

THE FIVE PILLARS OF BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

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POINT FIVE PRESS

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The Five Pillars of Biblical Leadership

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This book is dedicated to

Rev. Paul Edgar

whose church is training
a generation of leaders

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PREFACE

This book is a companion to my 2008 book, *The Five Pillars of Biblical Success*.¹

I wrote this book in three weeks in mid-April 2021. I wrote it to assign in my projected online 8th grade course on Christian worldview.

I tried for years to find a decent book on Christian leadership . . . or leadership in general. There are leadership books out there, but they suffer from these problems:

1. They do not offer a theology of leadership.
2. They do not offer a theory of leadership, biblical or otherwise.
3. They do not offer universal principles of leadership common to all institutions.
4. They do not offer something simple to recall.

A recent book on Christian leadership lists 129 principles, each with at least five spiritual exercises. Most have six. Some have eight. All 129 are good principles for living. The exercises are good . . . on paper. But the book is useless as a guide to leadership. Nobody is going to remember these 129 principles, nor is he going to perform a minimum of 800 exercises—not even once in a lifetime. To the author, I would say: “Get to the point!” Actually, he should have gotten to five points. An introductory book on leadership book should conform to these rules:

1. You can download it here: garynorth.com/success.pdf.

1. Identify and defend the common structure of all forms of leadership
2. Identify the core attitudes and skills required of a good leader.
3. Be sufficiently well organized to enable readers to remember #1 and #2.
4. Serve as a model for field-specific leadership training manuals.
5. Be short enough so that the interested reader can finish it in a few hours.

I finally gave up the search. I decided to write it. But I am short of time. So, I did what I usually do when I need to write a book rapidly: I resorted to a cookie cutter, the five points of the biblical covenant. I wrote a short book on this structure in 2006. I updated it slightly in 2020: *God's Covenants*.²

2. You can download it here: garynorth.com/covenants.pdf.

INTRODUCTION

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds in the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Then he said to another, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim far and wide the kingdom of God." Then someone else said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say goodbye to those in my home." Jesus replied to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

LUKE 9:57–62

There is a phrase in English: "Look before you leap." There is another phrase: "He who hesitates is lost." Both are true. Look before you leap, but when you are confident that the benefits of leaping will exceed the cost, do not hesitate. Leap.

This little book will help you to assess the benefits and the costs of leadership. The personal costs are great. The benefits are greater. But be forewarned: all of the benefits may not accrue this side of the grave. Jesus warned: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. Instead, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19–21).

In this book, I present an explicitly biblical framework for leadership. I have been in leadership positions all my adult

life, beginning at age 16 in 1958. I have been offered more opportunities for leadership than most men are ever offered. I have accepted some and rejected others. If I had been told about the biblical framework of leadership in 1959, it would have saved me a lot of stumbling around in the dark.

I am aware of no book like this one. I have read many books on leadership. I have read leadership books by Christian authors. These books offer no theory of leadership that is based on the Bible. They offer no theoretical framework. They offer instead dozens of insights on aspects of leadership, but no framework of interpretation.

There is another major problem with books on leadership. Their examples come from multiple fields. The authors do not discuss the major distinctions separating types of leadership. The qualities that are appropriate for leadership in a military hierarchy, with its life-and-death hierarchy, are different from qualities suitable for business, or academia, or scientific research, or entertainment, or any of ten thousand different job classifications. But the authors do not offer suggestions as to how leadership styles differ, why they differ, and how these differences may affect the rules of leadership, whatever they are.

My book offers a framework. It will help you make better a decision about whether to accept a new leadership position. It will also help you be a better leader right where you are.

A. Leadership Is An Inescapable Concept

It is never a question of leadership vs. no leadership. It is always a question of what kind of leadership: in whose name, enforced by whom, according to which rules, with what outcomes, and for how long?

You are already a leader. You have already accepted responsibilities in your life. Responsibility is the supreme mark of leadership. The question is this: are you responsible for anyone else? You are in a chain of command. You answer to someone. Does anyone answer to you?

If you are married, you are a leader. If you are planning to get married, you are planning to lead. There is no such thing as marriage without hierarchical responsibility.

You may be standing at a the proverbial fork in the road, with leadership down one path, and with subservience down the other. You arrived at this fork by leading. You did not get there all by yourself. You had help from people above you, and you had help from people below you. You have been in a chain of command. You may be standing at a different fork in the road, with one set of responsibilities down one path, and a different set of responsibilities down the other. The major decisions in life center around which set of responsibilities we are willing to accept. When we accept one set, we abandon another.

I am close at the end of over six decades of major decisions. My most recent one may turn out to be the biggest in my career. I have decided to start producing video lessons for my projected free Christian curriculum. I will begin production within a few days. I had hesitated. I was awaiting the results of a blood test which would indicate if my prostate cancer is accelerating. I underwent a second round of radiation treatments in early February, 2021, when I turned 79. I took the blood test this week: mid-April 2021. The results were favorable. My PSA number was cut by half: from 13.4 to 6.1. The normal range is 0 to 4. In 2017, it had reached 77. Then I underwent radiation. This dropped it to 0.1. But then it rose. It is no longer rising. So, while my cancer is not in remission, its spread has been reversed. This has provided me a stay of execution. I wrote a book in 2015, two years before my cancer diagnosis: *Stay of Execution: How to Negotiate with God when You Have Under Six Months to Live*.¹ So far, my negotiations have been successful

My point is this: as long as you are in a position to accept a new leadership position, you should consider it. Unless you are so old that you no longer trust your ability to make de-

1. You can download it here: bit.ly/StayOfExecution.

cisions or offer advice, you should not automatically forego new responsibilities. There was such a man in the Bible: Barzillai. He had befriended David when Absalom was in revolt. On his way back to Jerusalem, David invited him to accompany him. Barzillai declined. “I am eighty years old. Can I distinguish between good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a burden to my master the king?” (2 Samuel 19:35). He asked to be allowed to remain at home to die (v. 37). David accepted this explanation.

I doubt that you are in Barzillai’s condition.

B. The Bible’s Five-Point Covenant Model

In this book, as in so many others, I have adopted an interpretive framework: the five-point covenant model that appears in the Bible. This was developed by Rev. Ray Sutton in 1985. He wrote a manuscript on this topic. I worked with him as his editor. He rewrote it at least three times. My Institute for Christian economics published it in 1987: *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*.² The five points are these: sovereignty, authority, law, sanctions, and succession. Put theologically, they are:

1. Transcendence/presence
2. Hierarchy
3. Ethics
4. Oath
5. Succession

The acronym is THEOS, the Greek word for God.

This model can be structured in terms of five questions:

1. Who’s in charge here?
2. To whom do I report?
3. What are the rules?
4. What do I get if I obey? Disobey?
5. Does this outfit have a future?

2. You can download it here: bit.ly/Sutton-Prosper.

I used this five-point model to reconstruct economic theory. It took me 31 volumes of exegesis of over 700 passages, plus about ten volumes of supporting arguments, plus five volumes of economic theory. This project took me from 1960 until 2021. I wrote a separate book on this structure: *The Covenantal Structure of Christian Economics* (2018).³

This structure is biblical. These books are structured by the five points: Exodus, Leviticus (twice), Deuteronomy, and Revelation. The Pentateuch itself is structured by it.

1. Genesis (origins)
2. Exodus (hierarchy)
3. Leviticus (law)
4. Numbers (sanctions)
5. Deuteronomy (inheritance)

As I show in this book, the five categories of biblical leadership follow this structure: mission, service, teamwork, mastery, and inheritance. I call them pillars. I have divided each of the five pillars into five categories that follow the five categories of the biblical covenant.

