighter weight or smaller measure to sell with so he sold lesser quantity than what the buyer was paying for. He then used the heavier weight or larger measure to buy with so that he bought more than what he was paying for. In addition, a person cheated his customers by selling poor quality grain at a higher price.

Applying this to modern day business transactions, we must ensure that we do not cheat our customers and that we sell a quality product commensurate to the price they are paying. Similarly, when purchasing from our vendors, we must not cheat them by paying them less than what is correctly due.

Refuse to gain wealth through dishonest means

Proverbs 11:1 (The Message)
God hates cheating in the marketplace; he loves it when business is aboveboard.

Proverbs 10:2
Treasures of wickedness profit nothing,
But righteousness delivers from death.

Proverbs 13:11
Wealth *gained by* dishonesty will be diminished,
But he who gathers by labor will increase.

Proverbs 16:8 (GNT)
It is better to have a little, honestly earned, than to have a large income, dishonestly gained.

Proverbs 16:11 (The Message)
God cares about honesty in the workplace; your business is his business.

Proverbs 20:10 (The Message)
Switching price tags and padding the expense account are two things God hates.

Proverbs 20:17
Bread gained by deceit *is* sweet to a man,
But afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.

Micah 6:10,11 (The Message)
10 "Do you expect me to overlook obscene wealth you've piled up by cheating and fraud?
11 Do you think I'll tolerate shady deals and shifty scheming?

There are numerous ways businesses engage in dishonest practices. Deceptive sales practices that mislead customers using high-pressure sales tactics, taking advantage of customers, weakness, using "bait and switch" tactics, falsification, misrepresentation of facts, and the list goes on. Dishonesty may bring in temporary results but once the truth is out, the consequences can be severe.

Remember, God is watching every place, every moment and everything.

Proverbs 15:3
The eyes of the Lord *are* in every place,
Keeping watch on the evil and the good.

Say "No" to bribery and money laundering

Proverbs 15:27
He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house,
But he who hates bribes will live.

Exodus 23:8 (GNT)
Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe makes people blind to what is right and ruins the cause of those who are innocent.

Deuteronomy 16:18,19 (GNT)
18 "Appoint judges and other officials in every town that the Lord your God gives you. These men are to judge the people impartially.
19 They are not to be unjust or show partiality in their judgments; and

they are not to accept bribes, for gifts blind the eyes even of wise and honest men, and cause them to give wrong decisions.

Proverbs 17:23
A wicked *man* accepts a bribe behind the back
To pervert the ways of justice.

Proverbs 29:4
The king establishes the land by justice,
But he who receives bribes overthrows it.

Ecclesiastes 7:7 (GNT)
You may be wise, but if you cheat someone, you are acting like a fool. If you take a bribe, you ruin your character.

Bribery, kickbacks, and money laundering are big challenges in the world of business. Bribery is most often associated with corrupt government officials but there is commercial bribery as well between businesses that affects the marketplace. It is important to maintain a strict company policy where employees are never to make business decisions, choice of vendors or customers based on any personal benefit given to them. Never solicit or accept bribes or kickbacks from anyone who is seeking to do business with your organization. Never offer to give any bribes or kickbacks.

"To bribe" is "to dishonestly persuade (someone) to act in one's favor by a gift of money or other inducement" (Oxford Dictionary). A bribe is something of value, usually money, given, offered, or received in an attempt to influence a person's business decisions in order to obtain an unfair business benefit or advantage. Something of value can include any monetary or non-monetary benefit such as cash, gifts, excessive entertainment, meals, paid holidays, travel expenses, inflated commissions, unauthorized rebates, political or charitable donations, offers of employment, other business courtesies, etc. If these are offered in exchange for obtaining a business decision that gives the recipient an unfair benefit or advantage, then what has been offered is essentially a bribe.

We understand that gifts or courtesies given / received as part of business interactions, which are normally done to other business partners on an equivalent basis and not for dishonest purposes, are not bribery. A business offering a discount or a refund to all purchasers is a legal rebate and is not bribery.

A "kickback" is the return of a sum already paid or due to be paid as a reward for awarding or fostering business.

"Money laundering" is trying to clean up "dirty money". It is an attempt by individuals or organizations to hide money obtained from their crimes (bribe, extortion, illegal trading, etc.) by making it look legitimate. To avoid money laundering, ensure that all payments for goods and services are done legally via approved and documented payment methods.

You may not be able to control extortion or exploitation by others

Proverbs 28:8 (The Message)
Get as rich as you want through cheating and extortion,
But eventually some friend of the poor is going to give it all back to them.

Organizations exist to pursue a specific vision and goals, which for businesses would mean providing meaningful products or services to their customers while making profit. Most do not exist to fight evils such as bribery and corrupt governments but understand that these are challenges that need to be faced and overcome in the process of carrying out their organization's vision and purpose. We must understand that we need to remain focused on the organization's vision and purpose and not get distracted with rooting out corruption or fighting unfair practices. We need to choose our battles and avoid battles in which we are not to engage in. We are not here to fix the conduct of every corrupt businessman or corrupt government official while running our business or leading our own organization. Our objective is to make sure we are not engaging in any kind

of dishonesty in running our organization. We do not accept or give bribes, take kickbacks, or engage in any form of money laundering or malpractice.

If all your records, filings, and practices are clean, and when you are fulfilling a statutory requirement, an individual government official demands a "small payment" (or "tip") to do what is routinely expected of him, this is not bribery, this is extortion. This government official is trying to take what is not his by force although he is being paid to do his job. The money he collects is really extortion money.

Luke 3:12-14 (GNT)
[12] Some tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what are we to do?"
[13] "Don't collect more than is legal," he told them.
[14] Some soldiers also asked him, "What about us? What are we to do?" He said to them, "Don't take money from anyone by force or accuse anyone falsely. Be content with your pay."

When faced with a situation like this with an individual government official wanting a payment (extortion money) to secure or speed up what he is routinely supposed to do, you will have to handle this tactfully because ultimately, you need to get your work done; this is not the battle you want to fight because your business or organization's vision and purpose is your focus.

Ecclesiastes 5:8 (GNT)
Don't be surprised when you see that the government oppresses the poor and denies them justice and their rights. Every official is protected by someone higher, and both are protected by still higher officials.

Don't be an accomplice in business crime

Proverbs 29:24
Whoever is a partner with a thief hates his own life;
He swears to tell the truth, but reveals nothing.

Psalm 50:18,21 (GNT)
[18] You become the friend of every thief you see,

and you associate with adulterers.
[21] You have done all this, and I have said nothing,
so you thought that I am like you.
But now I reprimand you
and make the matter plain to you.

Proverbs 6:30,31 (The Message)
[30] Hunger is no excuse for a thief to steal;
[31] When he's caught he has to pay it back, even if he has to put his whole house in hock.

Typically, in a court of law, a person could be liable for criminal acts committed by a different person if the person were an accomplice to the crime. An accomplice is a person who aids, assists, or encourages another in the commission of a crime even if they take no part in the actual criminal offense. Be extremely cautious and do your due diligence before engaging in business deals and financial transactions. You do not want to be taken off guard. All employees within the organization should be made aware of precautionary measures and company policies in place.

While there can be numerous business-related criminal activities, we make mention of two here.

1) Third-party bribery and corruption
2) Insider trading

Third-party bribery and corruption

In addition to not giving or offering bribes directly, refrain from engaging a middle-man, business partner, agency, or third party to do so indirectly on your behalf. Typically, in such situations, there would be a request for cash payments, payments without supporting documentation, payments in another party's name, payments to shell companies and Trusts, etc. These suggest some sort of illegal transactions, possibly bribes or payments. Be cautious. Do a thorough check before engaging in business deals.

Insider trading

Buying or selling the stocks of a company based on inside information (known as "insider trading") is a criminal offense in many countries. Employees who own stock in the company they work for can trade in that company's stock only during one of the prescribed "trading windows" or with proper legal approval from the company. Revealing inside information of the company to anyone, including immediate family, based on what stock that person buys or sells is called "tipping", and that is also illegal in most countries.

Make every attempt to repay debt

Psalm 37:21
The wicked borrows and does not repay,
But the righteous shows mercy and gives.

Proverbs 22:7
The rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower *is* servant to the lender.

To maintain operations, support expansion, etc., organizations may borrow money from lending institutions or other sources. Make every effort to pay your creditors in a timely manner.

Believe God to bring you into a position of blessing where you can give and not have the need to borrow. *"He will send rain in season from his rich storehouse in the sky and bless all your work, so that you will lend to many nations, but you will not have to borrow from any"* (Deuteronomy 28:12, GNT).

Pay taxes and statutory dues

Romans 13:1-8 (GNT)
[1]Everyone must obey state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God.

[2] Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself.
[3] For rulers are not to be feared by those who do good, but by those who do evil. Would you like to be unafraid of those in authority? Then do what is good, and they will praise you,
[4] because they are God's servants working for your own good. But if you do evil, then be afraid of them, because their power to punish is real. They are God's servants and carry out God's punishment on those who do evil.
[5] For this reason you must obey the authorities—not just because of God's punishment, but also as a matter of conscience.
[6] That is also why you pay taxes, because the authorities are working for God when they fulfill their duties.
[7] Pay, then, what you owe them; pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honor for them all.
[8] Be under obligation to no one—the only obligation you have is to love one another. Whoever does this has obeyed the Law.

While it is perfectly right to avail of all legally permissible exemptions for you as an individual and your organization, in all other things, we must demonstrate compliance. Do not fail to pay taxes and other statutory dues.

Matthew 22:17-21 (The Message)
[17] So tell us honestly: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"
[18] Jesus knew they were up to no good. He said, "Why are you playing these games with me? Why are you trying to trap me?
[19] Do you have a coin? Let me see it." They handed him a silver piece.
[20] "This engraving - who does it look like? And whose name is on it?"
[21] They said, "Caesar." "Then give Caesar what is his, and give God what is his."

God still does financial miracles; believe Him to do so

Jeremiah 32:27 (GNT)
"I am the Lord, the God of all people. Nothing is too difficult for me.

God still does financial miracles. He can intervene in our organizations' or business' financial situation, bless, and turn things around. Believe Him to do so.

The God who kept multiplying one jar of oil and a little flour to feed three people all through famine, and who multiplied five loaves and two fish to feed more than 5000 can do the same with what resources you have (1 Kings 17:13-15; Matthew 14:15-21).

The God who caused a supernatural supply of oil so that the debts of a poor widow could be cancelled can bring about a supernatural supply to cause debt cancellation (2 Kings 4:1-7).

God can cause supernatural favor causing markets and nations to open up and the movement of wealth toward you (Isaiah 60:5,10; Proverbs 13:22).

The God who put a gold coin in the mouth of a fish and enabled Peter to catch that one fish can bring about supernatural provision and access to resources that otherwise would not happen (Matthew 17:27).

The God who caused Peter and his team to find a huge catch of fish after they had caught nothing the entire night can cause a supernatural turnaround of financial or market conditions to bring about increase (Luke 5:1-7).

Key Principles

1) God leads us into profitability.
2) God empowers us to make wealth.
3) Success is a blessing from God.
4) Believe God for profitability and increase.
5) Offer your service or products at a fair price.
6) Don't cheat on product or pricing.
7) Refuse to gain wealth through dishonest means.
8) Say "No" to bribery and money laundering.
9) You may not be able to control extortion or exploitation by others.
10) Don't be an accomplice in business crime.

11)Make every attempt to repay debt.

12) Pay taxes and statutory dues.

13) God still does financial miracles. Believe Him to do so!

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- Do you personally struggle with profit-motive and a desire to create wealth and wondering if this is right or wrong? How can you make sure that you maintain proper motivation for profit and wealth creation?
- Do you see your organization engaging in any unscrupulous means of generating revenues? What can you do about this?
- Bribery is a common challenge most business people face, especially when dealing with government officials. What has been your experience and how have you dealt with this in the past? Do you think you will take a different approach in the future?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

12
Strategic Partnerships

Strategic partnership is a great way to leverage the strengths two organizations can bring that can help each other to grow and accomplish their purposes.
Partnerships can be in place with a variety of business objectives. Some examples include for new product development, leveraging technical expertise, supplier / distributor, allied services, etc. While strategic partnerships could result in making both organizations stronger, there can also be several problematic areas in partnership including sharing of profits and expenses, ownership of intellectual property, technology transfer, hiring away of employees, and several other related matters. Given the possibility of things going wrong in strategic partnerships, these should be approached with caution, must be well thought out and appropriately documented before moving forward.

In this chapter, we provide Scriptural insights relevant to the area of strategic partnerships that organizations may consider entering into.

An ox and a donkey cannot plow together

Deuteronomy 22:10 (The Message)
Don't plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together.

The ox and donkey are both farm animals and can provide their physical strength in certain kinds of labor. However, it would be foolish and cruel to yoke them together to plow a field. They are incompatible for this task. Further, the work done would be

one-sided. The ox being so much stronger and powerful would carry the weight, and the donkey would only be a liability.

The simple lesson is that compatibility is critical for a partnership to succeed.

Among other things, check for compatibility in terms of work culture, business processes, complementing each other's strengths, expectations, commitment to the business and the partnership, values, long-term goals and commitment of their own employees. Also, check the partner's reputation in the business community because that will reflect on your organization because of the partnership. Partnerships that are one-sided will not usually succeed.

Know whom you are dealing with; dig deeper to get all the facts

Proverbs 27:6
Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend,
But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.

You cannot enter a strategic partnership with your eyes closed and on simple trust. Keep your eyes open. Know who you are dealing with. Get past the initial "honeymoon" period and look at the real stuff that each can bring to the table. Get past the smooth talk and flattery. Take a close look at their motivation. Are they in the partnership just to take advantage of you, or are they serious in building a relationship where both will contribute meaningfully toward common goals?

Proverbs 14:15
The simple believes every word,
But the prudent considers well his steps.

If needed, do a test run on some common non-critical engagements to see if there is a fit. See the level of commitment they bring. You do not want to partner with someone who only wants to "get" but not "give" to the partnership.

Evaluate work approach before saying "I do"

Proverbs 1:10-15
[10] My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent.
[11] If they say, "Come with us,
Let us lie in wait to *shed* blood;
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause;
[12] Let us swallow them alive like Sheol,
And whole, like those who go down to the Pit;
[13] We shall find all *kinds* of precious possessions,
We shall fill our houses with spoil;
[14] Cast in your lot among us,
Let us all have one purse"—
[15] My son, do not walk in the way with them,
Keep your foot from their path;

How you go about accomplishing something is important. The end cannot justify the means. It is not enough to achieve profit but how we get to it is also important. If people invite you into a partnership with them but they are unscrupulous in their work approach or their work styles are radically different, dare to refuse such partnerships.

Check for alignment of culture and values in mergers and acquisitions

Mark 3:24,25
[24] If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.
[25] And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Song of Solomon 2:15
Catch us the foxes,
The little foxes that spoil the vines,
For our vines *have* tender grapes.

Mergers of two organizations or acquisition of one by another is akin to making two families live under one roof. It is making two homes become one. Often, some of the strategic benefits of the merger and acquisition become the focus; some

of the minor differences go unnoticed. It is these "little foxes" that need to be caught. Otherwise, these "little foxes" can spoil the vine and destroy the good that was already happening. Organizational work culture and organizational values are such key elements that often go unnoticed during such decisions. There must be an alignment of culture and values, otherwise, you will end up in a "mismatched" merger or acquisition. A house divided is very likely to fall apart.

