

By definition, each of us takes important actions as a leader, actions with real ramifications—in our roles with our family...with our church...with our workplace. The question is, are those ultimately wise actions that bear good fruit? Well, not necessarily *every* time working to bear good fruit, but consistently so?

So, what's a proven path to great decisions by leaders? Well, many would say that's not easily ascertained. But I would say *this* in response to *that*: if we really don't know *how* or *why* we're making good decisions, that's a really big problem. Why? First, we don't have readily-identified processes for gaining wisdom, and, second, when we do happen to be successful, we're not likely to easily replicate our success.

I do think there is a broad cycle of decision-making that is universal and foundational. The reality is, you must have wisdom to make good decisions...wisdom is simply the main, core requirement for fruitful decision-making. But then, just where do you actually get wisdom? Well, wisdom comes from strong research. So, the cycle is this, broadly speaking, couched in Old Testament language: great research begets wisdom which in turn begets effective action. Again, that's...research begets wisdom begets action.

In our first podcast about this vital skill set, the key point was to pursue solid research! That's because the only way we are going to get to the full wisdom leading to correct actions—we have to pursue solid research. Our second podcast covered an essential: fearing God and keeping His commandments. If you haven't done so, be sure to listen to those podcasts—to be sure, they're foundational to this series.

Next in this series: make sure you study the entire Bible for all its worth, both now and ongoing. In fact, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart wrote an influential book titled just that: "How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth." For sure, God has documented the fullness of His handiwork for all of us to see, when we have decided to have eyes to see: the magnificence of His glory...creating humanity while still allowing for failure, grace, and redemption...long-suffering responses for the greatest personal and organizational outcomes...manifesting the unshakeable nature of His Kingdom for us to enjoy now and forevermore.

But there's more! The Bible's content impacts what many consider straightforward, everyday life in areas like business in a far more sweeping fashion than any other book published—ever, and for all time. That means, *from an organizational perspective*, every enterprise can and should learn from studying the Bible. That goes way beyond conventional confinements of what many consider to be "theology."

Let's back up for a minute for a personal story. I was not a believer in Jesus until well into my twenties. Oh sure, I had grown up in a mainline church where public behavior was the dominating focus...you know, where Christians are supposed to be the best-behaved people—unfortunately with that outward-behavior aspect being pretty much the beginning and the end of the focus of the church.

But then, a number of years later, I responded to the good news...yes, that's the Gospel of the Kingdom of God...the very gospel that Mark reported that Jesus proclaimed in His ministry. That's in Mark 1:14-15. Suddenly, for me, virtually everything changed! I had truly been born again—Christianity was no longer simply about being outwardly, behaviorally impressive to others. Indeed, every part of my mind was renewed: spiritual, relational, and vocational! Yes, you heard that correctly, I said *vocationally* renewed! You see, I read the Bible with fresh, new eyes, but also as a business person! The timing was perfect for my vocational life: I was literally in the process of leading a turnaround of a business enterprise, and it was really clear that the Bible offered far, far more in the way of understanding organizational turnarounds than the sum total of all my undergraduate and graduate courses in business.

So, of course, I excitedly went to and fro, looking in every nook and cranny I could think of—from bookstores to sermons to the web—searching in vain for the Christian authors, expositors, and theologians that *surely*, I thought, had worked to apply the Bible to business leaders' daily issues and deep challenges. But, alas, in terms of Kingdom-worthy resources, there was little to nothing there. That's

largely because such Bible experts had confined their pursuits to the approaches that pastors and theologians had always utilized. Of course, there is nothing inherently wrong with using good focus on proven methods. Indeed, that is often highly laudable.

But that very focus is often also why many leaders find what many Bible teachers say to be of often limited relevance to addressing the needs of their vocational lives. And that's the most gracious take on that we can muster. Yes, unfortunately, many Bible teachers neglect providing relevant, Biblically-grounded equipping for Kingdom-proclaiming believers who are appointed as ambassadors for Christ in the world of office buildings and factories. And some teachers even teach wrong principles, such as erroneously speaking condescendingly about the assumed limitations of lay believers' ministry.

So, what's one approach where you can read your Bible differently and very fruitfully—in a way that will equip you in amazing ways for your daily work in your office building or factory? Well, I'd recommend you watch out for two things in the teachings of others, and then adjust *your* Bible-reading lens accordingly. Those two things are “errors of commission” and “errors of omission.”

“Errors of commission”...you ask? Yes, that's the broad term of art when a person commits a direct error in whatever is being attempted, like teaching or practicing law or building a house. Now, for our purposes, I don't mean making a simple mistake here. When errors of commission in teaching, for example, are foundational, the impact is multiplied and far-reaching. Like teaching the New Covenant in Christ is still about keeping Mosaic law instead of embracing God's gift of grace that was accomplished only by the finished work of Christ on the Cross. Like teaching the religious traditions of humans and their churches carry the same weight as the Word of God. And like teaching that there are only some Christians appointed to full-time ministry, when indeed all are called to that very fullness of role—whatever their vocation. These kinds of approaches—these errors of commission—can mislead Christians in the wrong trajectory and can work to hamper the fullness of God's Word from being followed.

And then there are “errors of omission.” Given our calling as ambassadors, and God's readily-available equipping for us in that calling, it's lamentable when teachers presume that Biblical application is to be confined to ostentatiously spiritual matters—not to the practical needs of workers, to everyday life, to modern business organizations. That's *omitting* some pretty essential equipping. If you aspire to be a truly effective leader and mentor...well, then, omitting the fullness of the Bible's insights is exactly the last approach you should use. You see, many of the key answers to the most difficult challenges faced by business leaders are addressed and often even modelled by Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the life of the Kingdom of God—from marketing to management to operations to strategy. Indeed, all of the key issues faced by us can and should be foundationally informed by the Bible.

Here's the key point here: we are to renew our minds to a fullness applied to the whole of life, to a different way of reading the Bible—for sure, it is the *ultimate source* for equipping us in our daily leadership roles and challenges! If you want further guidance on how to shift that lens, check out the *Lasting Greatness* video seminar series. Short, jam-packed videos—all free at whitestone.org/seminars. You'll see economics, marketing, leadership, organizational strategy, and more—all framed from the standpoint of the Kingdom of the Son of God. Then, with that framework in mind, dig into the Scriptures.

Yes, indeed, the Bible informs leaders as to the deepest truths they need to lead. The Bible, with Holy Spirit's illuminating help, *is* the ultimate research tool, the ultimate source. And that Bible research is what births wisdom, empowering our daily actions—all for His Glory!

Just what's hampering you from the fullness of application of God's wisdom? Nothing! Go for it, friend!

A&A: Application & Action

1. Do you limit God to only your salvation, your healing, and your spiritual well-being? Are you fostering the Holy Spirit in His equipping of you in *all* of your roles in life? Discuss.
2. Have you confined your thinking about the Bible and its relevance to your daily life too much? Discuss.
3. Explain how many large, successful businesses are successful precisely because they wittingly or unwittingly mimic the Kingdom of God. If you are unable to do so, return to this question in a couple of weeks after viewing and ruminating on the video seminars at whitestone.org/seminars.