These five pillars apply to every form of leadership. They apply as well in business as they do in the army. The structure of each organization reflects its funding. Therefore, the rules vary. The sanctions vary. But there are rules and sanctions. The decision-makers at the top of the pyramids of power govern in terms of different rules and sanctions. But the structure is the same in all institutions. The five pillars support every hierarchical structure.

Because the pillars are the same, whenever you develop your leadership skills in one institution, you will be able to transfer these skills into a different institutional environment. You will have to modify these skills in terms of a different system of funding used by your new employer, but you will recognize how the system works. You will understand its hierarchy and its sanctions.

3. You can download it here: bit.ly/EconStructure.

I hope you are ready for the five pillars of biblical leadership.

To prepare, get a notebook and a pencil. There will be action steps in each chapter. All will involve writing things down.

I use the Unlocked Literal Bible, which is open source. It is based on the American Standard Version (1901). Its language is modern, unlike the ASV. It is easy to translate, which is why it was produced by Wycliffe Associates in 2017 for their unique team-based translation program.⁴

4. It is online here: bit.ly/UnlockedBible.

1

PILLAR 1: MISSION

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you.

MATTHEW 6:33

Introduction

Before beginning my assessment of how this verse is central to Christian leadership, I will parse it.

Seek first (hierarchy of values: point 2) the kingdom (civilization: point 5) of God (sovereignty: point 1) and his righteousness (ethics: point 3), and all these things (positive sanctions: point 4) will be given to you.

The five points of the biblical covenant are powerful analytical tools. They let us understand Bible passages in ways that most commentators ignore.

Jesus assigned this lifetime mission to His listeners within a context: the providence of God. The world is not random. God is in control. He has structured causation to extend His kingdom,

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink—or about your body, what you will wear. For is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds in the air. They do not sow or reap or

gather into barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more valuable than they are? Which one of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his lifespan? Why are you anxious about clothing? Think about the lilies in the fields, how they grow. They do not work, and they do not spin cloth. Yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass in the fields, which exists today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious and say, "What will we eat?" or, "What will we drink?" or, "What clothes will we wear?" For the Gentiles search for these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you. Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day has enough evil of its own (Matthew 6:25–34).

The conclusion is crucial for the completion of the mission: "Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day has enough evil of its own." This describes the psychology of the ideal Christian leader: *a highly long-term planner with highly short-term fears*.

The first pillar of biblical leadership is an application of point 1 of the biblical covenant model: the sovereignty of God. It is therefore inescapably theocentric. While the universe is theocentric, and therefore all of the pillars of leadership are theocentric, the first pillar is uniquely, foundationally theocentric. Second, because God is a Trinity, the first pillar is therefore uniquely, foundationally Trinitarian.

The essence of leadership is decision-making. The context of decision-making is always a mission, meaning an assignment from a superior. The source of this mission is God the Father. It is His kingdom. He has delegated to covenant-keepers the task of building His kingdom. This is the New Testament's modification of the original dominion covenant: God's delegation of authority to mankind to subdue the earth (Genesis 1:26–28).

All of life is a mission from God: point 2 of the biblical covenant model: dominion. This lifetime mission is a series of

missions. This is why there is no escape from leadership. There is therefore no escape from decision-making. Institutional decision-making is almost always representative: decisions made judicially on behalf of others. This representation began with Adam (Genesis 2–3). It culminates with Christ (1 Corinthians 15:12–28). All mankind is represented judicially before God by either Adam or Christ. Representation is point 2.

What is the Christian's primary lifetime mission? That is to say, what is the defining mission? Matthew 6:33 reveals it. It binds every Christian who is old enough to make binding decisions. Jesus imposed this obligation on everyone. He still does. It is not optional. He does not expect covenant-breakers to obey it. He requires covenant-keepers to obey it: *advancing the kingdom of God*. This is an earthly kingdom as well as an eternal kingdom. How do we know this? Because the blessings are historical. There is historical cause and effect. It is grounded in ethics: point 3 of the biblical covenant model. We are required by God to seek "his righteousness." This system of ethical causation undergirds the mission of the church, which is also the mission of every professing Christian. The fact that there is a pattern of ethics-based historical causation designed by God and enforced by God should give courage to every covenant-keeper in every challenge in life. He knows that if he does the right thing, God will back him up. God is his protector.

Causation is not random. It surely is not based on God's long-term rewarding of covenant-breaking. *The historical "playing field" is tilted in favor of obedience to God's ethics*. Psalm 37 is clear on this.

Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked people. For the arms of the wicked people will be broken, but the Lord supports the righteous people. The Lord watches over the blameless day by day, and their heritage will be forever. They will not be ashamed when times are bad. When famine comes, they will have enough to eat. But evil men will perish. The Lord's enemies will be like the glory of the pastures; they will be consumed and disappear in the smoke. The wicked

person borrows but does not repay, but the righteous person is generous and gives. Those who are blessed by God will inherit the land; those who are cursed by him will be cut off. It is by the Lord that a man's steps are established, the man whose way is commendable in God's sight. Though he stumbles, he will not fall down, for the Lord is holding him with his hand. I was young and now am old; I have never seen the righteous person abandoned or his children begging for bread (Psalm 37:16–25).

What does all this have to do with leadership? This: establishing the Christian leader's confidence in the ethical pattern of history. Christian leaders can and should risk more for the sake of God's cause, meaning His kingdom and His righteousness, because the world is not level. The covenant-keeping leader has an advantage. His enemies, who are God's enemies, operate at a disadvantage. This should give him courage. Every leader needs courage. *Courage is the willingness to bear without complaint the uncertainties of life.* More than this: a leader should be ready to bear added uncertainties for the sake of the mission. He should be ready to volunteer to take on extra responsibilities that his superior does not expect him to accept, ask him to accept, or pay him to accept.

Basic to every form of institutional leadership are two missions. One is individual. The other is institutional. Institutions have missions. God holds every institution responsible for adhering to its delegated mission. He imposes sanctions, positive or negative, on institutions in terms of their adherence to their missions. Here is a representative example of corporate judgment. Ezekiel wrote: "So you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'The Lord God says this to the people of Ammon concerning their coming disgrace: A sword, a sword is drawn! It is sharpened for the slaughter in order to devour, so it will be like lightning'" (Ezekiel 21:28). God therefore holds leaders especially responsible for adhering to the institutional mission. However, in contrast to individuals, institutions are not brought under God's eternal sanctions on judgment day (Matthew 25:31–46).

When a Christian's lifetime mission correlates closely with his temporary institutional mission, he has a far greater likelihood of being successful than if the two missions are not closely related. This is true in the three institutional covenants: family, church, and state. This is also true in all non-covenantal institutions, most notably business.

A covenantal institution is marked by a public mutual oath. This oath is between two or more people. What makes a covenantal oath unique is that God is a party to this oath. He is the Enforcer. A non-covenantal oath in some cases may be lawfully be enforced by the civil government as a representative of God, but the oath-breaker may not suffer direct God-imposed negative sanctions. God takes covenantal oaths far more seriously than contracts.

A. Commission

Point 1 of the biblical covenant model is God's transcendence, which is always associated with His presence. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is God incarnate: the Second Person of the Trinity. He entered history at a specific point in time and in a specific place. He dwelt among men. He was uniquely transcendent and uniquely present in history. He is now transcendent, sitting at the right hand of God (Acts 2:32–33). He is present judicially in the sacraments.