Agreement is important; put everything in writing

Amos 3:3
Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

Once there is clarity and a definite sense of alignment, then you decide to move ahead with a strategic partnership discussing and agreeing on the fine details. Arrive at a place of mutual understanding and agreement on practical issues on how the partnership will be worked out. Then make sure everything is put in writing in a contract or some legally binding document before commencing with the partnership. Standard partnership documents are available that cover a wide range of areas that need to be agreed upon and documented.

Build business partnerships steadily

Proverbs 25:17 (The Message)
And when you find a friend, don't outwear your welcome; show up at all hours and he'll soon get fed up.

Partnership, like marriage, takes time to build. There may be those rough patches, the unexpected challenges and other matters that need to be worked through to make the partnership work. Work on this steadily, cautiously, and patiently. Strategic partnerships need to be worked out with a clear understanding of boundaries, what is accepted and what is not, with a sense of adaptability and mutual understanding.

Get all on board to work the partnership

Genesis 13:1-7 (GNT)
1 Abram went north out of Egypt to the southern part of Canaan with his wife and everything he owned, and Lot went with him.
2 Abram was a very rich man, with sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as silver and gold.
3 Then he left there and moved from place to place, going toward Bethel. He reached the place between Bethel and Ai where he had camped before
4 and had built an altar. There he worshiped the Lord.
5 Lot also had sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as his own family and servants.
6 And so there was not enough pasture land for the two of them to stay together, because they had too many animals.
7 So quarrels broke out between the men who took care of Abram's animals and those who took care of Lot's animals. (At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were still living in the land.)

Abram and his nephew Lot began an amazing journey together. Both were probably excited. Both were eager to reach their destination of a land that held a great promise. Both were already very strong and successful in their own way. Yet, as they began to make the journey, there were problems between their employees. Their employees could not get along. They could no longer journey together.

A strategic business partnership is not just about the senior leaders in the organizations agreeing to do something together. If the rest of the people involved are not on board, the partnership will be threatened. So, an important key to making a strategic partnership between two organizations work is to help establish synergy between all involved on both sides. Everyone needs to be on board.

Let go when you have to

Genesis 13:8,9 (GNT)
8 Then Abram said to Lot, "We are relatives, and your men and my men shouldn't be quarreling.

9 So let's separate. Choose any part of the land you want. You go one way, and I'll go the other."

Not all strategic business partnerships will succeed. In fact, most do not. One of the important decisions to make is to let go when you must. Part company and go separate ways if things are not working out. Do this soon enough before the ship sinks.

Resolve disputes peacefully if possible

Proverbs 25:8-10
8 Do not go hastily to court;
For what will you do in the end,
When your neighbor has put you to shame?
9 Debate your case with your neighbor,
And do not disclose the secret to another;
10 Lest he who hears *it* expose your shame,
And your reputation be ruined.

When disputes arise in strategic partnerships, make every attempt to resolve matters peacefully. Once settled, learn to keep quiet and don't go publicizing the wrongs or dirt of the other party involved.

Matthew 5:25,26 (GNT)
25 "If someone brings a lawsuit against you and takes you to court, settle the dispute while there is time, before you get to court. Once you are there, you will be turned over to the judge, who will hand you over to the police, and you will be put in jail.
26 There you will stay, I tell you, until you pay the last penny of your fine.

Romans 12:17,18 (GNT)
17 If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good.
18 Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody.

Key Principles

1) An ox and a donkey cannot plow together.
2) Know whom you are dealing with. Dig deeper to get all the facts.

3) Evaluate work approach before saying "I do."
4) Check for an alignment of culture and values in mergers and acquisitions.
5) Agreement is important. Put everything in writing.
6) Build business partnerships steadily.
7) Get all on board to work the partnership.
8) Let go when you have to.
9) Resolve disputes peacefully if possible.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- Envision some of the challenges that could arise when two organizations with strongly differing work approach, culture and values enter into a strategic partnership.
- What are some indicators that a strategic partnership between two organizations is not working and it is time to consider parting ways?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

13

Leadership

Leadership, among other things, is influence. Organizations typically need strong leaders to succeed in their mission. A leadership position may be earned, delegated, or in some cases, inherited, but what comes out of that leadership depends on the leader's ability to influence people toward a common goal.

There are several studies and theories on organizational leadership, leadership traits and leadership behavior that are available. In this chapter, we review essential principles on leadership presented in Scripture.

If you don't see it, you cannot lead people into it

Matthew 15:14
Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

Judges 21:25
In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

Leaders can influence people to come together and pursue a common vision. Rather than each person going about without direction, leaders provide a vision of an intended future and direction on how to get there, and are then able to help people journey into it. It is therefore implicit that leadership requires vision. Leadership requires the ability to see into the future and envision intended outcomes. A leader without a vision is essentially blind. If a blind leader attempts to lead others, it is likely they will get nowhere.

Maintain proper heart attitudes

Matthew 20:25-28 (The Message)
25 So Jesus got them together to settle things down. He said, "You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around, how quickly a little power goes to their heads.
26 It's not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant.
27 Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave.
28 That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not be served - and then to give away his life in exchange for the many who are held hostage."

We would like to emphasize three main heart attitudes for godly leadership in any setting, be it in a business or a non-profit organization—servanthood, passion, and self-control.

Servanthood

The leader's heart is that of a servant. He serves the people he leads. He serves the organization to take it where it should go. He serves the customers and others engaging with the organization. Servanthood is expressed through humility, meekness, sacrifice, and service. The Lord Jesus Christ set us the perfect example of servanthood.

Philippians 2:3-11 (GNT)
3 Don't do anything from selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast, but be humble toward one another, always considering others better than yourselves.
4 And look out for one another's interests, not just for your own.
5 The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had:
6 He always had the nature of God,
but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God.
7 Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had,
and took the nature of a servant.
He became like a human being
and appeared in human likeness.
8 He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—his death on the cross.

[9] For this reason God raised him to the highest place above
and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.
[10] And so, in honor of the name of Jesus
all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below
will fall on their knees,
[11] and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

James 3:13 (GNT)
Are there any of you who are wise and understanding? You are to prove it by your good life, by your good deeds performed with humility and wisdom.

Proverbs 29:23
A man's pride will bring him low,
But the humble in spirit will retain honor.

Passion

A leader must be passionate about the vision and what the organization stands for. A leader's passion is expressed through the enthusiasm with which he goes about things. His passion is demonstrated through hard work, the ability to stay with the vision through turbulent times, through a sense of enjoyment, cheerfulness, and fun when pursuing the vision. A leader's passion and enthusiasm are contagious. It inspires others. It energizes people who interact with him. Leaders know how to keep this fire burning bright and strong all the time. They can tap into the strength of the Lord, His call, and His empowering to keep them strong.

Romans 12:11,12 (The Message)
[11] Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master,
[12] cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder.

Self-control

Self-control is the ability to be self-governing demonstrated through self-discipline and self-restraint. A leader does not have

anyone checking on him all the time and telling him what to do. So, a leader essentially must be self-governing. He keeps a check on himself, his time, his work, his habits, his productivity, his interactions with people, his use of resources, and much more.

The apostle Paul, one of the greatest Christian leaders, said this about himself, *"But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified"* (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Proverbs 17:27
He who has knowledge spares his words,
***And* a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.**

Proverbs 29:11
A fool vents all his feelings,
But a wise *man* holds them back.

James 1:19,20 (GNT)
[19] Remember this, my dear friends! Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to become angry.
[20] Human anger does not achieve God's righteous purpose.

Maintain proper people skills

Proverbs 20:28 (The Message)
Love and truth form a good leader; sound leadership is founded on loving integrity.

Proverbs 14:28 (The Message)
The mark of a good leader is loyal followers; leadership is nothing without a following.

Proverbs 3:3,4
[3] Let not mercy and truth forsake you;
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the tablet of your heart,
[4] *And* so find favor and high esteem
In the sight of God and man.

Leadership is about people. Inasmuch as leadership involves vision, goals, planning, direction, responsibility,

decision making, good governance, and other things, leadership is about people. If people don't follow, there cannot be leadership.

Leaders need to have a strong human side to their skills. Having genuine interest, compassion and care for people is essential. People are not robots or machines that do what they are instructed. People have emotions and needs that they bring with them to the workplace.

Working with people takes sensitivity, being sensitive to their feelings, their challenges, and their perspectives. Good leaders respect people, all people, regardless of what their role or position is in the organization. Good leaders see value and appreciate each person. Leaders celebrate people. Leaders are positive; they inspire and lift people up. Leaders are encouragers. They know how to speak the right words to give people the encouragement they need. Leaders are people builders. They build people. They empower people by creating opportunities for their growth and development. Leaders are secure and hence, give people freedom to think, decide, and act independently. Good leaders do not control or manipulate people. Good leaders treat people fairly without partiality or favoritism. Leaders correct people lovingly for their benefit. Good leaders genuinely care for their people, their well-being, their families, their life goals, their interests, etc. Good leaders enjoy seeing people at their best.

Proverbs 29:2 GNT
Show me a righteous ruler (*leader*) and I will show you a happy people. Show me a wicked ruler and I will show you a miserable people.

If the head is not right, the body won't be right

Proverbs 29:12 (The Message)
When a leader listens to malicious gossip, all the workers get infected with evil.

In some ways, leadership is headship analogous to the role and function of the head to the human body. Even if the body is in perfect shape, if the head malfunctions in some way, the rest of the body is affected, sometimes completely incapacitated. If the leader is not right—if his motivations, decisions, or actions are not right—the rest of the body will quickly feel the impact. Sometimes, the leader may be sincere but influenced by the wrong kind of people and the wrong ideas, and that can then affect everyone else he leads.

So as a leader, there must be a strong sense of protecting ourselves, keeping checks on ourselves to make sure we are staying right. As leaders, we need the right kind of people to speak into our lives to keep us on track.

Proverbs 25:5 (GNT)
Keep evil advisers away from the king and his government will be known for its justice.

Demonstrate, emphasize, empower, and celebrate honesty

Proverbs 16:12,13 (The Message)
12 Good leaders abhor wrongdoing of all kinds; sound leadership has a moral foundation.
13 Good leaders cultivate honest speech; they love advisors who tell them the truth.

Proverbs 18:5
***It is* not good to show partiality to the wicked,**
***Or* to overthrow the righteous in judgment.**

Proverbs 28:18 (GNT)
Be honest and you will be safe. If you are dishonest, you will suddenly fall.

Honesty, integrity, and other core values come top down. If the leader is honest, personally demonstrates honesty, emphasizes it, empowers people to be honest, and celebrates honesty, the rest of the people within the organization will follow.

In our world today, being honest is sometimes risky. Others may strike back on those who are honest. Leaders must protect people who are honest and putting themselves at risk of retaliation from those who are dishonest. Empower honest people by celebrating their honesty and protecting them. Never let honest people feel vulnerable or even punished for their choice of honesty. Similarly, as a leader, some people will hate you for your honesty and for walking uprightly. There will be some who will stand by you. Stay honest nonetheless.

Proverbs 17:26 (GNT)
It is not right to make an innocent person pay a fine; justice is perverted when good people are punished.

Proverbs 29:10 (GNT)
Bloodthirsty people hate anyone who's honest, but righteous people will protect the life of such a person.

Your attitude wrecks or invigorates; people tolerate or celebrate your attitude

Proverbs 16:14,15 (The Message)
14 An intemperate leader wreaks havoc in lives; you're smart to stay clear of someone like that.
15 Good-tempered leaders invigorate lives; they're like spring rain and sunshine.

Attitude is quickly noticeable. Your attitude affects others whether you like it or not. As a leader, your attitude wrecks or invigorates those who work with you. Your attitude refreshes and inspires or dampens and kills people's spirits. People tend to avoid you the best they can, or simply tolerate your bad attitude. They don't have much of a choice if you are the leader. However, your good attitude draws people to you. They celebrate you and enjoy being around. They come to draw inspiration and encouragement from you. Stay positive! Have a great attitude!

Be real, down to earth, avoid pretense

Proverbs 13:7 (The Message)
A pretentious, showy life is an empty life; a plain and simple life is a full life.

Proverbs 12:9 (The Message)
Better to be ordinary and work for a living than act important and starve in the process.

1 Peter 5:5,6 (The Message)
5 And you who are younger must follow your leaders. But all of you, leaders and followers alike, are to be down to earth with each other, for God has had it with the proud, But takes delight in just plain people. 6 So be content with who you are, and don't put on airs. God's strong hand is on you; he'll promote you at the right time.

Leadership is not "show business." A leader is just a normal human being, not a superhuman from another planet. So best to be real, down to earth, and avoid pretensions. Don't put yourself on a pedestal. Be accessible. Be approachable. Laugh. Cry. Be normal. You being real and normal will inspire people. People will know that they can do what you do, become what you are, and begin to pursue that when they know that you too are just a normal person.

On the other hand, being real and down to earth does not mean that you compromise and go down to the lowest level in terms of discipline, performance, ethics, standards, and values. Hold on to high standards in all these areas and yet, be normal as a person. Be careful of familiarity in the wrong sense where people no longer take you seriously. Your words will not mean much.

Be what you want your team to be—lead by example

Nehemiah 5:14,15,18
14 Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions.

15 But the former governors who *were* before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God.
18 Now *that* which was prepared daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in spite of this I did not demand the governor's provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people.

Nehemiah was an exemplary leader. Those were trying times when he was in charge. The people were still recovering from their time of exile and relocation and rebuilding their lives. During this time, Nehemiah chose voluntarily to stay away from enjoying and exercising his privileges as governor for 12 years. He chose to do this personally. When the need arose, he could then challenge people to make similar sacrifices for the benefit of their less privileged fellow citizens. And they gladly did because they saw Nehemiah's life example. Be what you want your people to be. Lead by example. Your life example speaks the loudest.

The apostle Paul challenged people to follow his life example.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (GNT)
Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ.

Philippians 4:9 (GNT)
Put into practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my actions. And the God who gives us peace will be with you.

Get the facts first, then act

Proverbs 13:16
Every prudent *man* acts with knowledge,
But a fool lays open *his* folly.

Sometimes as leaders, we tend to depend on our "gut feeling." We tend to do what we feel is right or what we intuitively

think is right. It is so much better to first get the facts and then arrive at a decision. Use the right information. Use data where available. When acting on a people issue, listen to the people concerned, and then decide.

Proverbs 18:13 (GNT)
Listen before you answer. If you don't, you are being stupid and insulting.

Give honest feedback

Proverbs 28:23 (GNT)
Correct someone, and afterward he will appreciate it more than flattery.

Don't assume that people know what you expect from them. Tell them. Similarly, if there are things that are not being done right, tell them. Giving honest feedback on areas where people are falling short is not easy. Sometimes, such communication or confrontation may not be received well initially but as a leader, that is part of the responsibility for the growth of the individual as well as the good of the organization. People will eventually know that you did it for their good and will appreciate the feedback you gave.

Correction and feedback must be timely. Give it when you notice it or shortly thereafter. Don't wait for a full year till the annual performance appraisal to give feedback. Providing timely feedback enables people to correct themselves immediately and hence, make improvements in the work they are doing.

Don't waste your words on the inattentive

Proverbs 25:12 (GNT)
A warning given by an experienced person to someone willing to listen is more valuable than gold rings or jewelry made of the finest gold.

Correction, sharing of knowledge, and experience with those who are willing to listen is worth the effort. On the contrary, if people are unwilling to listen and learn, don't waste

your time and effort. Save it for others who will appreciate it. Sometimes, people need to learn the hard way if they do not want to receive from the counsel and experience of others.

Guard against greed; demonstrate contentment without complacency

Proverbs 15:27
He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house,
But he who hates bribes will live.

