

Hey, this is the second in a series working to corral the very important issue of our *savviness*. Specifically, this series is the overall focus on *pursuing and sustaining fruitful savviness*—both for us as individuals and for the organizations we steward. And our first episode published just a few weeks back in time was the key starting point of *pursuing savviness*. Let's recap a couple of key ideas on that for a moment or two.

An essential distinction is crucial here—especially in today's world—and that's whether an influencer is *truly savvy...or merely smart*. Here's the thing: there indeed are lots of people who're smart, and they *can* seem to sparkle...most especially when their listeners are ill-informed or honestly not very discerning.

But hard-won experience and astute observation both teach us that it often turns out that lots of those smart people *sound* smart because they tout persuasive, often-attractive, moralistic theories that are in fact just false constructs that don't hold up in a world full of God's tests and the enemy's trials!

One example of this being a constant issue is that of higher education in the current era—yeah, professors often create crafty new theories or drag up old, broken-down ideas about a current problem or supposedly-looming crisis. But just why is this issue of false constructs so serious? It's because many a 20-year-old in college hears lofty-sounding rhetoric from an undeniably smart, highly-educated professor... and that viewpoint, that worldview, can vector a student off on the wrong track for a very long time.

In the big picture, this is the problem: some teachings that faculty impart are unproven theories or even already-proven failures that those profs learned from *their* influencers, folks who themselves often failed to grasp realities accurately. And their ideas are supposedly validated for everyone by a few like-minded faculty or bought-and-paid-for conclusions requested by, say, a politicized government-research grant.

Contrast that with a "smart" business executive competing in free markets who's getting his company's head handed to him by its competitors—yep, his company is clearly failing. And you know what, he can't just publish his supposedly "smart" but failing strategy in an academic journal and it magically becomes "true" because a few colleagues say he's brilliant! Hey, the *Wall Street Journal* just reported Kohl's CEO resigned, admitting he'd failed in his strategy that Kohl's *smart* board had approved! *Yes, he wasn't savvy.*

So here are key summary points to consider: many really smart people are simply not savvy either because they *just aren't* or their career trajectory thus far just didn't require them to be—therefore, those folks' theories and conjecture and opinions break down under the realities of real-world pressures.

A shining example of "smart but not savvy" is that of the many professors holding a highly-moralistic, unwavering belief in socialism. But for many decades, socialism has demonstrably failed *every* time it's been tried—yes, the reality is, all that socialism reliably produces is misery and poverty for the vast majority of a nation's people *while creating power, control, and financial gain for their government rulers.*

OK, so, by itself, "smart" can be really lacking. *But it isn't always that way: savvy people themselves really do have to be smart.* But *that* involves a *real* smartness emerging that's been leavened by realities...by seasoning...by experience...by humility...by a commitment to ever-freshened research and renewed minds...yes, often by faith, too...and importantly, a willingness to reject or ignore the supposed smartness of often-lauded "experts." All of that can result in a *true savviness that nails exactly what is needed now.*

So, overall, fruitful savviness is a crucial mindset that is best refined in an arena of robust activity with the real-world's capacity for punishment for bad choices and rewards for good choices. Frankly speaking, that mindset is crucial—and it's often lacking in many individuals and many organizations.

Now, let's identify the first key element needed for a fruitful, lasting savviness that leverages a "savviness mindset"—for both individuals and their organizations. And that element is establishing a deliberate and *resilient framework for fruitful savviness*. So, of course, we turn to the best model ever for establishing fruitful savviness—the Kingdom of God! God's Kingdom framework has lasted for millennia and encompasses hundreds of millions of people. The Kingdom must be considered first because the amazing manifestation of God's doings really has no peer! But just how has God's framework manifested?

Well, *foundationally*, God established free will and choices for humanity such that He could have fruitful, eternal fellowship with those who authentically respond to Him in love. Quite ironically to our topic, many folks tend to think that God's foundation of establishing free will at the very beginning in Eden *wasn't very smart*—after all, the evidence for that opinion is seemingly in Adam and Eve eating of the forbidden fruit!