How does point 1 of the biblical covenant model apply to point 1 of biblical leadership? Put differently, what is the starting point of biblical leadership? I answer this question by starting my analysis with Jesus as the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. That is to say, I begin with the doctrine of the Trinity.

The New Testament's concept of Christian mission centers on Jesus' declaration of His cosmic authority. Authority is always hierarchical. It is delegated. This is point 2 of the biblical covenant model. It asks: "To whom do I report?" The sovereign agent delegates it. The person who has been granted this authority judicially represents the sovereign agent. In

Trinitarian theology, the sovereign agent is God the Father. His delegated agent is God the Son. The Son is manifested in history by Jesus Christ. We find this declaration in the final words of the Book of Matthew. He announced this shortly after His resurrection.

Jesus came to them and spoke to them and said, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey all the things that I have commanded you. See, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20).

This is known in Christian circles as the Great Commission. Jesus issued it to the disciples as individuals, but He also issued it to the institutional church. The Great Commission rests on this assertion: “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.” This is a cosmic declaration. It applies to heaven and earth.

To understand the Great Commission, we first must have the biblical answer to this question: “On what legal basis did Jesus announce His authority?” There are two issues involved: creation and redemption. Jesus is both the Creator and the Redeemer.

1. Creation

The New Testament repeatedly announces that Jesus, in His capacity as God, created the universe.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This one was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him there was not one thing made that has been made (John 1:1–3).

Yet for us there is only one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we live, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things exist, and through whom we exist (1 Corinthians 8:6).

In his Son we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. The Son is the image of the invisible God. He is the firstborn of all

creation. For by him all things were created, those in the heavens and those on the earth, the visible and the invisible things. Whether thrones or dominions or governments or authorities, all things were created by him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Colossians 1:14–17).

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in many ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us through a Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things. It is through him that God also made the universe (Hebrews 1:1–2).

Consider a few of the implications of these statements. Jesus Christ, the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity, and also in His legal capacity as a perfect man, has issued a commission to His followers, meaning those individuals who have been judicially redeemed—bought back—by His perfect life, His death on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead. This includes you.

This is the Person who created the universe. Think about this. There are supposedly 200 million galaxies. Other estimates place this at two billion. Each galaxy, we are told by astronomers, has about a hundred million stars. This indicates the immensity of the universe. But this is just getting started with respect to the complexity of the universe. The stars are composed of atoms. I don't know how many atoms are in your typical star, but it must be a lot. Then there are all those sub-atomic particles—or are they waves?—that compose each atom. They are all held together, Paul assured us, by this Person. “He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16). And He has given you a commission.

How seriously should you take this commission? (Note: rhetorical question.)

2. Redemption

Jesus announced the Great Commission after His resurrection. He was speaking as a perfect man. Why had He waited

to announce this? Why had He not announced this at the beginning of His ministry? Because He had not completed His mission of redemption. That mission was completed only at the resurrection: His perfect life, sacrificial death, and resurrection. Having completed His mission, He assigned the Great Commission to His followers.

Do you have any doubts about your ability to fulfil this commission? I don't mean your willingness to fulfill it. I also don't mean your judgment in assessing how it applies day to day, year to year, decade to decade to your thoughts and actions. I mean your ability. Are you lacking something crucial? Do you plan to respond on the day of judgment that you were not given sufficient resources? Has God provided you with second-rate tools? This was the response of Adam and Eve. "The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.' The Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent lied to me, and I ate it'" (Genesis 3:12-13). This judicial defense did not work as they had hoped. It also did not work as their covenantal sons and daughters would have hoped.

You have been issued a commission. You have responsibilities associated with this task. They may be minimal responsibilities today, but as you work on your calling, you will become more skilled. You will be able to take on more responsibilities. As long as you are capable of performing your existing assignment, you should take on even more tasks until you have reached the limits of your capabilities. Your model should be Caleb.

"I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy on the land. I brought him a report again as it was in my heart to make. But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear. But I completely followed the Lord my God. Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has walked will be an inheritance for you and for your children forever, because

you have completely followed the Lord my God.' Now, look! The Lord has kept me alive these forty-five years, just as he said—from the time when the Lord spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. Now, look! I am this day eighty-five years old. I am still as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me out. My strength is now as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming. Now therefore give me this hill country, which the Lord promised me on that day. For you heard on that day that the Anakim [giants] were there with great fortified cities. It may be that Yahweh will be with me and that I will drive them out, just as the Lord said" (Joshua 14:7–12).

From the days immediately after the exodus, Caleb had wanted to fulfill God's mission for Israel: conquer the land of Canaan. He had recommended military action as soon as he had returned from spying the land (Numbers 14:6–9). He was overruled by the representatives of Israel. So, he had to wait for 45 years because the cowardly generation of the exodus had to die off: God's curse on them (Numbers 14:29). Now, all but Joshua were dead. Caleb was ready to pick up where he had left off 45 years earlier. He had not hesitated then. He did not hesitate now.

You are allowed to hesitate while you are spying out the land. However, when you are sure that it is time to move forward in extending your narrow segment of the mission, the time for hesitating is over. You must take action. Begin now.

Action Step

Write down three aspects of life in your town that are in need of reform by God's grace through God's people.

B. Calling

Point 2 of the biblical covenant model is authority. Authority is always delegated from God, who is sovereign (point 1). All authority is hierarchical. All authority involves represen-

tation. A leader represents those under his authority to those over him. He also represents those over him to those under him. Leadership is therefore always mediatorial. This began before the creation of man.

God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in his own image. In his own image he created him. Male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful, and multiply. Fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26–28).

I call this the dominion covenant. Others call it the cultural mandate. It is more than a mere mandate or general command. It is a covenant because it is judicial. It had a law: they were not allowed to eat from a designated tree (Genesis 2:17). It had a negative sanction: death (v. 17). It is still in force. God did not revoke it. Mankind is defined biblically in terms of the image of God and the command to exercise dominion over nature. This means that humanity is under God judicially. There is a cosmic hierarchy. It is also a covenantal hierarchy: God > man > nature. This means that individuals are stewards of God. A steward acts on behalf of the master. He acts legally, and he acts economically. People in lawful positions of authority act legally: in God’s name. They act economically: on God’s behalf.

I have already discussed Jesus’ Great Commission. Through the apostles, it was given to the church. Through the church, it was given to you. It is imperative for your spiritual walk before God that you understand that *the Great Commission is the extension of the dominion covenant*. The dominion covenant was given to all mankind. Because of the rebellion of Adam and Eve in the garden, God disinherited mankind. It is only through the Christ that people are adopted into God’s family again.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own did not receive him. But to as many as received him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. These were not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:10–13).

So also, when we were children, we were enslaved to the elemental principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent out his Son, born of a woman, born under the law. He did this to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then you are also an heir through God (Galatians 4:3–7).

If you are a redeemed child of God, you have been called to serve God in this hierarchy. In what ways have you been called? What does it mean to be called to serve God? In 1981, I came up with a unique definition of the calling: “The most important thing that you can do in which you would be most difficult to replace.” Maybe you can come up with a better one.

I distinguish the calling from the job. A job is how you support yourself financially. As Americans say, the job puts food on the table.

God calls individuals to both their callings and their jobs. A few people find that their calling is their job. This is rare. When this happens, the individual should have great confidence in whatever he is doing for a living. He is in the right place, the right slot, the right niche. He is right where he belongs.

In a parable describing the judicially saved and lost, Jesus said that many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14). One of the most memorable callings in the New Testament was the call of Jesus to Levi. “After these things happened, Jesus went out from there and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax collector’s tent. He said to him, ‘Follow me.’