Proverbs 28:16 (The Message)
Among leaders who lack insight, abuse abounds, but for one who hates corruption, the future is bright.

Luke 12:15 (GNT)
And he went on to say to them all, "Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed; because your true life is not made up of the things you own, no matter how rich you may be."

As a leader, you have a position where people look up to you. You also have access to finances, people, and other resources that most may not have access to. One of the big things that have caused the downfall of great leaders, CEOs and their organizations is greed. When leaders fall into greed, they ruin not only themselves but the organization they are responsible for. Greed can cause leaders to make decisions out of selfish interests, for personal gain, engage in corruption, and other dishonest practices. So, guard against greed. Learn to walk in contentment.

Yet, there is a subtle twist to the issue of contentment. Contentment should not lead to complacency and a state of being satisfied with things the way they are. Leaders are responsible for the growth and development of their organizations. There must be a constant continual striving for growth and advancement. And of course, as the organization does well and prospers, everyone benefits including the leader.

The great leader, the apostle Paul said, *"Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am"* (Philippians 4:11-13, The Message).

Stay away from women and wine

Proverbs 31:3-5 (GNT)
3 Don't spend all your energy on sex and all your money on women; they have destroyed kings.
4 Listen, Lemuel. Kings should not drink wine or have a craving for alcohol.
5 When they drink, they forget the laws and ignore the rights of people in need.

Two other things that have brought down great leaders are women and wine. Guard against these. If you are married, stay faithful to your wife. Always maintain a healthy distance from other women. Find other ways to relax and enjoy life than wine or alcohol. When you are socializing with other leaders who drink alcohol, don't feel pressured to engage in "social drinking". Choose a non-alcoholic beverage. Going down the path of drunkenness usually begins with the first sip. So, stay away from social drinking.

Stay God-controlled and God-directed

Proverbs 21:1 (The Message)
Good leadership is a channel of water controlled by God; he directs it to whatever ends he chooses.

Ultimately, as a leader, learn to be God-controlled and God-directed. You are His channel of blessing to your organization and to the people you lead and those you serve. Stay yielded and surrendered to Him daily. You are here to release the purposes

of God on the earth. Stay open to Him. Let His purposes be released through you to bless the world around you.

Key Principles

1) If you don't see it, you cannot lead people into it.
2) Maintain proper heart attitudes.
3) Maintain proper people skills.
4) If the head is not right, the body won't be right.
5) Demonstrate, emphasize, empower and celebrate honesty.
6) Your attitude wrecks or invigorates. People tolerate or celebrate your attitude.
7) Be real. Down to earth. Avoid pretense.
8) Be what you want your team to be. Lead by example.
9) Get the facts first, then act.
10) Give honest feedback.
11) Don't waste your words on the inattentive.
12) Guard against greed. Demonstrate contentment without complacency.
13) Stay away from women and wine.
14) Stay God-controlled and God-directed.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- Evaluate some leaders you have personally worked with. What lessons can you learn from what you observed in their heart attitudes and people skills—the good and the bad?
- Do leaders need to be put up on a pedestal or should they be "real and down to earth"? What are the pros and cons of each stance?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

14

Marketing, Brand Building, and Selling

To survive and prosper in today's competitive global environment, obtaining and retaining customers are extremely important. Part of this process is understanding customers' needs, creating awareness, creating a brand, and selling. Typically, this involves marketing and promotional activities such as pricing, sales promotions, advertising, selling, and public relations (PR) among other things.

Strategic marketing, marketing research, and marketing communications are key areas of work for organizations to understand markets, introduce services and products, and drive profits. While several traditional channels exist, social media has opened up new avenues to inform, interact, understand, and connect with customers.

In this chapter, we consider key scriptural principles that can be applied to this area of marketing, brand building, and selling.

Marketing communications—describe your product or service accurately

Proverbs 12:19 (GNT)
A lie has a short life, but truth lives on forever.

In marketing communications, lying can take on very subtle forms. A small misrepresentation, a minor exaggeration or inflation of the fact can have significant impact on outcomes. It is important that you describe your product or

service accurately. While creativity is important, never do it dishonestly or unlawfully. Be truthful in all sales and marketing communications about your organization's products or services. All statements must be substantiated when asked for.

Build your brand—a good name and reputation; money will follow

Proverbs 22:1 (GNT)
If you have to choose between a good reputation and great wealth, choose a good reputation.

Focus on establishing a good name and a good reputation for your organization, its services and products. Wealth will surely follow after that. You may have to make tough choices early on where you choose to protect and develop your brand while deferring profits. Creating a brand that in people's minds represents your organization's values of quality, excellence, integrity, creativity, etc. may take time but carefully work on this. You will reap its benefits in due time.

Protect your brand—a little foolishness can destroy good reputation

Ecclesiastes 10:1 (GNT)
Dead flies can make a whole bottle of perfume stink, and a little stupidity can cancel out the greatest wisdom.

It takes a long time to build a good name and reputation, but just one mistake can tear everything down and bring great disrepute. Protect your brand carefully. Everyone on the team has a role to play toward protecting what has been built so far. Have checks and counter checks to ensure that credibility and reputation are maintained.

Guard your intent; even if packaged well, evil intent will bring disrepute

Proverbs 24:8 (GNT)
If you are always planning evil, you will earn a reputation as a troublemaker.

In your marketing and advertising activities, if the intent is to cheat and deceive people, no matter how well it is packaged and concealed, it will be exposed, and your organization's reputation will be marred.

Hebrews 4:13 (GNT)
There is nothing that can be hid from God; everything in all creation is exposed and lies open before his eyes. And it is to him that we must all give an account of ourselves.

Advertisements—avoid the sexually suggestive, provocative, and indecent kind

Philippians 4:8 (GNT)
In conclusion, my friends, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable.

People's minds are not garbage dumps. In today's advertising world where sexually explicit or even sexually suggestive advertisements seem to get a lot of attention, it is challenging to choose not to engage in such kinds of promotions. However, take your stand. Choose to approve advertisements that are clean.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 (GNT)
and avoid every kind of evil.

Looks matter. What someone looks at matters. What someone looks at remains in their mind and can at some later point, lead them into sin and bondage. Of course, the advertisement agency or the creative artist won't be around to see the thousands whose minds are affected through the suggestive and indecent advertisement, but remember what people look at affects them.

Matthew 5:27-29 (GNT)
[27] "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'
[28] But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart.
[29] So if your right eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away! It is much better for you to lose a part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell.

In your advertisements, be a creative non-conformist. Don't conform to the ways of the world. Maintain courage to stand by your godly convictions.

Romans 12:2 (GNT)
Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.

Your unique selling proposition (USP) must be well-expressed

Proverbs 25:11 (GNT)
An idea well-expressed is like a design of gold, set in silver.

In a market that may be crowded with several other competing products or services similar to yours, you need to compete vigorously to stand out. You will need to differentiate your product or service and highlight its specific benefits to your customers.

Your unique selling proposition (USP) or your key differentiators must be well-expressed. This is where creativity comes in to capture people's attention and communicate effectively.

Focus on communicating clearly to your customer, not on outdoing your competition.

It is not how much you say but what you say that matters

Proverbs 15:23
A man has joy by the answer of his mouth,
And a word *spoken* in due season, how good *it is!*

The right word at the right time can make all the difference. In selling, remember it is not how much you talk but learning to listen, and then presenting the right thought at the right time that can be the clincher and win you the deal. So, listen. Keep listening. Understand your customer and then say what really matters. That will make all the difference.

Don't overdo the selling; watch what you say—it can save your life

Proverbs 13:3 (The Message)
Careful words make for a careful life; careless talk may ruin everything.

Proverbs 10:19
In the multitude of words sin is not lacking,
But he who restrains his lips *is* wise.

Proverbs 15:28
The heart of the righteous studies how to answer,
But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.

It is often easy to overcommit when doing the selling. We want to promise "the world" to the customer. We want them to think that we have all the answers and they don't need to go elsewhere. In the process of engaging in selling, it is so easy to make statements and promises in the heat of the moment, and then regret having ever said that. Sometimes, this very thing can ruin it all. Careless talk can ruin everything. So, watch your words. Speak with caution.

Resist the temptation to overdo the selling.

Here is a good prayer to pray before heading out on the sales call.

Psalm 141:3 (The Message)
Post a guard at my mouth, God, set a watch at the door of my lips.

You cannot get away with lies for too long

Proverbs 12:19
The truthful lip shall be established forever,
But a lying tongue *is* but for a moment.

Proverbs 21:6
Getting treasures by a lying tongue
***Is* the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.**

1 Peter 3:10,11 (GNT)
[10] As the scripture says,
"If you want to enjoy life
and wish to see good times,
you must keep from speaking evil
and stop telling lies.
[11] You must turn away from evil and do good;
you must strive for peace with all your heart.

Remember, you cannot get away with lies for too long. When selling to your customers, always speak the truth. If there are limitations in your product or service, it is better to state things upfront rather than having to recant statements you made earlier.

Cut out smooth talking and flattery; don't fall for them either

Proverbs 26:23-28 (GNT)
[23] Insincere talk that hides what you are really thinking is like a fine glaze on a cheap clay pot.
[24] A hypocrite hides hate behind flattering words.
[25] They may sound fine, but don't believe him, because his heart is filled to the brim with hate.
[26] He may disguise his hatred, but everyone will see the evil things he does.

[27] People who set traps for others get caught themselves. People who start landslides get crushed.
[28] You have to hate someone to want to hurt him with lies. Insincere talk brings nothing but ruin.

Proverbs 29:5 (GNT)
If you flatter your friends, you set a trap for yourself.

Often in meeting customers, you want to make them feel good. In the process, you end up saying all the right things just to flatter them, swell up their feelings about themselves and so on. Remember, flattery is only a trap that you will fall into yourself. Insincere talk brings ruin. Stay away from such things.

Flattery—don't give it and don't receive it either.

Your words must be backed by your work

Proverbs 12:14 (The Message)
Well-spoken words bring satisfaction; well-done work has its own reward.

In marketing and selling, statements made and promises given must all be substantiated. Well-spoken words must be backed up by work well done. If you cannot deliver it, then don't promise it. If it is something that you will attempt at doing, then make that clear and do your best.

A free gift gets attention; use it

Proverbs 18:16 (The Message)
A gift gets attention; it buys the attention of eminent people.

Everyone likes a gift, a rebate, something that is free and expresses generosity. Use the power of a free gift. It is a point of entry as well as a way to keep your brand in front of people.

Sheep can thrive among wolves if they stay wise and pure

Matthew 10:16
"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

When Jesus sent out the 12 to evangelize and share the Gospel, this was a task that was risky. It was like sheep being sent among wolves. He did warn His disciples but also showed them how to handle the risk. He instructed them to be wise and harmless. To be wise means to be prudent, sensible, and practically wise. The word "harmless" literally means "unmixed, with absence of foreign mixture, pure, guileless, sincere, with the simplicity of a single eye, discerning what is evil, and choosing only what glorifies God" (Vines Dictionary of the New Testament).

Stay wise, stay pure and you can survive and even thrive in the rough world out there.

Negotiation—patiently and gently press toward an agreement

Proverbs 25:15 (The Message)
Patient persistence pierces through indifference; gentle speech breaks down rigid defenses.

Part of the closing sales involves negotiation. While there are several facets to this process, while remaining fair and keeping the best interests of your customer as well as your organization in mind, patiently persist and press toward a place of agreement. Stay calm. Be kind, gracious and gentle throughout the process even when demands placed before you seem unreasonable, sometimes ridiculous.

Doors can be opened and mountains can be leveled supernaturally

Isaiah 45:2 (GNT)
"I myself will prepare your way,
leveling mountains and hills.
I will break down bronze gates
and smash their iron bars.

While market conditions and consumer choices can change rapidly, and competing products and services can inundate the market, you can rely on the supernatural intervention of God on your behalf to prepare the way, level mountains and open unusual doors of opportunities. Believe God to do this for you. Trust God for markets to open up for you. Journey with Him into unusual opportunities that He sets up for you.

Key Principles

1) Marketing communications—describe your product or service accurately.
2) Build your brand—a good name and reputation. Money will follow.
3) Protect your brand—a little foolishness can destroy good reputation.
4) Guard your intent. Even if packaged well, evil intent will bring disrepute.
5) Advertisements—avoid the sexually suggestive, provocative, and indecent kind.
6) Your unique selling proposition (USP) must be well-expressed.
7) It's not how much you say, but what you say that matters.
8) Don't overdo the selling. Watch what you say. It can save your life.
9) You cannot get away with lies for too long.
10) Cut out smooth talking and flattery, and don't fall for them either.
11) Your words must be backed by your work.
12) A free gift gets attention; use it.
13) Sheep can thrive among wolves if they stay wise and pure.
14) Negotiation—patiently and gently press toward an agreement.
15) Doors can be opened and mountains can be leveled supernaturally.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- If you were working for an advertising company and your team members or manager wants you to create an advertisement that has sexually suggestive and provocative content, how would you handle the situation?
- *"Sheep can thrive among wolves if they stay wise and pure"*— can you think of scenarios where you can apply this truth?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

15
Customer Relations

Customer relationship management and customer care are very crucial if an organization is to remain in business. You are your customers' best partner. Getting customers is one side of the coin. Retaining customers is equally important. Almost always, customers tend to take into account service levels in addition to product or pricing when making a purchase decision.

While some of the principles applicable to customer relations overlap with those of the earlier chapter, we cover a few additional principles from the Scripture that apply to this area of organizational activity. While most of these statements are made as though they were to an individual, it is important to train everyone who interacts with customers to engage with these principles.

Respond quickly; don't delay

Proverbs 3:27,28
[27] Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
When it is in the power of your hand to do *so*.
[28] Do not say to your neighbor,
"Go, and come back,
And tomorrow I will give *it*,"
When you have it with you.

The customer is extremely important, and responding to them should take priority over other activities. If you lose a customer, you not only lose his business but also those whom he can influence by talking about the poor service provided by your organization to him. A disgruntled customer becomes a negative

advertisement and can undo a lot of good that has taken a long time to build.

Represent your organization accurately

Proverbs 25:13
Like the cold of snow in time of harvest
***Is* a faithful messenger to those who send him,**
For he refreshes the soul of his masters.

When customers call or interact with an employee, in their minds, they are not just speaking to a customer service representative or an individual. In their minds, they are speaking with the organization itself. They are expecting the same kind of interaction from the employee as the image that has been built in their minds through the organization's promotions and stated culture and values. However, if one employee fails to live up to this, the customer's image of the organization is altered. Be a "faithful messenger" who represents the organization accurately upholding the organization's culture, values, vision, and mission.

Don't make false promises

Proverbs 25:14 (GNT)
People who promise things that they never give are like clouds and wind that bring no rain.

When a promise for a service or response is made to a customer, it must be kept. If you never intend to keep it, then don't make the promise in the first place. It is true that sometimes, situations arise that are beyond your control and you are unable to deliver on a promise. It is important to keep the customer apprised of developments and delays.

Proverbs 12:22 (GNT)
The Lord hates liars, but is pleased with those who keep their word.

Send your best man out to handle a crisis

Proverbs 25:19 (GNT)
Depending on an unreliable person in a crisis is like trying to chew with a loose tooth or walk with a crippled foot.

Crisis situations do happen in customer engagements. This is the moment to send the best man out to help resolve the matter. Sending someone who cannot resolve the problem or someone who will not make every effort to see things through to resolution is a sure way to aggravate the situation. Always give your customer the best you possibly can. You won't regret you did.

