

COMMON SENSE MANAGEMENT

A Biblical Perspective

BY

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Management, planning, and organization is not that complicated. It boils down to common sense. According to the Bible, we are to do our work heartily as unto the Lord. Unfortunately, we often neglect this command. The Bible never gives us suggestions. What we are instructed to do are, indeed, commands, and we are commanded to perform the duties of work in such a way that we see God as our boss rather than the person to whom we report. We are to be doers of the Word, and the Word clearly states how we are to conduct ourselves in our work lives. This is revolutionary, even for the twenty-first century. God knows what is best for His people, and His Word states that it is He who promotes. He will allow us to go through seasons during which we might be tested with a trying boss, but we must trust that God knows what is best for us. Perhaps we were to endure such a season to become more patient. Our sanctification process is a lifelong journey and is designed to shift us from relying on our own strength and wisdom to relying on the Holy Spirit. The end result is that we are to be more like Jesus.

Regardless of how one chooses to define “work,” we can be certain that schoolwork and volunteer work are included in God’s definition. To be sure, work, then, consists of everyday endeavors and may include several types of work for one person. For example, one who works and attends school is meant to perform both tasks with equal vigor and dedication as if purposing to glorify God.

Our efforts would be in vain if they excluded the Lord and His precepts. Work does not have to have a negative connotation. Seldom does a day go by when we don’t hear someone complain about having to go to work. God’s Word offers many common-sense principles that God Himself backs (He is always true to His Truth) and that we can use to our advantage in our work lives as well as in our personal lives. Covey reminds us that we are not human beings on a spiritual journey but rather spiritual beings on a human journey. Once we embrace that common-

sense revelation, we should conclude that everything begins and ends with God. One might argue that many atheists have had successful business careers. What is the definition of successful? Anything God permits us to achieve when we exclude Him is achieved only by and through His grace. But the achievement comes without contentment. A widow's mite given from a godly heart brings more contentment than all the riches hoarded. We must remember that God gives us the ability to make wealth. Everything we need to succeed can be found in His Word, through godly counsel and through prayer. If we utilize these, we will soon be astounded at how much common sense we can find in the profound. God may place people in authority over us, or God may give us authority. If we are faithful in the former situation, the latter is sure to come. The secret is to remember that God has authority over all, that His Word is His authority recorded, and that His children have been given authority. How we come to terms with these truths may very well determine how we succeed in this life. We can get caught up in the mysteries of God's Word or we can apply His common-sense principles to manage our lives, our homes, our time, and our work. When we ask Him to teach us to number our days, He will surely direct us to His Word, and because His Word is Truth, even a nonbeliever can benefit from the principles found there. "What a man sows, so shall he reap" is true to both believer and nonbeliever alike. One might ask how the nonbeliever knew to apply a principle he may have never heard of; one answer is common sense.

Here are some common sense principles for better management. Each has a unique title that illustrates the point. Each has a biblical basis.

CARE AND FEEDING OF THE BOSS: *Our attitude toward authority.*

. . . make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:2-4 NIV

How good and pleasant it is when brothers (coworkers) live (and work) together in unity!

Psalms 133:1 NIV

Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

James 4:17 NIV

CARE AND FEEDING OF THE EMPLOYEE: *How we treat those that report to us.*

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown.

2 Corinthians 9:6, 10

ICEBERG THEORY: *Stay on the lookout for danger.*

Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

Proverbs 13:10

Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established.

Proverbs 15:22

A wise man sees danger; the fool goes his merry way.

Proverbs 22:3

Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

Proverbs 19:20

Every purpose is established by counsel

Proverbs 20:18

For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counselors there is safety.

Proverbs 24:6

PROMOTION THEORY: *Train your replacement; help others develop.*

Think about:

Moses and Joshua

Elijah and Elisha

Paul and Timothy

Jesus and the 12 Disciples

MANAGING IS LIKE PARENTING: *Be a responsible manager.*

Train up a child in the way he should go (and in keeping with his individual gift or bent), and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

STINGER PRINCIPLE: *Sometimes Christians must tackle problems head on.*

Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you beat him with the rod, he will not die.

You shall beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from Sheol.

Proverbs 23:13, 14 NAS

Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul.

Proverbs 29:17 NAS

CYCLE THEORY: *What goes around comes around.*

Let your eyes look right on (with fixed purpose), and let your gaze be straight before you.

Consider well the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established and ordered aright.

Proverbs 4:25-26 AMP

Accordingly then, let us not sleep, as the rest do, but let us keep wide awake (alert, watchful, cautious, and on our guard) and let us be sober (calm, collected, and circumspect).