So Levi got up and followed him, leaving everything behind” (Luke 5:27–28). Leaving a box full of money behind was astounding. This was a symbolic act on Levi’s part. He was making a statement: *he was leaving his job for a new calling*. And what a calling it turned out to be! He later became known as Matthew, the former tax collector (Matthew 10:3). Then he wrote the book that begins the New Testament. He helped re-shape the world, including you.

Tax collectors in Israel were hated. They were agents of the ruling Roman empire. But they did possess power. All tax collectors do. Levi abandoned the evidence of this power: the money box. He left it behind. That decision must have generated a lot of word-of-mouth publicity. He joined what appeared to be a small band of wanderers. They had no visible authority. They had only their connection with a man with a unique message. They had all been called by Him. They answered this call.

After His resurrection but before His ascension (Acts 1:9) to the right hand of God in heaven (Acts 2:23), Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4). They did. There, 40 days later, on the day of Pentecost, they received the anointing of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1–4). After that, they knew what their individual callings were. They followed the command of Jesus: the Great Commission.

They henceforth exercised authority as apostles. In Acts 5, we read of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, who sold some property, secretly kept some of the money in reserve, and then made a show of donating the rest of the money to the church. Peter called Ananias to account. Ananias dropped dead. Some young men carried out his body. Then his wife arrived. Peter interrogated her about the money. She insisted that they had given all of the money to the church. Wrong answer.

Then Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” She immediately fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When

the young men came in, they found her dead, and carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard these things (Acts 5:9–11).

This was visibly supernatural leadership. It is not normal in church history. But it was important for establishing the authority of the institutional church in Jerusalem. The apostles held covenantal offices. This gave them authority. It was life-and-death authority. This authority was judicially linked to their offices as apostles. They gave orders, and God backed them up with visible sanctions. They had confidence in God.

This brings me to a fundamental principle of biblical leadership: *a leader needs self-confidence*. This is not autonomous confidence. On the contrary, it is confidence based on the Christian leader's belief that he has been specially called by God to exercise institutional authority in a specific office or position. This is confidence in the reliability of a hierarchy of authority. The leader's confidence is based on his assumption that he has been placed in his position by God as part of the fulfilling of the Great Commission. He has confidence in the sovereignty of God. He also has confidence in the Great Commission. He therefore has confidence in his position of authority.

Most Christian men never recognize their callings. They have no understanding of what their callings would mean to them and also to the kingdom of God. A few men begin their search for their callings before the age of 30, but most men do not discover it until they have worked for at least five years in their occupations. Here, they learn mastery. A Christian is required by God to strive for mastery (Pillar 4). This usually takes 5,000 hours on the job. Next, they are required to strive for virtuosity, although virtuosity is rare. But if a man decides on his calling, he should forego virtuosity in his job. Instead, he should attempt to achieve it in his calling. When a man achieves mastery in his job, he is ready to set aside time after work to invest in his calling. If he is willing to invest five to ten hours a week in his calling for 40 years, he will get

very good at it. This is what a calling deserves. Rule: do not offer God substandard work on the job or in the calling. (I publicly affirmed my calling at age 21 in 1963: to reconstruct economic theory in terms of the Bible. I completed the task in January 2021, a few weeks before I turned 79: publishing the typeset, indexed two volumes of *Christian Economics: Scholar's Edition*.)

Action Step

What is your calling in life? That is, what is the most important thing that you think you could do in which you would be most difficult to replace? Write this down.

C. Field

Point 3 of the biblical covenant model is the concept of boundaries. These are primarily ethical boundaries: right and wrong. Laws place limits in men's actions. Sometimes these are ethical laws. Sometimes they are judicial laws. Sometimes they are boundaries of nature: limits.

How does the concept of boundaries apply to the biblical concept of mission? I begin with this premise: *no organization and no individual can solve everyone's problems*. Men are creatures. It is a mark of messianic delusion to imagine that a single organization can solve all problems. Therefore, no organization can legitimately call for the total commitment of its members and supporters. Such a call is God's unique prerogative. He does not share it.

I have already discussed the general call to God's people: the Great Commission. I have discussed specific callings. God calls specific people to serve Him in specific ways. They are called to serve in specific locations in specific periods of time. These are mission fields. They may be foreign mission fields.

The most famous story in the Bible about a man with a foreign mission field is the story of Jonah. God specifically called him to bring the message of redemption to the foreign city of Nineveh.

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, “Get up and go to Nineveh, that great city, and speak out against it, because their wickedness has risen up before me.” But Jonah got up to run away from the presence of the Lord and go to Tarshish. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and boarded the ship to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord (Jonah 1:1–3).

The story is familiar because of what happened next. God sent a storm that engulfed the ship. Jonah was asleep in the hold of the ship (v. 5). He thought he was safe. No one on the ship was safe. The ship’s captain told him to call on his God, so that the ship would not sink. Then they cast lots to see who was responsible. This worked like a charm. It fell on Jonah.

Then the men were even more afraid and said to Jonah, “What is this that you have done?” For the men knew that he was running away from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. Then they said to Jonah, “What should we do to you so that the sea will calm down for us?” For the sea became more and more violent. Jonah said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will be calm for you, for I know that it is because of me that this great storm is happening to you” (vv. 10–12).

They now understood that they had come under God’s negative sanctions because Jonah was using their ship as a way to travel anywhere but to his God-assigned mission field. Jonah knew that if he did not take immediate action, there would be no fields of service for anyone on board. He ordered them to throw him overboard. They resisted for a time, but the storm got worse (v. 13).

Therefore they cried out to the Lord and said, “We beg you, Lord, we beg you, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life, and do not lay upon us the guilt of his death, because you,

Lord, have done just as it pleased you.” So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped raging. Then the men feared the Lord very much. They offered sacrifices to the Lord and made vows (vv. 14–16).

So, the ship had become a mission field for Jonah. His disobedience brought the crew to an understanding of the God of the Bible. They declared His sovereignty: “You, Lord, have done just as it pleased you.” They feared God, which is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 1:7; Proverbs 9:10).

He then wound up in the belly of a sea creature. He spent three days there. Centuries later, this became a means for Jesus to confront the Pharisees.

Then certain scribes and Pharisees answered Jesus and said, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” But Jesus answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign. But no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the stomach of the big fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation of people and will condemn it. For they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and see, someone greater than Jonah is here” (Matthew 12:38–41).

So, as it turned out in God’s providence, Jonah’s three days in the sea creature were in fact his mission field: the nation of Israel, which would be under the influence of the Pharisees. This was a ministry of condemnation, not redemption.

Then he repented. The sea creature vomited him out. He went to Nineveh. The nation repented. Yet, within half a century, Nineveh invaded Israel, i.e., the northern kingdom, and carried it into captivity in 722 B.C. That, too, was a ministry of condemnation.

It had done Jonah no good to abandon his calling as a prophet. He continued to perform that office: in the ship, in the sea creature, and then in Nineveh.

In the New Testament, we have an example of God’s call that was obeyed. It changed the world.

Paul and his companions went through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia, since they had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the word in the province of Asia. When they came near Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus prevented them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to the city of Troas. A vision appeared to Paul in the night: A man of Macedonia was standing there, calling him and saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." When Paul had seen the vision, immediately we set out to go to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the gospel to them (Acts 16:6–10).

God did not want them to preach in Asia. They were in what today is Turkey. They immediately headed west and north to Macedonia. This was Paul's second missionary journey, mid-century. Paul never again headed east of Jerusalem. He took the gospel west. This changed the history of Christianity. It laid the theological foundation of Western civilization.