Stay calm even when the customer makes unreasonable demands

Proverbs 20:14 (GNT)
The customer always complains that the price is too high, but then he goes off and brags about the bargain he got.

In customer interactions, the unspoken rule is "the customer is king." The customer has right of way and has the right to say whatever they wish. It is possible that situations may arise where the customer bargains hard, makes unreasonable demands, and insists on having things that were never promised or intended. In situations like this, tempers can easily flare up. The key is to stay calm. Listen. Let the customer speak. Once they are done, do the best you can, or go back to those in charge and see how best to serve the customer. Never get into a fight or a verbal exchange. You can never retract what has been spoken.

Proverbs 15:18 (The Message)
Hot tempers start fights; a calm, cool spirit keeps the peace.

If you have failed to deliver, admit it, apologize, and don't cover up

Proverbs 28:13
He who covers his sins will not prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

There is nothing wrong in admitting to a mistake or a failure on your part to deliver on a promise. Admit it. Apologize and work on remedying the situation. Covering up can only go on for so long. It is so much more liberating to keep things out in the open and work together with your customer to a best possible solution.

Key Principles

1) Respond quickly. Don't delay.
2) Represent your organization accurately.
3) Don't make false promises.
4) Send your best man out to handle a crisis.
5) Stay calm even when the customer makes unreasonable demands.
6) If you've failed to deliver, admit it. Apologize and don't cover up.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- Consider a situation where the customer made unreasonable demands. What led to that situation? How did you handle it? What was the outcome? What lessons did you take away from that experience?
- Was there a situation where you had to admit a failure or mistake to a customer? How did you go about remedying the situation? What was the outcome? What lessons did you take away from that experience?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

16
Challenges and Tough Times

Every day, the workplace is changing—sometimes for the better and sometimes these changes bring challenges. Competitive market conditions mean that there could be downsizing, layoffs, reorganizations, a hold on salary raises, reduced incomes, and many other challenges. Learning to stay resilient, overcoming challenges and forging ahead are skills we need to develop.

In this chapter, we cover scriptural principles we can tap into when faced with different workplace challenges.

Mountains can be conquered

Matthew 17:20
So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

There will be mountains along the way. Everybody faces one sometime or the other. These mountains could appear in your personal life in the form of a personal crisis, in your professional life, or in a workplace situation in the form of a failed product launch, a project gone amiss, and other situations but mountains are not insurmountable. Mountains can be conquered. Have faith in God. Stay anchored in the goodness of God toward you through every situation and every season of life.

Maintain a positive attitude; be thankful

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (The Message)
16 Be cheerful no matter what;

17 pray all the time;
18 thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.

In every situation, stay cheerful. Be thankful no matter what. Find something to thank God for. For LIFE itself, thank Him.

Proverbs 15:13
A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance,
But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

Proverbs 17:22 (GNT)
Being cheerful keeps you healthy. It is slow death to be gloomy all the time.

When you feel like you have lost everything and are in prison, look up. Sing to Him who is still King. The chains can be broken, and prison doors thrown open. Nothing is impossible.

Acts 16:24-26 (GNT)
24 Upon receiving this order, the jailer threw them into the inner cell and fastened their feet between heavy blocks of wood.
25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.
26 Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, which shook the prison to its foundations. At once all the doors opened, and the chains fell off all the prisoners.

Don't lose your confidence

Psalm 40:1-3 (GNT)
1 I waited patiently for the Lord's help;
then he listened to me and heard my cry.
2 He pulled me out of a dangerous pit,
out of the deadly quicksand.
He set me safely on a rock
and made me secure.
3 He taught me to sing a new song,
a song of praise to our God.
Many who see this will take warning
and will put their trust in the Lord.

When you find yourself in an unexpected place, look to the Lord. Wait on Him. He will come through for you. Though you fall, God can lift you up (Psalm 37:23,24; Proverbs 24:16). God can bring you out of the pit (professionals in turmoil). Don't give place to any of the negatives—fear, anxiety, or depression. Don't lose your confidence. Stay anchored in the Lord. Sing a new song to the Lord in anticipation of what He will do to bring you out.

Psalm 42:11 (GNT)
Why am I so sad?
Why am I so troubled?
I will put my hope in God,
and once again I will praise him,
my savior and my God.

Tap into empowered efficiency

Joshua 23:10
One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God *is* He who fights for you, as He promised you.

Humanly speaking, one man normally cannot outdo a 1000 people but this equation looks different when God is empowering that one man. In the workplace, there will be those situations when you will have to work alone and deliver huge results. Maybe the organization had to downsize, and so the work of 10 people is now placed on you. This is a challenge that is not uncommon. It is extremely stressful and challenging. Working under such circumstances is never easy. However, tap into empowered efficiency. What God promised to His people back then can also happen in our context today. With the Lord empowering you, the odds are in your favor. So, step up to the task and deliver the goods. Once things go well, you can look back and celebrate what the Lord did through you and for your organization.

God is your boss; don't worry about bad bosses and unfair employers

Ephesians 6:5-8
5 Bondservants (employees), **be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;**
6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,
7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,
8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

We are called to work as unto the Lord and expect the Lord to reward us when we do. When we do our work sincerely and well, we can look to the Lord to reward us even if we are overlooked by our boss or employer. So, stay away from complaining and fretting about your boss. Focus on the Lord and expect His intervention. God did that for Jacob even though his boss cheated him and changed his wages 10 times. God blessed Jacob more than he could imagine.

Genesis 31:4-7 (GNT)
4 So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field where his flocks were.
5 He said to them, "I have noticed that your father is not as friendly toward me as he used to be; but my father's God has been with me.
6 You both know that I have worked for your father with all my strength.
7 Yet he has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not let him harm me.

Bouncing back when you are put down

Proverbs 29:26
Many seek the ruler's favor,
But justice for man *comes* from the Lord.

Unfortunately, in the workplace, bad bosses and unfair managers can do things that hurt people. They can use their position to manipulate things and displace you from your current

role and position or cause you to be presented in bad light toward your peers or upper management. Such things do happen in some organizations. While it is good to have your boss' or manager's favor, remember that justice comes from the Lord. So look to Him to vindicate you in such situations. Don't fight back. Don't retaliate. Don't go around speaking ill of your boss or manager. Keep your eyes on the Lord and look to Him for your help. With God's help, you can come back strong with faith, diligence, and great results.

Psalm 103:6
The Lord executes righteousness
And justice for all who are oppressed.

Micah 7:7,8
7 Therefore I will look to the Lord;
I will wait for the God of my salvation;
My God will hear me.
8 Do not rejoice over me, my enemy;
When I fall, I will arise;
When I sit in darkness,
The Lord *will be* a light to me.

Don't stoop down to the level of gossip and organizational politics

Romans 12:17,18,21 (GNT)
17 If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good.
18 Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody.
21 Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good.

In some organizations, the work environment can be quite hostile. Workplace gossip and organizational politics make working there very difficult. If you find yourself in such a situation, as long as you work in that organization, steer clear of the gossip and politics. Refuse to participate in such things. Even if others gossip about you and do you wrong, stay out of it. Conquer evil by doing what is good.

God is your defense against false allegations

Isaiah 54:17 (GNT)
But no weapon will be able to hurt you;
you will have an answer for all who accuse you.
I will defend my servants
and give them victory."

Another challenge that could arise in a workplace situation is false allegations about wrongs you have not actually done. Such things can be emotionally disturbing and trying, but look to God for He has promised that no weapon will succeed against you and He will be your defense. Pray for them that God would be merciful to them, that God would change their hearts and minds, and they will recant. God surrounds you with His favor as a shield.

Psalm 3:3 (GNT)
But you, O Lord, are always my shield from danger;
you give me victory
and restore my courage.

2 Chronicles 16:9
For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him.

Matthew 5:44,45 (GNT)
44 But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
45 so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil.

Resolving business conflicts among brethren

Matthew 18:15-17 (GNT)
15 "If your brother sins against you, go to him and show him his fault. But do it privately, just between yourselves. If he listens to you, you have won your brother back.
16 But if he will not listen to you, take one or two other persons with you, so that 'every accusation may be upheld by the testimony of two or more witnesses,' as the scripture says.

17 And if he will not listen to them, then tell the whole thing to the church. Finally, if he will not listen to the church, treat him as though he were a pagan or a tax collector.

Sometimes, conflicts arise among believers who are engaging in business together. As the Scripture instructs, it is best to settle such matters with the help of spiritually mature leaders in the local church. If you are unable to arrive at a peaceful resolution with the help of leaders in the church, if there is no other option left, then legal proceedings may be the only available option.

1 Corinthians 6:1-8 (GNT)
1 If any of you have a dispute with another Christian, how dare you go before heathen judges instead of letting God's people settle the matter?
2 Don't you know that God's people will judge the world? Well, then, if you are to judge the world, aren't you capable of judging small matters?
3 Do you not know that we shall judge the angels? How much more, then, the things of this life!
4 If such matters come up, are you going to take them to be settled by people who have no standing in the church?
5 Shame on you! Surely there is at least one wise person in your fellowship who can settle a dispute between fellow Christians.
6 Instead, one Christian goes to court against another and lets unbelievers judge the case!
7 The very fact that you have legal disputes among yourselves shows that you have failed completely. Would it not be better for you to be wronged? Would it not be better for you to be robbed?
8 Instead, you yourselves wrong one another and rob one another, even other believers!

Don't let male chauvinism or prejudice shake you; just be who you are

Galatians 3:28
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

This note is of course for women. In some situations, male chauvinism can be strongly felt in the workplace. Women may be

subtly looked down as inferior or passed over for key leadership roles. God has shown us that He looks at us all equally. You are no less valuable in God's Kingdom just because you are a woman.

Sometimes, it could be racial, cultural, social, or other prejudices that may be rampant in the work environment.

If you are at the receiving end of such treatment, take things in your stride. Stand your ground and continue to demonstrate the value you bring to the organization. Where possible, address the issue with the appropriate leader. If things don't change, move on. There are more important things you need to do.

Say "No" to male sexual advances and requests

Proverbs 5:21-23
21 For the ways of man *are* before the eyes of the Lord,
And He ponders all his paths.
22 His own iniquities entrap the wicked *man,*
And he is caught in the cords of his sin.
23 He shall die for lack of instruction,
And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

This again is a challenge that women face in the workplace. Colleagues, bosses, or superiors may make sexual advances looking for opportunities. Sometimes, bosses may indirectly hint at giving rewards in return for sexual favors. Say "No" and protect yourself. Don't give in to the pressure. Take necessary precautions. One wise thing to do is to dress sensibly and modestly so that you do not draw unnecessary attention in the workplace.

Stay away from the woman seducer; don't play with fire

Proverbs 5:3-6
3 For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey,
And her mouth *is* smoother than oil;
4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,

Sharp as a two-edged sword.
[5] Her feet go down to death,
Her steps lay hold of hell.
[6] Lest you ponder *her* path of life—
Her ways are unstable;
You do not know *them.*

On the flip side, there could be women who are in the habit of luring men, offering them sexual favors, sometimes with the expectation of rewards in the workplace. Stay strong and stay away.

Proverbs 6:26-29 (GNT)
[26] A man can hire a prostitute for the price of a loaf of bread, but adultery will cost him all he has.
[27] Can you carry fire against your chest without burning your clothes?
[28] Can you walk on hot coals without burning your feet?
[29] It is just as dangerous to sleep with another man's wife. Whoever does it will suffer.

If you are ridiculed for your faith, stand strong knowing you are blessed

1 Peter 4:14-16
[14] If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you,* for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.
[15] But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.
[16] Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

While in some places, Christians in the workplace are held in high regard, in other places, there seems to be an increasing antagonism toward those who profess the Christian faith in the workplace. Sometimes there can be verbal and other subtle forms of attack in the workplace simply because you are a professing Christian. The Scripture instructs us to understand that we are blessed, the Spirit of God is upon us to empower us, and we

need not be ashamed. Continue to walk with wisdom and do not do anything to unnecessarily provoke people on matters of your faith. Continue to do exceptional work and let your work speak volumes.

Colossians 4:5 (GNT)
Be wise in the way you act toward those who are not believers, making good use of every opportunity you have.

1 Peter 2:15 (GNT)
For God wants you to silence the ignorant talk of foolish people by the good things you do.

Matthew 5:10-12 (GNT)
10 "Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!
11 "Happy are you when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are my followers.
12 Be happy and glad, for a great reward is kept for you in heaven. This is how the prophets who lived before you were persecuted.

Wisdom answers to nepotism

Proverbs 17:2
A wise servant will rule over a son who causes shame,
And will share an inheritance among the brothers.

Another kind of injustice that you may encounter in the workplace is nepotism where family members of the boss get positions even if they are not capable of handling those roles while others are overlooked. Respond with wisdom. Your wisdom will get you noticed and give you access to what may be otherwise retained for family members.

The pink slip and honorable exits

Romans 8:28 (GNT)
We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose.

Your time with an organization will come to an end. Sometimes, it is because the employer asks you to move on. Sometimes, you choose to do so for various reasons. Always try to leave on good terms in a friendly and honorable way. Also, try to plan and prepare your next step before you make the move. This may mean having your next job "in hand" before you leave your current job. In everything, stay yielded to God and His purpose knowing that as you do, He works all things for good.

Key Principles

1) Mountains can be conquered.
2) Maintain a positive attitude. Be thankful.
3) Don't lose your confidence.
4) Tap into empowered efficiency.
5) God is your boss. Don't worry about bad bosses and unfair employers.
6) Bouncing back when you are put down.
7) Don't stoop down to the level of gossip and organizational politics.
8) God is your defense against false allegations.
9) Resolving business conflicts among brethren.
10) Don't let male chauvinism or prejudice shake you. Just be who you are.
11) Say "No" to male sexual advances and requests.
12) Stay away from the woman seducer. Don't play with fire.
13) If you are ridiculed for your faith, stand strong knowing you are blessed.
14) Wisdom answers to nepotism.
15) The pink slip and honorable exits.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- Having to work for a bad boss or an unfair employer can be a harrowing experience. Was there a time when you were in such a situation? How did you handle this? What lessons did you take back from that experience?
- How does workplace gossip and politics affect an individual employee? What are some ways to stay clear of these in the workplace?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

17

Stewardship

Along with success in professional life comes individual and organizational responsibility for the proper use of resources and the wealth that is created. There is responsibility toward God, toward our communities, and toward others in need. We call this stewardship, which is essentially, taking proper care of something that has been put in our responsibility to manage efficiently, to use wisely, to multiply, and to pass on to succeeding generations.

In this chapter, we highlight key Scriptural principles relevant to stewardship.

Honor God with your personal finances

Proverbs 3:9,10
9 Honor the Lord with your possessions,
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;
10 So your barns will be filled with plenty,
And your vats will overflow with new wine.

1 Chronicles 29:11-14 (GNT)
11 You are great and powerful, glorious, splendid, and majestic. Everything in heaven and earth is yours, and you are king, supreme ruler over all.
12 All riches and wealth come from you; you rule everything by your strength and power; and you are able to make anyone great and strong.
13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and we praise your glorious name.
14 "Yet my people and I cannot really give you anything, because everything is a gift from you, and we have only given back what is yours already.

One important scriptural principle is to live with the understanding that God ultimately owns everything. The wealth

we have and the possessions we own are all His. Hence, while we use some of this for ourselves, we need to give back to Him. This is our way to honor Him and recognize His ownership of all things. Giving back to Him is expressed as we give our tithe (one-tenth of our personal income) for the work of His Kingdom and the Church and as we give to others—the poor, those in a time of need or to bless and empower people.

