

Today, we're looking at some intertwined key foundations for strategic success for all organizations. Great organizational strategy requires a deep appreciation and effective understanding of *shakeability*, *failure*, and *redemption*. What we're going to do is to observe and revel as to how God handles these key facets on the path to the long-term organizational success of His Kingdom manifested in Christ. Then, some astute gleaning from God's ways helps bring the realization once again that the more we mimic God effectively, the more organizational success we are setting ourselves up for! That's true for our churches...our businesses...our nonprofits. So here we go with a targeted, condensed survey of God's economy.

To learn about any organization, start with the founder's character and thinking! And God's character is best summarized in the three words of His own self-disclosure in the Bible: *God is love!* 1 John 4:8 (ESV) is direct: "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." And right there, we see a couple of important undergirdings: active love is a two-party action of giver and receiver. And the persons involved are active moral agents with a free will—all the way to rejecting what a giver of love offers.

Now, in Eden, God created an economy with participants having meaningful agency, a distinct ability to take action...for better or for worse. And that key phrase—*for better or for worse*—reveals organizational *shakeability*...yes, in God's economy! That's right, God knowingly allowed shakeability and the related strife in His economy. *But why, we might ask.* Well, for one thing, it's clear that the *shakeability* of God's economy early on paved the way for the eternal success of God's *unshakeable* Kingdom! Hebrews 12:28 informed the Hebrew Christians: "...for we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken." Amazing!

Wait, you might be saying, is your point that *God deliberately allowed organizational shakeability in His economy?* Well, *yes*, the truth is *much* of the Bible is comprised of stories of *the shakeability of individuals and institutions*. And that pervasive pattern of shakeability feeds right into key New Covenant provisions!

So, let's start by peeling the onion as to *shakeability—the capability to fail*—in order to gain the savvy we need in dealing with complex systems involving people. Now, to enjoy success, the goal is to have systemic success, and modern systems are both mixed and complex. They routinely have technological components that can fail. They routinely have people who can fail. They routinely have supply chain partners who can and do fail in their commitments. And they have unavoidable exposure to cybersecurity and tech issues.

That's right...all those and other vital dimensions can fail—and we should expect that when we have a large number of people in our organizations. But that's also true even if we have just a few. Regardless, people do fall short...no "new" news in that, is there?! But sometimes there's a real "system-stopper"—what some experts call an SPOF, a "single point of failure." That's a major flaw in design or implementation of a key component that can bring the whole system down—at least for a notable period of time.

All of this is a picture of *shakeability*...especially key when it can be fatal for the enterprise! So, naturally, people in charge of complex systems and organizations often work to minimize failures...and especially so for SPOFs—those single points of failure! And one thing's for sure: there needs to be remedies available to redeem failures for the sake of all the people involved—really, the whole organization...and beyond! All of that integrated together is our focus today: *shakeability, failure, and redemption*.

So, now let's look at God's perfect plan for humanity. First, *God allowed His economy in Eden to be shakeable!* Yes, God gave Adam and Eve an unimaginably awesome economy in Eden. But God tested them with free access to eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You see, God embedded the capacity for failure in His rule for Adam and Eve. And failure did come. Of course, that rule was a possible failure point leading to a greater shakeability of that community of more than one person—*God's economy was shakeable!* But make no mistake: God was not surprised at that in the least!

Soon other failures followed. Cain chose to murder Abel. Sin reigned widely and resulted in the Great Flood and death to all but Noah's family. But righteous Noah and his family immediately had their own failures. Later, Joseph's envious brothers sold him into slavery...a telling failure in both those individuals

and the family—a chosen one, no less! In turn, Israel was enslaved in Egypt for 400 years—culminating in the failures of a Pharaoh...a nation...an empire to honor God. *Individual failures and institutional failures.*

Moses himself failed to believe and thus was not allowed into the promised land...and thus becoming a “type” representing individuals in humanity as to failure of belief. That’s *shakeability*. And with their ingratitude, the whole of Israel itself under Moses almost immediately was a failure...not listening to God’s voice...then not able to keep the law that God then put upon them in response to not obeying His voice.

Later, of course, Israel asked for a human king who would essentially replace God as their King (1 Samuel 8)—a quite radical failure with serious implications for Israel’s national future. You see, God then often remained faithful in the midst of Israel’s failures...yes, warning His people yet redeeming them many a time from their enemies. But ultimately, God allowed both Israel and Judah to be sacked by their enemies, and the first temple was destroyed. *Yes...God allowed His economy of Israel to be shaken!*

*But then, in the fullness of time*, the Kingdom of God’s Son was manifested at the Cross. The fullness of redemption was in play—and God tells us all that, *strategically, the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.* (Revelation 13:8) And we believers know that *we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken!* Yet, ever since the time of the Cross, God has still allowed His creation to be shaken by the sin and folly of humanity: wars, atrocities, murders, molestations...you name it. Yes, God is allowing His creation to be shaken...but, within that, His good news for all—the *gospel of the unshakeable Kingdom*—is to be proclaimed and embraced and enjoyed with gratitude, both now and forever! (Hebrews 12:28)

Apparently, a huge failure happened even *before* the Garden of Eden! It seems clear that Lucifer who became Satan was generously occupying a version of God’s economy in heaven that was ideal...yet he still chose to rebel! The result of that failure was that Lucifer fell from on high. Yes, then Adam and Eve were generously handed a version of God’s economy *on earth* that was ideal...yet they still disobeyed God’s one rule for them! Yes, these versions of God’s economy were shakeable! *But then...*God lovingly gave humanity His Son in a unique fashion so that every person could be redeemed from their sins. But each must come to God with repentance—yes, changing their mind to that of God’s redemptive system!

So now, God’s economy is now manifested in the *unshakeable* “Kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have redemption.” (Colossians 1:13-14) In the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4), God used His shakeability savvy and His infallible handling of failures of both individuals and institutions in order to bring His economy—His Kingdom that is grounded in His love—to unshakeability forever!

Now God’s Kingdom is increasing daily with redeemed citizens. Our standing as believers in the Kingdom is based entirely upon acknowledging our inability to be there apart from Christ! And that is by God’s design: our recognition of our own personal failures leads to repentance and gratitude. As the book of Hebrews says: “...Let us be grateful...!” So...rejoice! Forget SPOFs, “single points of failure.” Instead, for all eternity, we will worship Christ the “SPOS”—the “single point of success!” Yes, God’s savvy about shakeability...His perfect handling of our failures...and His redemptive actions through Christ prevail!

A final point here. God’s acting via the Cross “in the fullness of time” is really key here. Yes, believers in Jesus’s time could look upon thousands of years of human history and spiritually observe the failures of individuals and institutions, including Israel—so God’s answer of the sinless Jesus as our Lord and Savior was clear! For folks like us far down the road, “the fullness of time” is even more poignant and meaningful!

Here’s the thing. As believers fully cognizant of these principles of shakeability, failures, and redemption, we have a huge advantage in our businesses and nonprofits. We ourselves are beneficiaries *personally* of God’s amazing shakeability savvy...His handling of failures...His redemptive actions. Yes, as serious Christians, *we’ve already been experientially disciplined in this area by God!* With that etched in us, we ourselves should work to absorb these three characteristics as stewards and gratefully deploy our own Spirit-directed shakeability-savvy, effective understanding of failures, and redemptive actions! *Love that!*