But God's very character is love (1 John 4:8), and God's *modus operandi* of love is *not* a human-like controlling of every action of others! Rather, God's pioneering brand of love not only begins in a great fullness in the Garden of Eden...it's also positioned for redeeming failure! In fact, the Bible says that *the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world*—yes, God's redeeming-love framework was established *from the beginning*! This was far beyond “smart,” *this was the ultimate in savviness*: a loving relationship ultimately fully forged in His established, savvy redemption of everyone who would call upon His name!

And God put His fruitful savviness in the Word of God itself—making it accessible for our learning and application! These quite brief 66 books contain all that's needed for a savvy life in Christ! But note this: for centuries, many in power contrived to keep people from accessing the Word of God, whether by literally keeping it physically out of their hands...or by intellectual intimidation that only the “smart” people can properly interpret the Bible. But, in Jesus's time, witness all the “smart” Pharisees who engaged Scripture...but stumbled in their spiritual blindness. ...*Just like today!*

So, *by both God's deeds and His explanatory, revealing, and confirming Word*, He most savvily established the unparalleled framework for His Kingdom—all the while not looking “smart” to the so-called “smart” experts at all—even to this very day! Now that's something valuable to remember in all of our dealings!

Now there's another compelling example to consider about establishing savviness in a framework—the U.S. Constitution. While certainly not perfect, the U.S. has endured to be one of the few nations to largely act for the good of its citizens *and* of many other nations...in war, in trade, in alliances. There's little doubt in the minds of many that this savvy document contemplated inherent human weaknesses such that they created checks and balances among the three branches...and embedded protections in the Bill of Rights!

Of course, the huge issue not handled well within the Constitutional framework was the institutionalized slavery of the era. The slavery issue then ripened into the Civil War and the nation then amended the Constitution to better fulfill the promise of freedom for all. The very fact that the Constitution could be rightly, successfully amended is clear evidence of its savvy flexibility. So—unlike the Word of God—the Constitution was not perfect at the beginning...and is still not perfect! Still, as amended, it stands above all other human-government frameworks as savvily handling people's sin and propensity to abuse power.

But just *why is this* Constitution so different? Well, it stood on some key principles of the Bible, like human fallibility. And it stood on the strength of the Magna Carta, the Great Charter of freedom in 1215—five centuries earlier. And the Constitution was crafted by founders of the nation who were very savvy—they *discerningly studied and experienced histories of nations and governance and wars and kings and laws*. Yes, well beyond “smart,” the likes of Jefferson, Adams, and Washington were savvy in their understanding of the faults and foibles of humanity and what framework of governance might work best.

The savviest statement by a founder was made by Ben Franklin, who was asked what form of government was being birthed. His response? “A republic, if you can keep it.” Of course, that statement is very savvy. And the essence of that question made of Franklin still stands for every generation of Americans. And the answer remains the same: “*A republic, if you can keep it.*” *Yes, real savviness would need to be sustained!*

So, the unshakeable Kingdom of God and shakeable America. Still, a common thread regarding these two very different organizations is savviness: yes, the *absolute* savviness of God and the *relative* savviness of the Founding Fathers...*as embedded in the respective documents that founders facilitated*. So, what's the lesson here? *From parents to CEOs, every organization's founders and early leaders must strive to establish a savvy, referential framework.* Even then, any particular savviness established up front can quickly be dismantled. So, the next episodes in this series are about *sustaining* a savviness-framework. Stay tuned!

## *A&A: Application & Action*

1. Have you ever been influenced by an undeniably-smart teacher or professor or pastor that you later realized was not savvy at all—in fact, that person led you on a false, destructive path? Discuss.
  
2. By its emphasis and practices, does your church or denomination rely more on the Word of God, the Bible as its framework for fruitful savviness...or on an “official” creed or a tradition or a formal “confession” as its framework for understanding, strategy, and operations? If it’s the latter, why is that approach desired? And if it’s the latter, why is that approach needed? Discuss.
  
3. Do you believe the Bible is sufficient for your personal, fruitful savviness in serving God and His purposes? Discuss.