Always tithe from your individual income

Malachi 3:10-12 (GNT)
[10] Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple, so that there will be plenty of food there. Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things.
[11] I will not let insects destroy your crops, and your grapevines will be loaded with grapes.
[12] Then the people of all nations will call you happy, because your land will be a good place to live.

What we are instructed to do as people of God in both Testaments (also see Matthew 23:23; Hebrews 7:8) is to give 10% of our income to the House of God, in this case, our local church that we are a part of. If you receive a salary monthly, then each month, give 10% of your gross earnings (salary before any deductions) to your local church for the work of the Kingdom of God. This is our way of expressing dependence on the Lord, acknowledging that what we have has come from Him, and investing into the work of His Kingdom on earth. Apart from the tithe, we are also encouraged to give offerings whether to specific needs in the church, or as gifts to help other people, and alms to help the poor and needy.

Be generous—give to help others in need

Proverbs 11:24,25 (The Message)
[24] The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller.
[25] The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped.

1 Timothy 6:7-10,17-19 (GNT)
[7] What did we bring into the world? Nothing! What can we take out of the world? Nothing!
[8] So then, if we have food and clothes, that should be enough for us.
[9] But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and are caught in the trap of many foolish and harmful desires, which pull them down to ruin and destruction.
[10] For the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil. Some have been so eager to have it that they have wandered away from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows.
[17] Command those who are rich in the things of this life not to be proud, but to place their hope, not in such an uncertain thing as riches, but in God, who generously gives us everything for our enjoyment.
[18] Command them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share with others.
[19] In this way they will store up for themselves a treasure which will be a solid foundation for the future. And then they will be able to win the life which is true life.

We work and we earn money, but money is not everything. Money does not control us, we control it and put it to use. We do not put our trust in money, but in the God who empowers us to make it. God has taught us to be generous, to share with others, and to help those who are in need.

Galatians 6:10 (GNT)
So then, as often as we have the chance, we should do good to everyone, and especially to those who belong to our family in the faith.

Give to the poor, widows, and orphans

James 1:27 (GNT)
What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world.

Proverbs 22:9
He who has a generous eye will be blessed,
For he gives of his bread to the poor.

Proverbs 28:27
He who gives to the poor will not lack,
But he who hides his eyes will have many curses.

Matthew 6:2-4 (GNT)
2 "So when you give something to a needy person, do not make a big show of it, as the hypocrites do in the houses of worship and on the streets. They do it so that people will praise them. I assure you, they have already been paid in full.
3 But when you help a needy person, do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it.
4 Then it will be a private matter. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you.

God has instructed us to use our money to help those who are poor and needy. To whatever extent you can, give to help the poor, orphaned, and widowed. Remember, money alone is not enough. They also need love, care, spiritual, and emotional support. Give toward this as well. And when you give, do it quietly. Do it with a sincere heart.

Corporate tithing and giving

Owners of organizations and businesses can agree to set aside 10% or more of their net profit (net earnings or net income) to tithe into the Church to help those in need, to support the poor, orphaned, widowed, and other causes that the owners or organization may be passionate about.

Addressing poverty, standing up against injustice, and other causes

Proverbs 19:17
He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord,
And He will pay back what he has given.

Proverbs 13:23
Much food *is in* the fallow *ground* of the poor,
And for lack of justice there is waste.

Proverbs 31:8,9
[8] Open your mouth for the speechless,
In the cause of all *who are* appointed to die.
[9] Open your mouth, judge righteously,
And plead the cause of the poor and needy.

In addition to helping the poor and needy, we need to actively engage in helping lift people out of poverty and other social evils that hold them down. In some cases, people are oppressed by the injustice done to them and are unable to raise a voice against their oppressors. Social evils such as child labor, bonded (slave) labor, child trafficking, prostitution, and other illegal ways for oppressors to make money by using helpless people need to be fought and stopped. In some parts of the world, people need help from epidemics and other natural disasters. Some communities need help to address basic health and hygiene, infrastructure, education, and microenterprise development. There are several other areas of need in our world. As individuals and organizations, we can be involved and engage meaningfully by giving of our finances, volunteering our time, expertise, skills, and influence to make a difference in the lives of people needing help.

We are all responsible for creation care

Psalm 115:16
The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the Lord's;
But the earth He has given to the children of men.

The Scripture teaches us that the earth has been entrusted to us to use as well as to manage it well. Adam's responsibility was to both cultivate the garden and to guard the garden. Without losing our primary focus of loving God and loving people, preaching the Gospel, and building His Kingdom, we should engage meaningfully in protecting, conserving, preserving, and multiplying the earth's resources.

Key Principles

1) Honor God with your personal finances.
2) Always tithe from your individual income.
3) Be generous—give to help others in need.
4) Give to the poor, widows, and orphans.
5) Corporate tithing and giving.
6) Addressing poverty, standing up against injustice, and other causes.
7) We are all responsible for creation care.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- As an individual, review your current level of tithing, generosity, and social responsibility. Are there areas you can improve and do a little more?
- What are some ways organizations can create a culture of generosity and social responsibility amongst its employees? Can you initiate this in your organization?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.



SECTION THREE
THE WORKPLACE AND YOU

18
Career Growth

As a professional, you would (and should) be looking to grow professionally. In today's world, professional growth takes place not only vertically up the corporate ladder but also laterally as you move into new roles, jobs, and functions. Career growth is of course dependent on your career development—you growing continuously in your grace, gifts, and skills, increasing your knowledge, experience, and expertise. Moving through the "career lattice" is important as it helps with your career development. Knowing how to move through the various stages and transitions at the right time and in the right manner is key.

In this chapter, we cover scriptural insights relating to career growth and movement through the career lattice as you progress to become the PERSON, reach the PLACE, and fulfill the PURPOSE that God has for your life.

You can enjoy the rewards of your work

Psalm 128:1-4 (GNT)
[1] Happy are those who obey the Lord,
who live by his commands.
[2] Your work will provide for your needs;
you will be happy and prosperous.
[3] Your wife will be like a fruitful vine in your home,
and your children will be like young olive trees around your table.
[4] A man who obeys the Lord
will surely be blessed like this.

One of the promises in the Scripture is that you can enjoy the rewards of your work. God will bless you so that your work

will provide for your needs and you can be happy and prosperous. Believe God's Word and look to Him to bring this about in your life. For this to take place, as a professional, it means that you need to develop your skills, knowledge, and expertise (career development) so that you can progress professionally (career growth). Career growth is an exciting journey you are making with God professionally.

Promotion comes from the Lord

Psalm 75:6,7
6 For exaltation *comes* neither from the east
Nor from the west nor from the south.
7 But God *is* the Judge:
He puts down one,
And exalts another.

1 Peter 5:6 (GNT)
Humble yourselves, then, under God's mighty hand, so that he will lift you up in his own good time.

It is God who makes way for promotion and growth so look to Him. Continue to walk humbly before God, yielded to His purposes for your life. Continue to do your part in growing professionally by learning and developing your skills. He will make sure that promotion happens.

Excellence will be rewarded

Proverbs 22:29
Do you see a man *who* excels in his work?
He will stand before kings;
He will not stand before unknown *men.*

Excellence—doing an exceptional job will cause you to be promoted and bring you before leaders. So be excellent in what you do. Strive for excellence in your work. Don't settle for average. Remember excellence is not a "one-off" thing. Excellence in your work must be seen consistently.

Wisdom opens doors

Proverbs 12:8
A man will be commended according to his wisdom,
But he who is of a perverse heart will be despised.

While knowledge and skill are important, the ability to use your competencies to solve problems, determine solutions, envision the future, and determine a course of action requires wisdom. This kind of intelligence will bring honor and open doors for you. So, ask God for this ability. Work on it as well. Develop this ability of not only gaining knowledge, understanding, and skill, but being able to bring it all together to solve, create, envision, and innovate.

Proverbs 4:8 (GNT)
Love wisdom, and she will make you great. Embrace her, and she will bring you honor.

A sincere heart and gracious lips will get you noticed

Proverbs 22:11
He who loves purity of heart
***And has* grace on his lips,**
The king *will be* his friend.

In addition to developing yourself professionally, understand that essential qualities like sincerity, gentleness, and the right attitude in your approach will get you noticed and give you access to people and places in authority. Don't neglect walking in the fruit of the Spirit.

The more you are given, the more you have to deliver

Luke 12:48 (GNT)
But the servant who does not know what his master wants, and yet does something for which he deserves a whipping, will be punished with a light whipping. Much is required from the person to whom much is given; much more is required from the person to whom much more is given.

If you want to be entrusted with a greater role, position, and responsibility in an organization, understand that much will be expected back from you. So, the real question is whether you are ready to handle such responsibility. Do you have what it takes to fulfill the responsibility of a higher role and position? Do you have the required skills and competencies? Are you working on developing these skills and competencies? If not, then any desire for career growth is just wishful thinking. If you are not willing to do what it takes to build capacity and personal competencies for the next level you want to get to, then you really are not going to get there, or if you do, you may not be able to deliver on what is expected. So do your part to get to the next level. Prepare. Learn. Grow. Get ready.

The stakes get higher the higher up you go

Growing professionally into higher roles and positions also means that the stakes are higher. There is greater risk, greater challenges, and your decisions will have greater impact. The responsibilities are greater. The price you pay is higher. The pressure you will face is more intense. So, you will also need to check if you are ready for this mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. So, in addition to developing your professional competencies, also prepare yourself mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Be patient as you transition through unemployment

Psalm 37:23-25
23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the Lord,
And He delights in his way.
24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down;
For the Lord upholds *him with* His hand.
25 I have been young, and *now* am old;
Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his descendants begging bread.

Going through a season of unemployment for most people is a really difficult time unless they were voluntarily taking a break from work. If the season of unemployment gets extended, this can lead to a lot of negative emotions, depression, withdrawal, and despair. Whatever the reason that caused you to become unemployed, keep your trust in the Lord. Continue to do the things you know you should be doing involving your job search, enhancing your skills, etc. "Wait" on the Lord but remember, "to wait on the Lord" does not mean you sit idly doing nothing. Waiting does not mean inactivity. Waiting means you are patient and expectantly looking forward to God's timing while doing what you know He wants you to do in this current period. "Waiting time" is a great time to prepare yourself for the next stage of life you are about to enter.

Isaiah 64:4
For since the beginning of the world
***Men* have not heard nor perceived by the ear,**
Nor has the eye seen any God besides You,
Who acts for the one who waits for Him.

God will come through and open doors to lead you into the right opportunities. This could mean a job opportunity from an unexpected source, a job in a new area of work, or even moving into self-employment where you start a new business. However God leads you through this time of unemployment, follow Him.

God is a God of restoration. He is able and willing to restore what has been lost during the season of unemployment. Believe Him to do so. Expect Him to do this for you.

Job 42:10
And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Look ahead as you step into your new job

Philippians 3:13,14
13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do,* forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,
14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6
being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;

While neither of these two verses mentioned above directly refer to the workplace, they reveal to us an important part of our spiritual understanding as we journey with God through all of life's experiences. We must learn to put the past behind as we reach forward for the things that lie ahead. This means that while we are grateful for all the wonderful things of the past, we cannot live in the past. Neither can we permit the past to hold us captive and rob us of the future awaiting us. We need to make every effort to strain forward and push forcefully into what lies ahead. There must be an intentional intensity to get into what lies ahead. And we do all this with the confidence that God who started the good work in us will continue to perfect the work He has begun.

Applying this understanding to our professional lives means that we carry with us the knowledge, experience, learning, skills, and other good things that we have developed over the years. We also determine not to permit the bad experiences or failures of the past to hold us captive. We also make every effort to do our best with intentional intensity in the new job we transition into. And we do all this knowing that God is with us in our new undertaking.

Be courageous as you move from employment to entrepreneurship

Joshua 1:9
Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God *is* with you wherever you go."

Entrepreneurship is exciting! The process of starting an organization, a business, or other kinds of entity, envisioning the future, determining the best way to get there, bringing together people and other resources, and making the journey is exciting. It is stimulating but there are lots of risks along the way. There is no one pathway to making this transition. Some spend a good amount of time to prepare themselves and then take the step. Others see an opportunity before them and make the move almost overnight. Of course, should situations permit, it would be best to do a thorough preparation before transitioning from being an employee to being an entrepreneur. Ultimately, it is a step of faith and courage. As you take this step, do it with wisdom. Do it depending on the Lord knowing that He is with you wherever you go. Be strong. Be courageous. Step out in faith.

(More on "Kingdom Entrepreneurship" in a later chapter.)

Key Principles

1) You can enjoy the rewards of your work.
2) Promotion comes from the Lord.
3) Excellence will be rewarded.
4) Wisdom opens doors.
5) A sincere heart and gracious lips will get you noticed.
6) The more you are given, the more you have to deliver.
7) The stakes get higher the higher up you go.
8) Be patient as you transition through unemployment.
9) Look ahead as you step into your new job.

10) Be courageous as you move from employment to entrepreneurship.

Reflection

1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- What are some areas in which you can demonstrate excellence in your current role? How can you ensure you do this consistently?
- What would be some of the possible options for the next stage in your professional career path? How would you prepare to step into these should any of them open up?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

19
Work-Life Balance

Balancing personal and professional life is a serious challenge confronting almost all working professionals. In most of our lives, improper work-life balance becomes one of the primary reasons for many problems and conflicts that arise. But with proper wisdom and skill, we will be able to navigate successfully through this sometimes tempestuous journey called "work-life".

Managing work-life has become increasingly difficult in the digital world. The fact that we are so well connected globally has its many advantages as well as disadvantages. One area of impact is what is commonly referred to as "work-life balance". We are expected to work longer hours and on more days per week. Excessive overtime hours coupled with the unsaid expectation that you are still expected to be connected to work even after you leave the office on weekends and on vacations continues to take its toll.

Organizations try to compensate for this with good salaries, promotions, amazing work environments, work flexibility, and other benefits but all this at what cost to the individual's personal life and family is the question!

What are some of the consequences of an imbalanced work-life?

Which of these do you think you are encountering currently?

☐ Always under stress (Stressed out, irritable)	☐ No time with family	☐ Escape for quick highs (alcohol, drugs, etc.,)
☐ Emotional disorders	☐ Marital / family conflict	.....
☐ Health problems	☐ Sense of dissatisfaction	.....

To better manage work-life, people may consider several options. Some of these include changing jobs or careers, giving up opportunities for growth and promotions, reducing work hours and taking a pay cut or in the case of married couples, one spouse chooses to stop work to take care of the family.

Quick Check 1 Work-life balance percentage indicator

On an average, in the last six months, using a scale of 1 to 5, indicate the time you have had for each of these activities.

1 = No time, 2 = Barely any time, 3 = Just enough time, 4 = Sufficient time, 5 = Plenty of time

1) Time to rest	
2) Time to spend with my family	
3) Time for recreational activities / leisure	
4) Time to pursue other interests / hobbies	
5) Time to think and plan	
6) Time to exercise regularly	
7) Time to develop new skills	
8) Time to socialize with friends / with community	
9) Time to ponder and engage in spiritual matters	

10) Time for vacation (get away from work)	
Total	
x 2 =	%

A higher percentage can be perceived as an indicator that you are nearing a better work-life balance.

Work-life balance is ultimately arriving at a place where you (and your family) are happy with the way you are living your life (or your lives together).

Quick Check 2 Potential contributing factors to work-life imbalance

Why do we find it so difficult to balance our family, work, personal and spiritual life?

Let us do a quick check to identify possible contributing factors.