1 Thessalonians 5:6 AMP

But test and prove all things [until you can recognize] what is good; [to that] hold fast.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 AMP

Let me warn you therefore, beloved, that knowing these things beforehand, you should be on your guard lest you be carried away by the error of lawless and wicked (persons and) fall from your own (present) firm condition—your own steadfastness (of mind).

2 Peter 3:17 AMP

PAY ME NOW, OR PAY ME LATER: *Do it right the first time.*

By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established.

Proverbs 24:3 NIV

A tyrannical ruler lacks judgment.

Proverbs 28:16 NIV

A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.

Proverbs 22:3 NIV

AFRAID TO FAIL: *Like the Nike commercial says, “Go for it.”*

When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you

Deuteronomy 20:1 NIV

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

Psalm 37:23

DEFENSIVE END THEORY: *Get tough if you have to.*

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Ephesians 6:10

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

Proverbs 24:10

ALAMO THEORY—TOE THE LINE: *Make sure everyone is heading in the right direction.*

He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded.

Proverbs 13:13 NIV

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come unto me

Exodus 32:26

A servant cannot be corrected by mere words; though he understands, he will not respond.

Proverbs 29:19 NIV

He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.

Proverbs 15:31 NIV

A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool.

Proverbs 17:10 NIV

LAWN-MOWING THEORY: *There is a way to get organized: Each does what they do best.*

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.

1 Corinthians 12:21, 22 NIV

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Psalms 133:1

VIEW THE WORLD THROUGH (OTHER) COLORED GLASSES: *Respect the view of others.*

And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:2 NAS

But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

1 Corinthians 12:18 NAS

STEW IN YOUR OWN JUICE: *Better get your team with you.*

But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced.

Philemon 14 NIV

. . . He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.

2 Corinthians 9:6a

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Galatians 6:7

SNOWBALL: *Things, events, a course of action can get out of control.*

Now finish the work so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.

2 Corinthians 8:11 NIV

GET YOUR HEAD ABOVE THE CLOUDS: *Take a look where you are going.*

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Proverbs 3:6

A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.

Proverbs 16:9

HOMEOSTASIS: *Be aware that there is an integration-cause-event. We have both: We effect and affect others.*

. . . "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.

Genesis 11:6 NIV

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 NIV

SEED FAITH: *Better to give than receive.*

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Luke 6:38

NATURAL RHYTHM: *There is a rhythm to everything.*

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.

Psalm 127:1a

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it: for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Joshua 1:8 NAS

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

**“I’LL BE TRUE TO YOU WHILE YOU’RE GONE, HONEY . . . JUST DON’T BE GONE TOO LONG”:
*Don't forget your friends and family.***

Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Peter 4:9, 10 NAS

FIND OUT HE IS A CHRISTIAN BY HOW HE ACTS, NOT BY WHAT HE SAYS:
Action speaks louder than words.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

James 2:18

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

1 Peter 2:12

BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE: *Don't give the Lord second best.*

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:17 NAS

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more.

1 Thessalonians 4:1 NAS

NEVER GIVE UP: *Just keep plugging.*

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

1 Corinthians 9:24 NAS

DO IT WHEN IT IS IMPORTANT: *We tend to put things off.*

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

Proverbs 3:27, 28

SUCCESS—THE WHOLE PERSON: *Success is broader than your career.*

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

3 John 2 NIV

Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.

Proverbs 23:4 NIV

BE THERE IN THE MORNING: *Be loyal to the cause.*

Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

Proverbs 20:6

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Matthew 24:45, 46

FAILING TO PREPARE IS LIKE PREPARING TO FAIL

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.

Proverbs 11:14 NIV

THE PRODUCT MUST BE BETTER THAN THE SALES PITCH

Oral Roberts, former President of Oral Roberts University, made this statement at the beginning of a School of Business Marketing Conference at ORU. He was referring to Jesus—and the message to the business audience was that “their product must be better than the sales pitch.”

THE O-RING

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.

Proverbs 11:14 NIV

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

Proverbs 15:22 NIV

Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.

Proverbs 19:20 NIV

SCRIPTURES RELATING TO PROMOTION THEORY

The Great Commission

And Jesus spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Elijah and Elisha

So he (Elijah) departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

I Kings 19:19-21

. . . Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

And he said, Thou has asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven..

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw them no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

II Kings 2:9-15

The Calling of the First Disciples

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

“*Wisdom* is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her.

Proverbs 4:7-8

Conclusion

The Bible remains the best book ever written about how we manage our affairs. Libraries are full of books on business, planning, management, and other organizational topics. This article proposes that there is a common sense approach, key to common sense in the Bible.