The lesson of Jonah and Paul is clear: *go where you are called*. Jonah did not accept the message initially. He had to go through two terrifying experiences first. He had less faith in the sovereignty of God than his shipmates did. They kept begging him to pray to his god. They clearly recognized that God was behind the storm. He then wound up as a missionary despite his open rebellion. In contrast, Paul did not hesitate. He and his companions headed to Macedonia as soon as Paul was persuaded that his vision was God's call.

The clarity of a person's call from God is rarely as definitive as either Jonah's or Paul's. People hesitate. They do a self-inventory. They want to know that God is calling them. They are supposed to apply Bible-based judgment to the terms of this call. This judgment is fallible. But there is no legitimate escape from the careful evaluation of what appears to be a call from God to a mission field, whether this field is a place or a position of authority. A call is specific. It is bounded: time, place, and position of authority.

Action Step

- If you have ever had a call from God, write it down. What did you do in response to it?
- If you have never has a call from God, have you had a whisper? What did you do in response to it? Write this down.

D. Sanctions

Point 4 of the biblical covenant model is sanctions. These are positive and negative. They are always associated with point 2: hierarchy. They are also associated with point 3: laws.

How does the concept of sanctions apply to the biblical concept of mission? To understand it, consider the familiar phrase, “He was at the right place at the right time.” Someone with a unique talent was recognized by an expert as possessing this unique talent. This expert had authority in the field in which the performer is seeking fame and fortune. He intervenes on behalf of the performer, and the performer becomes a huge success. That is, he finds paying customers for his services.

This is all about imputation of value. The expert imputes value to the performer’s ability. He recognizes that the performer’s talent is unique. He also senses that the performer’s talent will find an audience. He intervenes on behalf of the performer with someone who is able to market the performer’s services. The marketer agrees. The public then imputes value to these services. The money that the public pays confirms the imputed value of the expert and the marketer. Being the right person at the right time is viewed as an accident. It was not predictable. Maybe it was random. Random or not, it was not predictable. But there was a connection between the discovery and the later success: the person’s talent. It was a constant factor. Without this talent, the person would not have been discovered. There would have been nothing to discover.

There is another phrase, somewhat less popular. “He was the at the wrong place at the wrong time.” He was “minding his own business” when a disaster happened to him. Unlike the performer who had talent and who was discovered, the disaster had nothing to do with the victim’s talent or lack of talent. We see the disaster as undeserved. This is why we see him as a victim. In contrast, we see the success of the discovered person as deserved.

What connects the two cases is their unpredictability. Yet in the worldview of the biblical covenant, there is no unpredictability. God is omniscient. Men are not. This is best seen in a verse whose numbers are easily remembered, Deuteronomy 29:29. “The secret matters belong alone to the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong forever to us and to our descendants, so that we may do all the words of this law.” What men cannot predict accurately in advance, God predicts invariably.

God is also omnipotent. The Book of Job declares this in chapters 38–42. The book is about the unpredictability of an omnipotent God. Three of Job’s four visitors accuse Job of having done evil. This alone explains the disasters that have befallen him, they insist. Job denies this connection. He knows that he has not deserved all these negative sanctions. He asks God for an explanation. He demands an explanation. The response to these demands was offered by the fourth visitor, Elihu: it is God’s business, not Job’s. God does not owe Job an explanation. Then God confirms Elihu’s assessment. He does so by calling attention to the fact that He is omnipotent, while Job is not. At the end, Job apologizes to God. Then God blesses him. But the blessings did not restore to life his ten dead children or any of his dead servants. They had been in the wrong place at the wrong time. But their deaths were not random.

With this as background, consider the story of Jonah. It is a story of sanctions. The most famous sanction is his time in the sea creature. But that is only part of the story. For re-

jecting God's explicit calling, Jonah went through the storm. Then he was tossed overboard. Then the whale swallowed him. It was as if God were asking him: "How is this working out so far?" There were negative sanctions for disobeying God's call. God's call was clear. The negative sanctions were equally clear.

Jonah finally wised up. He went where he should have gone in the first place. There, his ministry produced remarkable positive sanctions for Nineveh. So complete was the ethical transformation that God did not impose His promised negative sanction of national destruction. That promise had been conditional. It was conditional on the nation's failure to repent. But then it repented. This fact depressed Jonah (4:1). The book ends with God's explanation to him of the reason behind his ministry. "So as for me, should I not have compassion for Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than one hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know the difference between their right hand and their left hand, and also many cattle?" (4:11). Jonah was a very slow learner. He did not want his calling at any stage.

I hope you do better than Jonah did in this regard. You will thereby avoid a lot of negative sanctions.

There were positive sanctions for Paul, although these were delayed. He planted a church in Macedonia. Years later, when he was raising funds for the church in Jerusalem, which had fallen on hard times, he was able to collect money from the Macedonian church, which was poor. Then he used this example to pry loose the previously promised donation from the rich church of Corinth. We read this in what was the first known fund-raising letter:

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. During a great test of affliction, the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have produced great riches of generosity. For I bear witness that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond what they were able, and of their own free will, they urgently

pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the believers. This did not happen as we had expected. Instead, they first gave themselves to the Lord. Then they gave themselves to us by the will of God. So we urged Titus, who had already begun this task, to complete among you this act of grace. But you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us. So also make sure that you excel in this act of grace (2 Corinthians 8:1–7).

We come now to the Bible story that is second only to the story of Christ in conveying the centrality of sanctions: Joseph in Egypt. Joseph began with a revelation from God: a dream in which his brothers bowed down to him (Genesis 37:7). This enraged his brothers. “His brothers said to him, ‘Will you really reign over us? Will you actually rule over us?’ They hated him even more for his dreams and for his words” (v. 8). Then he had another dream in which his brothers and his parents bowed down to him (v. 9). “He told it to his father just as to his brothers, and his father rebuked him. He said to him, ‘What is this dream that you have dreamed? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come to bow down to the ground to you?’” (v. 10).

This was all about hierarchy in the family’s chain of command. God was going to place Joseph above them all. Yet he was not Jacob’s first-born son. Reuben was (Genesis 29:32).

The brothers planned to kill him. But, after they kidnapped him, Reuben interceded on his behalf. He planned to save Joseph’s life. He told the brothers to place him in a pit (v. 22). Next, Judah recommended that they sell him to traders, which they did (v. 27). So, they pulled Joseph out of the pit, which was a symbol of death. The traders took him to Egypt. They sold him to Potiphar, who was the captain of Pharaoh’s bodyguard (v. 36). Joseph became a slave in a high-level Egyptian household. He was so efficient in his new calling as a slave that Potiphar trusted him to run his household. God’s blessing was on Potiphar’s house because of Joseph’s covenantal bond to God.

The Lord was with Joseph and he became a prosperous man. He lived in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord prospered everything that he did. Joseph found favor in his sight. He served Potiphar. Potiphar made Joseph manager over his house, and everything that he possessed, he put under his care. It came about from the time that he made him manager over his house and over everything he possessed, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything that Potiphar had in the house and in the field. Potiphar put everything that he had under Joseph's care. He did not have to think about anything except the food that he ate (Genesis 39:2-6).

Joseph was in the right place at the right time. He was in his mission field. The positive sanctions should have verified this to Joseph.

Potiphar's wife repeatedly attempted to seduce him (v. 7). In her last attempt, he ran, naked, from her presence (v. 13). Nakedness was a negative sanction. He was willing to bear it in order to avoid committing a sin. Potiphar sent him into prison. In doing so, he forfeited God's blessings on his household. Blessings then were showered on the warden of the prison. "The prison warden gave into Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever they did there, Joseph was in charge of it. The prison warden did not worry about anything that was in his hand, because the Lord was with him. Whatever he did, the Lord prospered" (vv. 22-23). Joseph's new mission field was the prison.