0 = Not applicable, 1 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 5 = Always

A	1) Unable to manage my time on tasks assigned to me	
	2) Not very efficient in how I do my work	
	3) Distracted with social media, other activities	
	4) Not excited about what I am doing; lack motivation	
	5) Not sure how my time goes by each day	
	Total score (Section A)	
B	1) Too much work with tight deadlines, compelled to work long hours	
	2) Need to make up for poor performance by others on my team	
	3) Too much work-related travel	
	4) Decreased personal productivity due to conflicts / politics at the workplace	
	5) Insufficient tools to get work done efficiently	
	Total score (Section B)	

C	1) I'm a workaholic; I feel incomplete if I am not working all the time	
	2) I'm ambitious and overworking to earn quick promotions	
	3) I'm overworking to make more money	
	4) Voluntarily take on more work than is really needed	
	5) Don't see value in family time, rest, recreation, relaxation	
	Total score (section C)	
D	1) Too much time spent in daily commute	
	2) Spouse works on different schedule / work timings	
	3) Over involvement in other extra activities takes time away	
	4) Carrying workload at home without much assistance from family	
	5) Special needs of family or extended family members	
	Total score (section D)	

From Quick Check 2, enter your score for A, B, C, and D sections (the maximum possible score is 25) in the blank row.

A	B	C	D
PERSONAL SKILLS	**WORKPLACE RELATED**	**PERSONAL LIFESTYLE**	**OTHER FACTORS**
Section A identifies areas that you have control over and that you can work on personally. These are personal skills and disciplines you can develop to help improve personal productivity and efficiency.	**Section B** identifies areas that are workplace related. You may need to speak to your manager or HR to address some of these areas. Also, differentiate between something that is for a short season versus things that are perennial.	**Section C** identifies areas that you have control over and which you may need to make adjustments in lifestyle, choices, and pursuits to bring about proper work-life balance. Some of these may have to be done together with spouse / family members.	**Section D** identifies areas that you need to address together with your spouse and / or family members.

Who should be held responsible for an employee's work-life balance struggles? Is it the organization that makes unlimited demands from the employee? Is it the employee who accepts the demands while sacrificing family, personal time, health, and much more?

Perhaps the answer is somewhere in between, but more so on the employee's part. Organizations can only do so much to help their employees. The rest of the responsibility remains with you—the employee—to determine what works best for you.

While organizations, leaders, and managers understand the importance of work-life balance, the company's goals take priority. So essentially, as an individual, you need to understand that while the organization can be accommodating and supportive to an extent, you will have to earn your right to have the flexibility and arrangements you want so that your personal life is maximized as well. You will personally have to develop strategies and skills to be effective at the workplace and balance personal life without compromising your performance. You will then have to negotiate work-life arrangements with your boss, manager, or organization.

Practical recommendations

Here are some practical recommendations based on the Scripture to help guide our response to the pressures and demands of the workplace. Individually, you will have to arrive at a work-life balance that best suits you and your family.

Maintain the rhythm of worship, work, rest

Exodus 20:8-10 (The Message)
8 Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
9 Work six days and do everything you need to do.
10 But the seventh day is a Sabbath to God, your God. Don't do any work - not you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your servant, nor your maid, nor your animals, not even the foreign guest visiting in your town.

God commanded worship, work, and rest. We need to maintain a daily and weekly rhythm of worship, work, and rest. Every day we allocate sufficient time for worship, work, and rest. We must also maintain the "worship, work, and rest" weekly rhythm, one day in seven days for rest and worship. This ensures we avoid the extremes of laziness or overworking.

There will be days, and sometimes certain weeks, when this rhythm is disturbed due to various situations. Perhaps due

to travel, tight project deadlines, other events, or activities that demand our time. However, once this passes, we get back to our daily and weekly rhythm of worship, work, and rest.

Be committed to what is important

Mark 12:29-31 (The Message)
[29] Jesus said, "The first in importance is, 'Listen, Israel: The Lord your God is one;
[30] so love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy.'
[31] And here is the second: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' There is no other commandment that ranks with these."

For us to maintain work-life balance, we must be committed to what is important.

Know what is important to you

This is something you must determine. Intangibles such as your personal walk with God, your family, and meaningful relationships may be more important to you than money, professional success, and other accolades. You may choose to embrace the challenge the Lord Jesus placed before us, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you"* (Matthew 6:33).

Understand true value and have a value scale

We must understand the true value of things. There are some things that are priceless that money cannot buy. Money is important and a good resource but money cannot buy a happy home. Money cannot buy meaningful relationships. Money cannot earn a deep and intimate relationship with God. Money cannot produce peace and rest.

Luke 12:15 (GNT)
And he went on to say to them all, "Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed; because your true life is not made up of the things you own, no matter how rich you may be."

There is the story of two sisters Mary and Martha who Jesus visited one day. Here is what happened…

Luke 10:38-42 (The Message)
[38] As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home.
[39] She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said.
[40] But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand."
[41] The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing.
[42] One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it - it's the main course, and won't be taken from her."

While cooking a sumptuous meal is good, Mary placed greater value on this precious moment of being with Jesus and listening to what He spoke.

What value would you place on your personal relationship with God, your family, your health, your children, your work, you serving God, and so on? Have a value scale so that internally, you are clear on things that are of true value or greater value to you. For instance, in the Scripture, we see three main institutions ordained by God—family, the Church, and government. The institution of family is foundational. Focus on the family. Place family on higher value than work.

Once you have a value scale, you will be able to differentiate, time things, adjust, and align. Differentiate between what is important (of higher value) and what is secondary (needs to be done at some point). Timing is about first doing the important, then the secondary. Adjust your schedule when required to accommodate the valuable over the less valuable. Align your professional practices and daily life to what you value.

Keep important things important

Honoring God and prioritizing family above money, success, and profession is important. There will always be the tension, the pull and pressures of work drawing us away from our focus on what is of higher value. This is where we need to make tough choices and keep important things important.

Refuse to compromise. Those who disagree with you will eventually respect you for your godly convictions.

Don't be afraid to say, "No".

Set boundaries on being "always connected". Have those times when you switch off your smartphone, stop checking emails, disengage from social media, and other digital distractions.

Family time

Set time aside regularly for your spouse and children. Enjoy these moments. Take time for the simple yet powerful things that leave a lasting impact on the lives of your children. What really matters are those moments with the family—not just reaching the next rung on the corporate ladder.

Some simple things that you can do…

- Express love and affection toward your spouse and children.
- Have time not only for discipline but also plenty of time for fun.
- Be there when you are needed by your spouse and children.
- Have meals together with meaningful mealtime conversations.
- Be involved in your children's studies and activities.
- Take time for regular family vacations.
- Pray together regularly as a family.
- Attend and serve at church together as a family.

Keep short accounts—checks and balances

Mark 6:30-32 (GNT)
30 The apostles returned and met with Jesus, and told him all they had done and taught.
31 There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples didn't even have time to eat. So he said to them, "Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest a while."
32 So they started out in a boat by themselves to a lonely place.

Those long days and weeks always come. There will be those times when you are away from home for extended periods because of business travel. Such things that take time away from important things will happen, but you must keep a check (account) and balance it out with sufficient breaks from continuous running. If you have had a particularly busy two weeks, you must try to balance things out the next week by taking things slower than usual, spending that additional time with family, and on other things that you value.

Guard your resources—time, energy, and money

Ephesians 5:15-17(GNT)
15 So be careful how you live. Don't live like ignorant people, but like wise people.
16 Make good use of every opportunity you have, because these are evil days.
17 Don't be fools, then, but try to find out what the Lord wants you to do.

Guard your resources and avoid wastage. Guard against things that drain your time, energy, and money. Conserve and direct your energy into what matters.

Think about the Lord Jesus. He was a great Teacher and yet, He avoided getting into meaningless debates with those who did not really want to learn but simply argue. He did not perform miracles for those who came challenging Him to prove Himself, but rather for those who came for help believing in Him. At His

trial, He let things happen and did not waste His time in what He knew would be a meaningless defense.

Things that can be "energy leaks" are as follows:

- Not minding your own business—getting involved in things that other people should be doing.
- Overreacting to situations—expending emotional energy unnecessarily. Stay calm.
- Distractions—social media updates, just browsing, chatting, or texting.
- Investing resources into the unprofitable—things that don't really bring value.

  Example: Spending time gossiping or listening to a colleague gossip at the workplace, doing tasks that you could pay a small amount to someone else to do for you while you use that same time on something more important.
- Overcrowding your life with unnecessary activities or with activities that can be easily delegated.

1 Thessalonians 4:11 (The Message)
Stay calm; mind your own business; do your own job. You've heard all this from us before, but a reminder never hurts.

Proverbs 26:17 (The Message)
You grab a mad dog by the ears when you butt into a quarrel that's none of your business.

Stay focused. Stay in the center of God's plan for your life. Do not take on things that God does not want you to be doing. This crowds your day and expends your resources.

Develop personal efficiency, productivity and time-saving skills

Ecclesiastes 9:16a,18
16 Then I said:
Wisdom *is* better than strength ...
18 Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war ...

Look for ways by which you can become more productive in your work. Look for ways to save time, increase efficiency and maximize your output.

- Increase personal efficiency to accomplish the same task with equal level of quality in less time. This may involve developing productivity skills, managing your workflow, or streamlining your work processes, improving your time management, or developing better work habits.
- Use technology and tools that can help you improve your productivity and efficiency. Use collaboration software, organize your email, to-do lists, etc.
- Organize for improved efficiency. You need a systematic way to organize your digital content for quick retrieval. Simple things like naming your files with a year-month-date-prefix and a meaningful name, organizing files into year-wise folders or folders having related content, etc. can help you organize for improved efficiency. Declutter for improved efficiency. Storing all important files on your computer's desktop can only go on for so long before your desktop gets cluttered. Have a place (folder) for everything and put things in their place.
- Learn to delegate even when you feel like doing it yourself. Let go and let someone else do it. See it as providing them an opportunity to develop. Do what you do best.
- Set short deadlines for your tasks. Parkinson's Law is the understanding that "work expands to fill the time available for its completion" (Cyril Northcote Parkinson in The Economist, 1955). So, allocate only what you know is really needed or less time than what is really needed.
- Reuse content that you have developed earlier. Update it and modify it as needed rather than starting from scratch.
- Save travel time. Work remotely or travel to / from work during non-peak hours.
- Remember, little changes can bring big results.

Rejuvenate yourself

Isaiah 40:28-31 (The Message)
[28] Don't you know anything? Haven't you been listening? God doesn't come and go. God lasts. He's Creator of all you can see or imagine. He doesn't get tired out, doesn't pause to catch his breath. And he knows everything, inside and out.
[29] He energizes those who get tired, gives fresh strength to dropouts.
[30] For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall.
[31] But those who wait upon God get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles, They run and don't get tired, they walk and don't lag behind.

Our physical, emotional, and spiritual energy must be kept renewed. Find out what helps you renew yourself. Exercise, rest, worship, music, and other things that are easily done on a regular basis help keep you refreshed.

"Time out" with God is so important for keeping the rest of your world in balance. This is the center—the core—the thing that holds everything together. Take time to pray, listen to God, read His Word, examine, reflect, and evaluate to see if your world is in balance and in order.

Isaiah 30:15 (The Message)
Your strength will come from settling down in complete dependence on me.

Stop demonic disruptions and delays

John 10:10 (The Message)
A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.

It is not our intent to become spooky-spiritual and see the devil behind every traffic jam, power failure, copying machine problem, computer crash, etc. However, we do know that one of his tactics is to "steal"—take away our resources, i.e., time, money and energy. He can introduce confusion that disrupts and delays things. A small task that would normally take 10

minutes suddenly consumes 60 minutes! The enemy can also cause distractions and hindrances through circumstances and people. Stay alert! If you sense a demonic hand, pray, rebuke, take authority and stop that work, and then proceed. There are times when you will need to stand bold and tell the storms that arise to cease because you intend to reach your destination.

Plan ahead

Ecclesiastes 3:1
To everything *there is* a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven:

When you plan, you are deciding ahead of time when / where / how you will invest your resources. This helps you to ensure that there are no unnecessary leaks. Mark out time slots in your calendar or scheduler. Block out time for things that you need to do. Work on other things that come up around what you have scheduled.

- Develop a DAILY PLAN—set time aside for important things that you need to do regularly / daily.
- Develop a WEEKLY PLAN—appointments / tasks for that week.
- Develop a MONTHLY PLAN—important recurring things that need to be done that month.
- Develop an ANNUAL PLAN—things that you would do over the course of the year.

Example: Family vacations, birthdays, anniversaries, important conferences, travel, and so on.

While it is important to plan and keep it tight, we also remain open to "divine interruptions" when God steps in and alters what we have planned. As long as a change in your schedule is legitimate and for something that is important, go with the flow. Accommodate that change and adapt to what needs to be done.

Take a family-friendly approach to business

Job 31:13-15 (The Message)
13 "Have I ever been unfair to my employees when they brought a complaint to me?
14 What, then, will I do when God confronts me? When God examines my books, what can I say?
15 Didn't the same God who made me, make them? Aren't we all made of the same stuff, equals before God?

This short note is for business owners and managers. While there are limitations on what business owners and managers can do to help their employees and staff have more meaningful work-life balance, it is beneficial both for the organization and definitely for the people we engage to have a family-friendly approach.

Business owners and managers can intentionally look for opportunities to help their employees nurture their personal and family lives. Often these are simple adjustments we can make to workplace policies to bring about desired outcomes.

- "Work from home" options where appropriate. This helps people save travel time. Makes them more relaxed and productive.
- Flexible timings when needed.
- Travel policies that ensure people are not away from home too long and are back with families as much as possible, especially on weekends.
- Maternity leave providing sufficient time for mothers to be at home with their newborn.
- Open houses and company visits for spouse and children on special days. Even providing option for children to spend time in designated areas at the office.
- Company-sponsored family events, souvenirs and other family-friendly gifts that bridge between family and the workplace.

- Hiring family and relatives. While there are obvious risks having family members working together, if effectively managed, there can be benefits for the organization and families. Maintain proper safeguards such as not having family members reporting to each other. Set guidelines on vacation and leave if key positions are occupied by family members so that they are not all away when needed.

Key Principles

1) Maintain the rhythm of worship, work and rest.
2) Be committed to what is important.
3) Keep short accounts—checks and balances.
4) Guard your resources—time, energy, and money.
5) Develop personal efficiency, productivity and time-saving skills.
6) Rejuvenate yourself.
7) Stop demonic disruptions and delays.
8) Plan ahead.
9) Take a family-friendly approach to business.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- What are some of the main factors preventing you from having a healthy work-life balance?
- What practical steps can you take to help address those areas and move toward a healthier and happier work-life balance?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

20

Saving, Investing, Retiring, and Beyond

Life is lived in seasons. And as surely as the sun rises, the sun does set. We will someday enter into the sunset years of life. It is therefore, right to prepare for what we know will come upon us should we live long enough.

We realize that this chapter may stir up a bit of debate and discussion as there are two sides that need to be held in a healthy balance. On the one hand, we are taught to have faith, to trust in God for our future and to not lean on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). On the other hand, we are called to live responsibly, be good stewards and take responsibility for the things entrusted to us, all of which entail that we also plan. There is therefore, this constant tension of being spiritually minded and yet, earthly wise. We believe that the right balance is to always have our trust and dependence on God while we do our part in planning and preparing without worrying for our future. As we will see, the Scriptures, when seen in their entirety, bring this truth to us.

Save—to prepare for the future

Proverbs 6:6-8 (The Message)
6 You lazy fool, look at an ant. Watch it closely; let it teach you a thing or two.
7 Nobody has to tell it what to do.
8 All summer it stores up food; at harvest it stockpiles provisions.

Genesis 41:34-36 (GNT)
34 You must also appoint other officials and take a fifth of the crops during the seven years of plenty.

35 Order them to collect all the food during the good years that are coming, and give them authority to store up grain in the cities and guard it.
36 The food will be a reserve supply for the country during the seven years of famine which are going to come on Egypt. In this way the people will not starve."

Joseph was God's man in that place. He was operating under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The wisdom God gave Joseph not only revealed what was coming but also the plan to save 20% each year and store this up so that when the time of famine comes, there would be sufficient supply. Then in the book of Proverbs 6, God instructs us to learn from the ant, not only its industriousness but also its foresight. It anticipates a time when it will not be able to gather grain and hence, stores up when it can for the time ahead.

While staying aligned to all other instructions in the Scripture concerning money and wealth, we do understand that it is right and important to save financially now in preparation for the years when we would not be able to work and earn the way we do presently.

Invest—to multiply what you have

Luke 19:23 (GNT)
Well, then, why didn't you put my money in the bank? Then I would have received it back with interest when I returned.'

Not only do we save money but also invest the money we are able to set aside so that the money keeps growing. The Lord Jesus gave us a parable in Luke 19 to teach us something about the Kingdom of God. He used the story of a wealthy man who was going away to be made king and before he left, he handed some of his servants a gold coin each. He didn't want them to just hold on to the money, but His instruction to them was to "*do business till I come*" (Luke 19:13). They were to make this money grow. How they made it grow was up to them to decide.

It is not clear what the two of them did to make the money grow, but one of them was able to get 10 gold coins, and the other 5 gold coins with the one gold coin they started out with. The king commended them and made them in charge of some of his cities but there was one of his servants who just held on to the gold coin and brought that back. He faced the anger of the king who said that at the very least, the servant should have put it in the bank and earned some interest. The point here is that in God's Kingdom, God wants us to use what He has given us and multiply the resources entrusted to us—whether this is finances or any other resource.

So, since this would include money, it is right for us to consider multiplying the financial resources that we have. How each one does this can vary. What specific investments you make to grow these resources are your decisions but God does want you to multiply what has been entrusted to you.

Plan financially to live responsibly

Just as we have plans for other areas of life, we need to think ahead and plan financially. We need to plan financially for taking care of children, for family members if they are in need and for our own needs in old age. We find these responsibilities given to us in the Scripture, which we will consider later.

In the light of **Matthew 6:19-21**, we must ensure that our saving and investing are intended to be for the wise use of what God has entrusted to us. We must not make acquiring wealth our primary goal in life. Our hearts must always be set on the things of God.

In the light of **Matthew 6:24-34**, we must ensure that we do not worry or be anxious about our future. Our dependence is always on God for our today and our tomorrows. We make it a priority to seek first His Kingdom, and we know He is our faithful Father to take care of all of life's needs.

In the light of **Luke 12:15-21**, we understand that our true value is not in the riches we have but is found in who we are in God. We are to always be rich in our relationship with God. Any abundance we receive is not to be spent lavishly on ourselves but to be used for the purposes of God.

In the light of **1 Timothy 6:7-19**, we are to guard ourselves from the love of money and not to trust in riches, which can dissipate easily. Out of the abundance we have been given, we are to be generous and bless others.

Hence, our financial planning, which includes saving and investing, is for us to be good stewards of resources entrusted to us, to fulfill our God-given responsibilities, to bless other people and to serve the purposes of God's Kingdom.

Parents should provide for their children

2 Corinthians 12:14 (GNT)
This is now the third time that I am ready to come to visit you—and I will not make any demands on you. It is you I want, not your money. After all, children should not have to provide for their parents, but parents should provide for their children.

Part of our God-given responsibility for those of us who are parents is to take care of and provide for the needs of our children. This would include taking care of their daily needs and giving them a good education so that they can stand on their own.

Children should care for widows and elderly family members

1 Timothy 5:4,8 (GNT)
4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should learn first to carry out their religious duties toward their own family and in this way repay their parents and grandparents, because that is what pleases God.
8 But if any do not take care of their relatives, especially the members of their own family, they have denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever.

Another area of our God-given responsibility is to take care of widows as well as parents and grandparents when there is a need.

Plan for what you will leave behind

Proverbs 13:22
A good *man* leaves an inheritance to his children's children,
But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.

Part of the financial planning will also include how you will want your inheritance to be passed on to your children and grandchildren. This of course needs to be documented in a written will or placed in the hands of suitable family members or authorized people who will manage it correctly.

Retire and refire; add meaning to those golden years

Psalm 92:12-15 (GNT)
12 The righteous will flourish like palm trees;
they will grow like the cedars of Lebanon.
13 They are like trees planted in the house of the Lord,
that flourish in the Temple of our God,
14 that still bear fruit in old age
and are always green and strong.
15 This shows that the Lord is just,
that there is no wrong in my protector.

As people enter their retirement and old age, most tend to think that this would be an unproductive phase of life. Rather, the Scriptures indicate that you can still bear fruit in old age and be green and strong. Yes, in all practical terms you retire, but you can still be on fire. You can still do things that are useful and meaningful and still be productive and fruitful. Plan for this season of life. There are so many ways to use those sunset years—volunteer in organizations that are doing things you are passionate about, serve the community, teach younger people, and impart your learning to them, etc.

Psalm 71:5-7,17,18 (GNT)
[5] Sovereign Lord, I put my hope in you;
I have trusted in you since I was young.
[6] I have relied on you all my life;
you have protected me since the day I was born.
I will always praise you.
[7] My life has been an example to many,
because you have been my strong defender.
[17] You have taught me ever since I was young,
and I still tell of your wonderful acts.
[18] Now that I am old and my hair is gray,
do not abandon me, O God!
Be with me while I proclaim your power and might
to all generations to come.

God who was, who is, and always will be

Malachi 3:6
"For I *am* the Lord, I do not change; ...

It is always good to pause and reflect on the goodness of God. The God who has led us all these many years. He saw us through our professional journeys—the biggest part of our lives for many of us. He was with us through it all. And this same faithful, unchanging God is with us. He will see us through to the end.

Isaiah 46:4
Even to *your* old age, I *am* He,
And *even* to gray hairs I will carry *you!*
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you*.

Key Principles

1) Save—to prepare for the future.
2) Invest—to multiply what you have.
3) Plan financially to live responsibly.
4) Parents should provide for their children.
5) Children should care for widows and elderly family members.

6) Plan for what you will leave behind.
7) Retire and refire. Add meaning to those golden years.
8) God who was, who is and always will be.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- If you have not been saving financially each month, draw up a plan on how you can start doing this and work on it.
- Explore investments you can make with the money you lay aside with help from your bank / financial institution and advice from a reliable financial advisor.

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.



SECTION FOUR
THE KINGDOM AND YOU

21

Entrepreneurship

Deciding to be an entrepreneur is exciting and yet, has substantial risk. You are taking responsibility and initiative to pursue an idea that you think has value.
The idea could be a product, service or a cause that benefits a community or customers that could be local or global. You are so convinced by this that you are willing to plan, organize and employ resources to pursue the idea and make it a reality. And of course, in the process, you most likely hope to be able to generate profit or at least sustain yourself financially while you accomplish the goal and bring about the benefit to customers or the target community.

While entrepreneurship has typically been understood in terms of business and wealth creation, and while this may still be the primary sense in which it is used, entrepreneurship can be expanded to include any kind of entrepreneurial initiative—social, political, cultural, and transformational among others. These other entrepreneurial initiatives may not necessarily result in a product or service but could be the pursuit of a cause that has significant impact either on a local community or on a larger audience globally.

In this chapter, we present key scriptural insights in the context of business entrepreneurship.

Prepare well before the launch

Luke 14:28-30 (GNT)
[28] If one of you is planning to build a tower, you sit down first and figure out what it will cost, to see if you have enough money to finish the job.

[29] If you don't, you will not be able to finish the tower after laying the foundation; and all who see what happened will make fun of you.
[30] 'You began to build but can't finish the job!' they will say.

Entrepreneurs develop great ideas into great companies but it does require that the entrepreneur has the requisite skills to develop and act on innovative business opportunities, whether he is working alone or along with partners to pursue the idea.

Do a thorough preparation before the launch of your business. Broadly speaking, you need to be clear about your idea, the business model, and the business plan. All these three areas require a lot of work and preparation. Be diligent about these and work on them.

Determine to do business God's way; apply biblical principles to develop your business

As part of your preparation, there will be numerous strategic decisions that you would need to make prayerfully.

A few of these decisions include the following:

- Do you want to do this solo or do you want to do it with partners?
- Who would be your co-founders?
- Do you want the organization to stay small at a comfortable size for you to run or do you want it to grow to be big and large?
- Do you want to retain control or are you willing to give up ownership and control?
- Will you fund this yourself or would you seek venture capital or angel funding or other sources of capital?
- About the exit—do you want to sell and exit at some point or do you want to run the company and pass it on to someone you trust?

In all these decisions, determine to do business God's way. Practice the principles of His Word and you will get to where you wish to go.

A lot is written about entrepreneurial mindset, motivation, behavior, and the entrepreneurship process. While it is good to understand these, make a determined choice to apply biblical principles to developing your business. In this book, we have presented several of these principles addressing many of the areas you will need as you develop your business. Determine to abide by these "Timeless Principles" as you make your entrepreneurial journey. Establish Kingdom priorities and Kingdom focus. Stick with these.

Finally, depend on the Spirit of God and His empowering to help you make this journey. Do not be ashamed of small beginnings, the day of small things. The Lord who helps you lay the foundation will also empower you to place the capstone—the finishing touch to what you set out to do.

Zechariah 4:6-10a

6 So he answered and said to me:
"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel:
'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,'
Says the Lord of hosts.
7 'Who *are* you, O great mountain?
Before Zerubbabel *you shall become* a plain!
And he shall bring forth the capstone
With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" ' "
8 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying:
9 "The hands of Zerubbabel
Have laid the foundation of this temple;
His hands shall also finish *it.*
Then you will know
That the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.
10 For who has despised the day of small things?

Don't be distracted by quick success; you are in for the long haul

Proverbs 20:21 (GNT)
The more easily you get your wealth, the less good it will do you.

If you experience quick success, that is great, but don't let it distract you from what you set out to do. Stay focused on your vision and mission, and stick with your values.

Psalm 62:10 (The Message)
And a windfall, if it comes - don't make too much of it.

Don't be hasty for profit

Proverbs 28:22
A man with an evil eye hastens after riches,
And does not consider that poverty will come upon him.

Refuse to take shortcuts just to make a quick profit. Don't compromise on your values and principles in order to see success. Build strong even if it means it may take some time.

First plant your fields, then build your barn

Proverbs 24:27 (The Message)
First plant your fields; then build your barn.

If you build your barn without planting the fields, it is going to be empty for a long time till harvest comes along, and if you have built your barn but have nothing to plant into your fields, things are doomed! So, stay focused on what is important even if it is hard work. This needs to be done. The barn can be built once the fields have been planted.

Keep a close eye on what brings in the bread and butter

Proverbs 27:23-27 (GNT)
[23] Look after your sheep and cattle as carefully as you can,
[24] because wealth is not permanent. Not even nations last forever.
[25] You cut the hay and then cut the grass on the hillsides while the next crop of hay is growing.

[26] You can make clothes from the wool of your sheep and buy land with the money you get from selling some of your goats.
[27] The rest of the goats will provide milk for you and your family, and for your servant women as well.

As your business begins to take shape, don't get distracted with the numerous nonessentials or non-critical things that come your way. There are many things that come as distractions to entrepreneurs. Chasing after every new opportunity that seems to have some promise can be a big distraction. Engaging in socializing, events and conferences that sap your time and energy but don't really do much good for your business is another distraction. Stick to the core of what you are doing. Take care of what brings in the "bread and butter" first. Keep a close eye on your core business.

Stay clear of the pride that comes with success

Proverbs 16:18
Pride *goes* before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.

As your business grows and prospers, don't let pride creep in. Pride is dangerous and destructive. Continue to walk in humility and operate by the principles of God's Word. Always acknowledge the Lord who has blessed you.

Jeremiah 5:24
They do not say in their heart,
"Let us now fear the Lord our God,
Who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season.
He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest."

Your personal income and benefits—keep them right

Proverbs 30:7-9
[7] Two *things* I request of You
(Deprive me not before I die):
[8] Remove falsehood and lies far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches—

Feed me with the food allotted to me;
9 Lest I be full and deny *You,*
And say, "Who *is* the Lord?"
Or lest I be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.

As profits increase and there is plenty of money coming in, it is perfectly fine to enjoy the fruit of your hard work, but do not be excessive. Don't indulge yourself in your success. Guard against greed and lavish spending on yourself. Pay yourself well and give yourself sufficient benefits based on what is acceptable in your industry and proportionate to what you are doing for your organization. Avoid excesses. You don't have to "live it up" to prove something to other people. You have better use of money than to spend it all on yourself. God has made you a steward of His resources so that He can use you to carry out His purposes.

Proverbs 25:16
Have you found honey?
Eat only as much as you need,
Lest you be filled with it and vomit.

Multiply what you have by empowering others

Matthew 13:31,32 (GNT)
31 Jesus told them another parable: "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man takes a mustard seed and sows it in his field.
32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows up, it is the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that birds come and make their nests in its branches."

One of the aspects of God's Kingdom is that it begins small but always grows into something large that serves a much greater and grander purpose than what seemed possible in the beginning. When God prospers and increases your business, He does so for a purpose that is greater and grander than what you envisioned. One of the ways to live out this greater purpose is to take what you have and multiply it by empowering other people who are less fortunate.

You can empower other people in a variety of ways. Take for example, providing education. Help them get a good education by paying their way through school and college.

You can empower others by helping them become self-sufficient through funding microenterprise development and helping them start small businesses in their context that can provide them an ongoing means for livelihood. Imagine if you do this in the context of a local church community in a rural area. People in that community can take care of themselves as well as their local church and pastor, who in turn can serve them spiritually.

The woman entrepreneur, virtuous wife, mother, and homemaker

Proverbs 31:10-31
10 Who can find a virtuous wife?
For her worth *is* far above rubies.
11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her;
So he will have no lack of gain.
12 She does him good and not evil
All the days of her life.
13 She seeks wool and flax,
And willingly works with her hands.
14 She is like the merchant ships,
She brings her food from afar.
15 She also rises while it is yet night,
And provides food for her household,
And a portion for her maidservants.
16 She considers a field and buys it;
From her profits she plants a vineyard.
17 She girds herself with strength,
And strengthens her arms.
18 She perceives that her merchandise *is* good,
And her lamp does not go out by night.
19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff,
And her hand holds the spindle.
20 She extends her hand to the poor,
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.

[21] She is not afraid of snow for her household,
For all her household *is* clothed with scarlet.
[22] She makes tapestry for herself;
Her clothing *is* fine linen and purple.
[23] Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sits among the elders of the land.
[24] She makes linen garments and sells *them,*
And supplies sashes for the merchants.
[25] Strength and honor *are* her clothing;
She shall rejoice in time to come.
[26] She opens her mouth with wisdom,
And on her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
[27] She watches over the ways of her household,
And does not eat the bread of idleness.
[28] Her children rise up and call her blessed;
Her husband *also,* and he praises her:
[29] "Many daughters have done well,
But you excel them all."
[30] Charm *is* deceitful and beauty *is* passing,
But a woman *who* fears the Lord, she shall be praised.
[31] Give her of the fruit of her hands,
And let her own works praise her in the gates.