Then came the incident of the two servants of Pharaoh who were thrown into the prison by Pharaoh. "The captain of the guard assigned Joseph to them, and he served them. They remained in custody for some time" (Genesis 40:4). They both had dreams. Joseph interpreted these dreams. One of the servants would die in three days (v. 19). The other would be restored in three days to his calling as the cup-bearer (poison screener) for Pharaoh (v. 13). Joseph pleaded with the cup-bearer: "But think of me when it goes well with you, and please show kindness to me. Mention me to Pharaoh and

bring me out of this prison. For indeed I was abducted out of the land of the Hebrews. Here also have I done nothing that they should put me in this dungeon” (vv. 14–15). But the man forgot for two years. Joseph’s mission field was still the prison.

We do not think about the servant who died in three days: the baker. He seems almost peripheral to the narrative. But he was not peripheral. His demise helped to confirm the ability of Joseph to predict the future. He could predict negative sanctions as well as positive sanctions. It does look as though the baker was in the wrong place at the wrong time. From his point of view, he was. From God’s point of view, he wasn’t. It looks as though the Pharaoh’s negative sanction was undeserved. But it was in fact representative of what would have happened to all of Egypt in the seven years of famine. Had Joseph not intervened, Egypt would have died. The baker’s death was part of the salvation of Egypt, which was in turn based on the elevation of Joseph to power by Pharaoh.

Two years later, Pharaoh had two dreams. His soothsayers could not interpret them (Genesis 41:1–8). At that point, the cup-bearer told Pharaoh about the man in prison who could accurately interpret dreams (vv. 9–13). Pharaoh brought him out of prison. Joseph interpreted the two dreams: seven years of famine would follow seven years of bumper crops (vv. 25–36). Pharaoh believed him. Then came his elevation to authority. Pharaoh asked Joseph what he should do to prepare the nation for the famine. Joseph offered this advice.

Now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and put him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh appoint officials over the land, and let them take a fifth of the crops of Egypt in the seven abundant years. Let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, for food to be used in the cities. They should preserve it. The food will be a supply for the land for the seven years of famine which will be in the land of Egypt. In this way the land will not be devastated by the famine.”

This advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find

such a man as this, in whom is the Spirit of God?” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you. You will be over my house, and according to your word will all my people be ruled. Only in the throne will I be greater than you.” Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have put you over all the land of Egypt.” Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph’s hand. He clothed him with clothes of fine linen, and put a gold chain on his neck. He had him ride in the second chariot which he possessed. Men shouted before him, “Bend the knee.” Pharaoh put him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and apart from you, no man will lift his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt” (vv. 33–44).

During the famine, Jacob sent sons to Egypt to buy food. They did not recognize Joseph. Later, he revealed his identity. He announced: “God sent me ahead of you to preserve you as a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here but God, and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, master of all his house, and ruler of all the land of Egypt” (Genesis 45:7–8). He clearly acknowledged the sovereignty of God in history.

The brothers showed submission. “His brothers also went and lay facedown before him. They said, ‘See, we are your servants’” (Genesis 50:18). This was the fulfillment of his original two dreams that got him into so much trouble. “But Joseph answered them, ‘Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God?’” (v. 19). He had learned an important lesson. He was no longer arrogant. He no longer wanted them to bow to him. Yet he possessed life-and-death power. He was Egypt’s redeemer, but at a price: all of them except the priests were henceforth in bondage to Pharaoh (Genesis 47:20–22). He was also Israel’s redeemer. They were not in slavery. He then made a profound observation regarding historical causation. “As for you, you meant to harm me, but God meant it for good, to preserve the lives of many people, as you see today” (Genesis 50:20).

Joseph was elevated to leadership, but not in a straight line. He was put in a pit. He was sold to slave traders. He was

placed in bondage. He prospered as a slave, as did his owner. He gained operational authority in the family's hierarchy. He was then put in prison. He prospered as a prisoner, as did the warden. His responsibility increased with each seeming setback. *The more he submitted, the higher he rose.* This is the essence of the process of redemption in history. The model is Christ.

He existed in the form of God, but he did not consider his equality with God as something to hold on to. Instead, he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, and he was born in the likeness of men. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death of a cross! Therefore God also highly exalted him. He gave him the name that is above every name. He did this so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend, the knees of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth. He did this so that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:6–11).

Leadership is a process. It requires subordination to lawful authority. “Do not act as a master over the people who are in your care. Instead, be an example to the flock. Then when the Chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive an unfading crown of glory. In the same way, you younger men, submit to the older men. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility and serve one another. For God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:3–5). Leadership also involves finding a place of service: a mission field. Then the leader must await positive sanctions. Negative sanctions are deceptive. They are tests. The biblical pattern is this: positive sanctions are more powerful than negative sanctions as sources of historical causation . . . for obedient covenant-keepers. This is not the pattern for covenant-breakers.

Here is my point. *History reflects eternity.* The pattern of the sanctions in eternity is reflected in the pattern of sanctions history (Deuteronomy 28). Here are the sanctions that will end time and launch eternity.

Peter said, “Lord, are you telling this parable only to us, or also to everyone?” The Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and wise

manager whom his lord will set over his other servants to give them their portion of food at the right time? Blessed is that servant whom his lord finds doing that when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his property. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My lord delays his return,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink, and to become drunk, the lord of that servant will come in a day when he does not expect, and in an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and appoint a place for him with the unfaithful. That servant, having known his lord's will, and not having prepared or done according to his will, will be beaten with many blows. But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating, he will be beaten with a few blows. But everyone who has been given much, from them much will be required, and the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked" (Luke 12:41–48).

This parable makes this point clear: *with knowledge comes responsibility*. With leadership comes responsibility. There is no escape from this judicial connection. God imposes it. It is part of the dominion covenant.

Action Step

Write down the three areas in your life in which you have the greatest responsibility.

E. Transmission

Point 5 of the biblical covenant model is succession. Men die. They are succeeded. Institutions also die. They are succeeded. This is not true of the institutional church, the bride of Christ. It is unique in this respect. It extends into eternity. The kingdom of God is also eternal. This is the civilization of God. It is the extension of the work of covenant-keepers. It will never be succeeded.

How does the concept of succession apply to the biblical concept of mission? This is another way of asking this

question: “Is there a biblical philosophy of history?” There is. Ever since God’s judgment on Adam and Eve, history has been cursed. Death reigns. Because of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, death does not reign supreme, but it reigns. Therefore, people who are part of God’s kingdom are required by God to pay attention to the survival of the results of their callings. A Christian leader must give careful consideration to who will succeed him and on what terms. Each transmission must be part of a long-term process of inheritance: generation to generation. (See chapter 5.)

Transmission is a complex process. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines “transmission” as follows:

the passage of radio waves in the space between transmitting and receiving stations

an assembly of parts including the speed-changing gears and the driveshaft by which the power is transmitted from an engine to a live axle

Something that is transmitted: message

Transmission has to do with communication. It also has to do with power. In the case of the gospel of Christ’s redemption, it has to do with both communication and power.

Jesus came to them and spoke to them and said, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey all the things that I have commanded you. See, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20).

Transmission is individual. It is also institutional. Leadership is the link between the two aspects of transmission. It is a personal link. It has to do with the mission, the calling, the mission field, and sanctions. Above all, it has to do with responsibility. This responsibility is personal. “I say to you that in the day of judgment people will give an account for every idle word they will have said” (Matthew 12:36). It is

also institutional. “If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God so as to keep all his commandments that I am commanding you today, the Lord your God will set you above all the other nations of the earth” (Deuteronomy 28:1).

Leadership is hierarchical: upward and downward. An individual owes allegiance to his superior in a chain of command. He also acts as an agent of those under his authority. Most people can understand this arrangement by considering the structure of leadership in a military chain of command. A second lieutenant owes allegiance to his first lieutenant, who in turn owes allegiance to his captain. But the second lieutenant also must consider the needs of his men. A wise second lieutenant in battle recognizes that he has three priorities, in this order: (1) completing the mission assigned by his superior officer; (2) getting his men back to camp safely; (3) getting himself back to camp safely. This is a hierarchy based on honor. It is based on the principle of sacrifice by the leader. This is also true of the church’s hierarchy. Jesus said this at the last supper.

If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, as I have kept the commandments of my Father and remain in his love. I have spoken these things to you so that my joy will be in you and so that your joy will be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this—that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do the things that I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, for everything that I heard from my Father, I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain. This is so that whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you (John 15:10–16).

This is the theological foundation of biblical leadership. This is what everyone in a leadership position in a church should strive for. *The structure of sacrifice is basic to biblical lead-*

ership. The leader acts as an agent of those above him and also those below him. This is how he extends the kingdom of God in history. He represents Christ in representing those above him and those under him.

The hierarchy of command is simultaneously a system of concentric circles. We speak of someone being at the top of a pyramid of power. We also speak of him as occupying the center of the inner ring. We use both metaphors: pyramid and ring. We understand that someone who occupies a high position in a chain of command also occupies a central position in a circle of influence. Power is transmitted downward. It is also transmitted outward.

A Christian evangelist brings a message of progressive liberation from sin and also from the eternal sanctions against sin. This is a message of hierarchy. The word “hierarchy” is from two Greek words: *hiereus* (priest) and *archon* (ruler). A person moves out from under the dominion of sin into the dominion of Christ.

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free from righteousness. At that time, what fruit then did you have of the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now that you have been made free from sin and are enslaved to God, you have your fruit for sanctification. The result is eternal life. For the wages of sin are death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:20–23).

In short, *hierarchy is an inescapable concept*. It is never a question of hierarchy vs. no hierarchy. It is always a question of which hierarchy.

When a leader performs well in terms of the hierarchy, word spreads beyond the hierarchy. Influence also spreads. Again, we see this clearly in military affairs. Individual leadership styles are different, but when a general gains victories, word spreads. His style may get attention as a curiosity, but successful generals are honored by their troops and by the public irrespective of their different styles. The troops and the public recognize that leadership style is secondary. What

matters is performance under battle. *What matters is the mission.* Does the leader advance the mission?

Every organization faces this long-term threat: the mission may become compromised if the leaders find it difficult to find supporters who are willing to fund the mission. In a business, customers stop buying. In a nonprofit organization, donors stop donating. The positive sanction of greater money may persuade senior managers to substitute a new mission. They expect to find greater support financially by means of this substitution. This undermines the continuity of the original mission. The original mission may even be abandoned. The old terminology may remain, but the mission is gone.

Action Step

If you were diagnosed tomorrow with a terminal disease that will probably kill you in a year, what would you like your legacy to be? Write this down.

Conclusion

Biblical leadership is always leadership in terms of a mission. It may be a specific mission. It may be the lifetime mission. Here is the lifetime individual mission: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you” (Matthew 6:33). Then there is the institutional mission. “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey all the things that I have commanded you. See, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20).

We call this the Great Commission.

There is an inescapable link between leadership and personal responsibility. This responsibility is innately hierarchi-

cal. Someone owes allegiance to those above him in a chain of command. He also has obligations to those people under his authority. God judges everyone in terms of a performance standard: upward and downward.

Basic to membership in the kingdom of God is a command to exercise dominion. This means dominion over nature, but also over other people. Heads of families are responsible to God in administering their God-given offices. The same is true of officers of a church. The same thing is true of civil magistrates and officials in administrative agencies. These are offices. They have rules. There are formal institutional sanctions associated with improper performance or nonperformance. There are also rules for advancement.

Christians are to seek greater responsibility in one or more areas of life. This is the meaning of dominion. It is also the meaning of responsibility. There is a popular phrase: "A man needs to know his limitations." It is a wise observation. It goes back to Adam, who did not know experientially his limitations, and who was willing to break God's law in order to test God and test himself. He failed the test. God did not.

God called Moses to exercise authority. He told Moses to speak against Pharaoh. Moses protested, saying that he was a nobody (Exodus 3:11). He protested again, saying that he was not a good speaker (Exodus 4:10). God ignored him. Then God told him again. Moses again resisted, saying that he was not a good speaker (Exodus 6:12). God then repeated the command. Moses protested (v. 30). Then God spelled it out again (Exodus 7:1-5). Eventually, Moses did what God told him to do. He became the greatest leader in the history of Israel. But this did not come naturally to him. He did not want all the extra responsibility. He was content to herd sheep, which he had done for 40 years. Now he would herd Israelites for 40 years. It was a lot easier to herd sheep. But God would not leave him alone. God had a mission. Moses was a big part of that mission. God commissioned Moses to represent Him.

After 40 years of herding sheep, Moses was a successful shepherd. He had specialized. He was self-confident about his skills as a shepherd. He was not self-confident about his skills as the deliverer of Israel. He had little prior experience along those lines, and what little experience he had led to his flight from Egypt into the wilderness (Exodus 2:11–15). He therefore lacked confidence. God put backbone in him.

Sometimes we need God to put backbone in us. But it is always wise to examine the situation carefully. Perhaps God left out courage in most areas of life for a reason: He wants us to be leaders in some other area. That takes judgment. I will consider this aspect of leadership in chapter 4D.

Main Action Step

Write a personal mission statement for your life: what you intend to leave behind as your legacy. Start with your lifetime goal. This will be your personal application of Matthew 6:33: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you “ Keep this under 26 words. It may take you several hours. It may take you several days. Do not treat this lightly. Then use it to evaluate your plans and your progress in implementing these plans in every area of your life.

After you read chapter 2, you will write statements for your calling and your job.

2

PILLAR 2: SERVICE

Jesus called them to himself and said, "You know those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles dominate them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. But it shall not be this way among you. Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

MARK 10:42-45

Introduction

The historical context of Jesus' statement on the nature of faithful Christian leadership was an argument among the disciples. It was an argument over position. Who would be second in command under Jesus?

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask you." He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" They said, "Allow us to sit with you in your glory, one at your right hand and the other at your left." But Jesus replied to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I will drink or endure the baptism with which I will be baptized?" They said to him, "We are able." Jesus said to them, "The cup that I will drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you also will be baptized. But who is

to sit at my right hand or at my left hand is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” When the other ten disciples heard about this, they began to be very angry with James and John (Mark 10:35–41).

Americans have a phrase for this: “jockeying for position.” During a horse race, a jockey tries to position his horse so that it will be better able to cross the finish line ahead of the other horses. James and John were trying to jockey for position against the other ten disciples. The other disciples recognized what the two were doing. Yet it was even worse than what Mark’s version described. Matthew provides even more embarrassing information—embarrassing for James and John. Their mother was the jockey. They were the horses. “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons. She bowed down before him and asked for something from him. Jesus said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to him, “Command that these my two sons may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand, in your kingdom” (Matthew 20:20–21). Her aggressive intervention on their behalf led them to commit to sharing Jesus’ cup. James was beheaded around A.D. 44 (Acts 12:1–2). John survived long enough to write a gospel, three epistles, and the Book of Revelation. We do not know when or how he died.