This Scripture passage describes a woman entrepreneur who is also a virtuous wife, mother, and homemaker. This is a powerful inspiration for women to engage the marketplace while also doing their part in their own home.

Key Principles

1) Prepare well before the launch.
2) Determine to do business God's way. Apply biblical principles to develop your business.
3) Don't be distracted by quick success. You are in for the long haul.
4) Don't be hasty for profit.
5) First plant your fields, then build your barn.
6) Keep a close eye on what brings in the bread and butter.

7) Stay clear of the pride that comes with success.
8) Your personal income and benefits—keep them right.
9) Multiply what you have by empowering others.
10) The woman entrepreneur, virtuous wife, mother and homemaker.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- What are some of the key principles you would use to define your personal entrepreneurial mindset, motivation, and behavior?
- In addition to what has been mentioned, what are some ways you can empower others to multiply the success you may experience as a business entrepreneur?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

22
Workplace Transformation

What if there was a transformation in the workplace? What if things were done right? What if businesses carried out their work with integrity? What if the workplace was a place where people enjoyed going to? What if change happened?

Each of us can bring about a change in our sphere of influence. While you may not be able to change the whole wide world, you can begin to affect change in your world, in your sphere of influence, in the lives of people you interact with.

In this concluding chapter, we present a simple challenge—for you to be an agent of transformation in your workplace.

Initiate a culture shift

Matthew 5:13-16
13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.
14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.
15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house.
16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

The Lord Jesus commissioned His followers to be salt and light. Salt permeates, light penetrates. Both impact and influence their environment. Salt brings flavor. Light dispels darkness. Both bring about a shift in their sphere of influence. However, salt is no good if left inside the container. Light is of no use if it is hidden and not made visible or available.

You are salt and light. You have been commissioned to have an impact and influence in your world. You cannot bring about change by readily aligning yourself to the ways and patterns of your world. You bring about change by challenging "what is" so that "what is not" can be brought in. You bring about change by initiating a culture shift—a change in the mindset that accepts things the way they are. You do this by walking in the "Timeless Principles" discussed in this book. You do this by walking in the character of Christ. Doing so may be counterintuitive to the way things operate in the workplace but that's what you are commissioned to do—**to be salt and light**. Initiate a culture shift in your workplace.

Create a constructive change

Matthew 13:33
Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

It only takes a small amount of yeast to affect the entire dough with which it is mixed. You are that little yeast. The Kingdom of God released through you is strong enough to affect the entire dough—your sphere of influence. So, let the power of the Kingdom be released through you.

Create a constructive change in your workplace by applying these "Timeless Principles".

In an environment where there is dishonesty and corruption, step in and demonstrate integrity, and challenge people to do the same.

In an environment of hostility and strife, step in and demonstrate love and kindness, and challenge people to do the same.

In an environment of injustice and abuse, step in and demonstrate justice and goodness, and challenge people to do the same.

In an environment of greed and selfish self-aggrandizement, step in and demonstrate sharing and generosity, and challenge people to do the same.

Dare to create a constructive change! Yes, you can!

Be a transformational leader

John 10:11-14 (The Message)
11 "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd puts the sheep before himself, sacrifices himself if necessary.
12 A hired man is not a real shepherd. The sheep mean nothing to him. He sees a wolf come and runs for it, leaving the sheep to be ravaged and scattered by the wolf.
13 He's only in it for the money. The sheep don't matter to him.
14 "I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own sheep and my own sheep know me.

There are two kinds of shepherds. One, the Good Shepherd, who put the sheep ahead of Himself. He even gave His life for the sheep. The hired shepherd looked out for himself. Instead of taking care of the sheep that depended on him, he abandoned them while he took care of himself.

There are two kinds of leaders today. Good leaders who care for and serve the people they lead. The other kind is leaders who are in it just for themselves.

The transformational leader sets out to transform. He seeks to bring into being what is not. He brings a positive change. He seeks to transform the lives of his employees so that their lives can be far better than what it is. He seeks to transform his organization so that the organization can be stronger and better than where it currently is. He seeks to transform the lives of customers or people served by the organization by providing

goods or services that add value to their lives. He seeks to transform communities by using the resources available in his organization to improve their lives, and he does this selflessly. There are not too many leaders like this today. Will you dare to be one?

Demonstrate the Kingdom in the workplace

Acts 17:16,17
16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.
17 Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.

Finally, workplace transformation can happen as we demonstrate the fact that God is interested and God is involved in the workplace today. Our knowledge, science, technology and all the intellectual prowess we have gained has divested the workplace from the presence and power of God who is the Source and Owner of all things. God is with us at the workplace, not just at the church service. We need to let people know and experience the love, goodness, and power of God right there at the workplace. We have referenced many supernatural things that God desires to do in the workplace. He has done these in the past and will do these again. He is looking for people He can work through in the marketplace. Will you be bold enough to demonstrate the Kingdom in the workplace? Yes, you can! Pray, use your spiritual authority, minister healing and deliverance, expect the release of the gifts of the Spirit and ask for prophetic insight, wisdom, and revelation. Do these in the workplace.

Key Principles

1) Initiate a culture shift.
2) Create a constructive change.
3) Be a transformational leader.
4) Demonstrate the Kingdom in the workplace.

Reflection



1) In the light of principles shared in this chapter, reflect on (discuss) the following:

- In what ways can you initiate a culture shift and create a constructive change in your current workplace?
- Have you had opportunities where you could have taken the step to demonstrate the Kingdom in the workplace? If you felt inhibited, what held you back? How can you overcome these inhibitions?

Action Steps / Personal Journal

1) Record action steps for personal application and your real-life experiences in relation to the content in this chapter.

Do You Know the GOD Who Loves You?

About 2000 years ago, God came into this world as a man. His name is Jesus. He lived a perfectly sinless life. Since Jesus was God in flesh, everything He said and did reveal God to us. The words He spoke were the very words of God. The things He did were the actions of God. Jesus did many miracles on the earth. He healed the sick and suffering. He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, made the lame to walk and healed every kind of sickness and disease. He fed the hungry by miraculously multiplying a few loaves of bread, calmed the storm and did many other wonderful things.

All these actions reveal to us that God is a good God who wants people to be well, whole, healthy and happy. God wants to meet the needs of people.

So why then would God decide to become a man and step into our world? Why did Jesus come?

All of us have sinned and done things that are unacceptable before the God who created us. Sin has its consequences. Sin is like a great unsurpassable wall between God and us. Sin separates us from God. It prevents us from knowing and having a meaningful relationship with the One who created us. Therefore, many of us try to fill this void with other things.

Another consequence of our sins is eternal separation from God. In God's court, the penalty for sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God in hell.

But the good news is that we can be free from sin and be restored to God. The Bible says, ***"For the wages [payment] of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"*** **(Romans 6:23).** Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world when He died on the cross. Then, three days later He rose again, showed Himself alive to many and then went back into heaven.

God is a God of love and mercy. He does not wish that any person be lost in hell. And so, He came to provide a way for the entire human

race to be free from sin and its lasting consequences. He came to save sinners—to rescue people like you and me from sin and eternal death.

To receive this free forgiveness of sins, the Bible tells us that we have to do just one thing—accept what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross and to believe in Him wholeheartedly.

***"… through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins"* (Acts 10:43).**

***"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved"* (Romans 10:9).**

You too can receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following is a simple prayer to help you decide to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. This prayer will help you express your acceptance of what Jesus has done for you and receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins. This prayer is only a guideline. You can also pray in your own words.

Dear Lord Jesus, today, I have understood what You did for me on the cross. You died for me, you shed Your precious blood and paid the penalty for my sins so that I could be forgiven. The Bible tells me that whoever believes in You will receive forgiveness for their sins.

Today, I decide to believe in You and to accept what You did for me by dying for me on the cross and rising again from the dead. I know I cannot save myself by my own good works, and neither can any other human save me. I cannot earn forgiveness for my sins.

Today, I believe in my heart and say with my mouth that You died for me, You paid the penalty for my sins, You rose again from the dead, and by faith in You, I receive forgiveness and cleansing for my sins.

Thank You, Jesus. Help me to love You, to know You more and to be faithful to You.

Amen.

About All Peoples Church

Our vision at All Peoples Church is to be salt and light in the city of Bangalore, a voice to the nation and to the nations.

All Peoples Church is a **Jesus loving**, **Word focused**, **Spirit filled**, family church, an equipping center, a missions base and a world outreach.

- As a **family church**, we grow together as a community in Christ-centered fellowship, caring and serving each other in love as the assembly of God.
- As an **equipping center**, we empower and equip every believer to live victoriously, mature into Christlikeness and fulfill God's purposes for their lives.
- As a **missions base**, we engage in meaningful ministry to bless our city, nation and the nations with the full Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Word of God and supernatural demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit.
- As a **world outreach**, we serve locally and globally by nurturing godly leaders and Spirit-filled churches who can impact their regions for the Kingdom of God.

At APC, we are committed to presenting the complete, uncompromised Word of God in the anointing and demonstration of His Holy Spirit. We believe that good music, creative presentations, brilliant apologetics, contemporary ministry techniques, the latest technology and so on, can never substitute the God-ordained approach of proclaiming the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4,5; Hebrews 2:3,4). Our theme is Jesus, our content is the Word, our method is the Holy Spirit's power, our passion is people and our goal is Christ-like maturity.

With our main base in Bangalore, All Peoples Church has several other church locations in India. To get a current listing and contact information of All Peoples Church locations, please visit our website at **apcwo.org/locations** or send an email to **contact@apcwo.org**.

Free Publications

A Church in Revival
A Real Place Called Heaven
A Time for Every Purpose
Ancient Landmarks
Baptism in the Holy Spirit
Being Spiritually Minded and Earthly Wise
Biblical Attitude Towards Work
Breaking Personal and Generational Bondages
Change
Code of Honor
Divine Favor
Divine Order in the Citywide Church
Don't Compromise Your Calling
Don't Lose Hope
Equipping the Saints
Foundations (Track 1)
Fulfilling God's Purpose for Your Life
Gifts of the Holy Spirit
Giving Birth to the Purposes of God
God Is a Good God
God's Word—The Miracle Seed
How to Help Your Pastor
Integrity
Kingdom Builders
Laying the Axe to the Root
Living Life Without Strife
Marriage and Family
Ministering Healing and Deliverance
Offenses-Don't Take Them
Open Heavens
Our Redemption
Receiving God's Guidance
Revivals, Visitations and Moves of God
Shhh! No Gossip!
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The Conquest of the Mind
The Father's Love
The House of God
The Kingdom of God
The Mighty Name of Jesus
The Night Seasons of Life
The Power of Commitment
The Presence of God
The Redemptive Heart of God
The Refiner's Fire
The Spirit of Wisdom, Revelation and Power
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Who We Are in Christ
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Chrysalis Counseling

Chrysalis Counseling offers personal counseling to help people face and overcome life's challenges. Chrysalis Counseling is a team of professionally trained and experienced Christian counselors.

Our Services are for all age groups and address a wide range of life's challenges.

- **Adolescents**
- **Personal Adjustments**
- **Relational Challenges**
- **Academic Underachievement**
- **Work-related Issues**
- **Family / Couples: Premarital, Marital**
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To schedule an appointment with one of our trained counselors:

Website: **chrysalislife.org**
Phone: +91-80-25452617 or toll-free (within India) 1-800-300-00998
Email: **counselor@chrysalislife.org**

Chrysalis Counseling is a ministry of All Peoples Church & World Outreach.

Partner with All Peoples Church

All Peoples Church ministers beyond its own borders as a local church by reaching out across India, especially North India, with a special focus on (A) Strengthening Leaders, (B) Equipping young people for ministry and (C) Building up the Body of Christ. Several training seminars for young people and 'Christian Leaders' Conference' are held throughout the year. In addition, several thousands of copies of publications are distributed free of cost in English and other Indian languages with the purpose of equipping believers in the Word and in the Spirit.

We invite you to partner with us financially by sending either a one-time gift or a monthly financial gift. Any amount that you can send to help us in this work across our nation will be greatly appreciated.

You can send your gift by cheque / bank draft payable to "All Peoples Church" to our office address. Else, you can remit your contribution directly by bank transfer using our bank account details.

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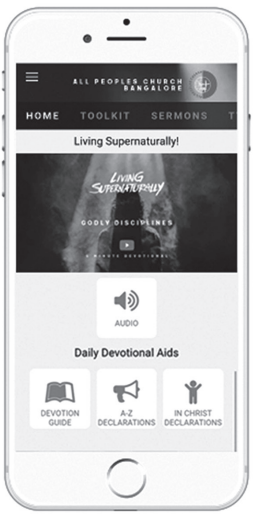
Also, please remember to pray for us and our ministry whenever you can.
Thank You and God Bless!

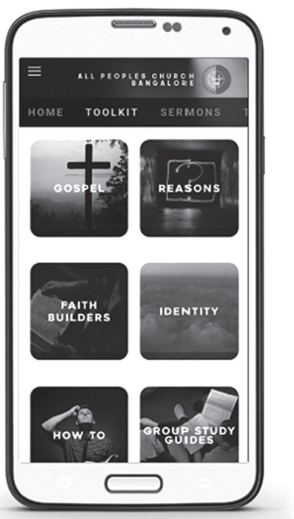
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ALL PEOPLES CHURCH BIBLE COLLEGE

apcbiblecollege.org

All Peoples Church Bible College and Ministry Training Center in Bangalore, India, provides Spirit-filled, anointed, hands-on training and equipping for ministering in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit along with a doctrinally sound and intellectually stimulating study of God's Word. We believe in developing the whole person for ministry emphasizing godly character, deep roots in the Word of God and powerful demonstrations of signs, wonders and miracles, all flowing out of an intimate relationship with the Lord.

At All Peoples Church Bible College (APC-BC), in addition to sound teaching, we emphasize the love of God in demonstration, the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural work of God. Several young men and women have been trained and sent out to fulfill God's call over their lives.

We offer three programs.

- One-year Certificate in Theology and Christian Ministry (C.Th.)
- Two-year Diploma in Theology and Christian Ministry (Dip.Th.)
- Three-year Bachelor's in Theology and Christian Ministry (B.Th.)

Classes are held each weekday, **Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m.-12 noon, Indian Time (UTC+5:30).** We offer three learning options.

- **On-Campus:** Attend in-person classes at the campus
- **Online:** Attend live lectures online
- **E-Learning:** Self-paced learning through the online portal **apcbiblecollege.org/elearn**

To **apply online,** and for more information about the college, curriculum, eligibility criteria, tuition costs and to download the application form, please visit **apcbiblecollege.org.**

The World around us is constantly changing. Global markets gain and tumble, economies rise and fall. Organizations need to constantly improvise and adapt to changing conditions. Concepts, theories, and ideas about management, organizational development, entrepreneurship, leadership, employee motivation, and numerous areas surrounding the workplace keep on evolving. This is indeed necessary as the marketplace keeps changing. Amidst this continuous change, there are things that are constant. There are principles that transcend time, place, people, and culture. We refer to these as "Timeless Principles." They hold true regardless of the variants of when, where, what, and why.

This is not a management book, but a book of "Timeless Principles."

At the workplace, we encounter numerous challenges—corrupt sales processes, accounting malpractices, unscrupulous bosses, questionable advertising methods, employment terminations, the challenge of time for family, struggles with work-life balance, and many other situations. This book provides "Timeless Principles" for these challenges.

Entire organizations and businesses can be transformed as their people assimilate and apply these "Timeless Principles."

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