The desire to be number one has always been widespread among ambitious men. Ambitious men want to distinguish themselves. The familiar trio of goals of ambitious men are these: money, sex, and power. To this list we should add fame. Power is the supreme lure among truly ambitious men. Power attracts women. It also enables men to get rich. Power far more readily leads to riches than riches lead to power. The percentage of poverty-stricken national political leaders in history has been minimal. In contrast, the percentage of rich men without political power is enormous. Fame also attaches to power far more than to riches. Powerful men receive paragraphs in history textbooks. Rich men rarely get even a sentence.

The New Testament warns against the pursuit of both power and riches. Jesus' reply to James and John made clear what the basis of power should be in Christian circles: service. The New Testament does not describe an explicitly Christian means of attaining riches, but in a free market economy, the means is also service: service to paying customers. Service is therefore the key to accumulating both power and money. As for fame, Peter warned: "For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like the wild flower of the grass. The grass dries up, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord remains forever" (1 Peter 1:24).

A. Capital

Point 1 of the biblical covenant model is God's transcendence, which is always associated with His presence. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is God incarnate: the Second Person of the Trinity. He entered history at a specific point in time and in a specific place. He dwelt among men. He was uniquely transcendent and uniquely present in history. He is now transcendent, sitting at the right hand of God (Acts 2:32–33). He is present judicially in the sacraments.

How does point 1, God's sovereignty, apply to the issue of biblical leadership, which is always hierarchical: point 2? I begin my analysis with Jesus, who as the Second Person of the Godhead, is sovereign. How did He become incarnate? That is, how did He move to point 2? Paul described this transition. "He existed in the form of God, but he did not consider his equality with God as something to hold on to. Instead, he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, and he was born in the likeness of men. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death of a cross!" (Philippians 2:6–8). This is the biblical model for all forms of service.

What Paul wrote next is the model for biblical leadership: *exaltation follows subordination*. "Therefore God also highly exalted him. He gave him the name that is above every name.

He did this so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend, the knees of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth. He did this so that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (vv. 9–11). With respect to the Second Person of the Trinity, this was the historical sequence: exaltation, subordination, exaltation. It was not from glory to glory. Why not? Because of the service aspect of human leadership. What applied to God applies to man. The message is clear: because God had to go through this process in order to redeem His people from sin and its curse, so should redeemed men expect to go through this process in order to provide healing to others.

Put differently, point 1 of the biblical covenant, the sovereignty of God, is tied to point 2: Jesus’ authority. Why? Because point 1 declares that the God of the Bible is both transcendent to the creation yet present with it. Jesus Christ is the supreme evidence of God’s presence. John wrote: “The Word became flesh and lived among us. We have seen his glory, glory as of the one and only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This leads to an inescapable theological conclusion: *authority is God-delegated sovereignty*. It is always hierarchical. It always an aspect of point 2.

With this as background, I begin with point 1 of Pillar 2 of biblical leadership: capital. The Second Person of the Trinity possessed capital in the days of Augustus Caesar. As the creator of the universe (see chapter 1:A), He owned it. “The earth is the Lord’s, and its fullness, the world, and all who live in it. For he has founded it upon the seas and established it on the rivers” (Psalm 24:1–2). He lacked nothing. He had never lacked anything. Yet He abandoned His capital in order to become a man, and not just any man: the Supreme Servant. He has been known in Christian circles as the suffering servant. This, He surely was.

He did not become a suffering servant in order to remain a suffering servant. He became a suffering servant to redeem His people from their sins. But that was not His only mo-

tivation. He used His time on earth to validate a specific pattern of leadership. God the Father subsequently elevated Jesus Christ, the incarnate Lord, to His right hand. He had always possessed equality with God as the Second Person of the Trinity. But, as a perfect man, He was raised to supreme power by God the Father. He became the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). The Son of God, meaning the Second Person of the Trinity, did not need to become a suffering servant in order to attain power. But He did need to become a suffering servant in order to raise members of redeemed humanity to positions of leadership under the perfect man who now sits at the right hand of God. *This was God's way of transferring leadership to the redeemed sons of Adam.*

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, who is the firstfruits, and then those who belong to Christ will be made alive at his coming. Then will be the end, when Christ will hand over the kingdom to God the Father. This is when he will abolish all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "he has put everything under his feet." But when it says "he has put everything," it is clear that this does not include the one who put everything in subjection to himself. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subjected to him who put all things into subjection under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:22–28).

Paul was clear. Jesus Christ reigns from on high. This is His means of dominion. "For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death." He does not reign in person, any more than Satan does. He reigns through His covenantal human representatives, just as Satan does. *Cosmic leadership is representative.*

Christ's agents possess capital. Their supreme form of capital is their redemption, which they received by God's grace through their faith. Before their redemption, Christians were dead men walking. Paul wrote:

And as for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins. It was in these trespasses and sins that you once lived according to the ways of this world. You were living according to the ruler of the authorities of the air, the spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience. Once we all lived among these people, fulfilling the evil desires of our sinful nature, and carrying out the desires of the body and of the mind. We were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of humanity. But God is rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us. While we were dead in trespasses, he made us alive together in Christ—by grace you have been saved. God raised us up together with Christ, and God made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show to us the immeasurably great riches of his grace expressed in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this did not come from you, it is the gift of God, not from works and so no one may boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good deeds that God planned long ago for us, so that we would walk in them (Ephesians 2:1–10).

Covenant-breakers became covenant-keepers. The lost were saved. This transfer of capital is the crucial form of wealth redistribution in history: from the sovereign God to His people. It cost Jesus Christ a great deal: separation from His Father on the cross (Matthew 27:46). Grace is free to the redeemed, but it was not free to Christ. He paid the price of sin so that His people will not have to.

This is the biblical pattern for leadership. It begins with capital. The owner of capital transfers it to those in need. He does not do this in order to impoverish himself. He does it in order to serve the needy. This service subsequently leads to his elevation to a leadership position: from victory unto victory.

Here is the biblical principle: *it takes capital to attain leadership*. Yet we cannot buy meaningful leadership. It is not offered for sale to the highest bidder. Even if it were, the bidding process would not be based on the highest price in money. It would be based on the greatest degree of sacrifice. “Jesus looked up and saw the rich men who were putting their gifts

into the treasury. He saw a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So he said, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them. All of these gave gifts out of their abundance. But this widow, out of her poverty, put in all she had to live on” (Luke 21:1–4).

Action Step

You possess eternally valuable capital if you believe this: “But God proves his own love toward us, because while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, now that we are justified by his blood, we will be saved by it from the wrath of God” (Romans 5:8–9). You possess a great deal more than this. Write down three skills that you possess that might be useful to others if you were placed in a position of leadership. Leave space for additions, for you will continue to recall additional skills.

B. Trusteeship

Point 2 of the biblical covenant model is authority. Authority is always delegated from God, who is sovereign (point 1). All authority is hierarchical. All authority involves representation. A leader represents those under his authority to those over him. He also represents those over him to those under him. Leadership is therefore always mediatorial.

How does this apply to biblical leadership? I begin with God. (In theological matters, as well as all other matters, always begin with God.) God created man to lead. He also created man to obey. Mankind must obey God. Individuals must obey those who possess lawful authority over them. God requires this (Romans 13:1–7).

Authority is always delegated from God, who is sovereign (point 1). All authority is hierarchical. All authority involves

representation. A leader represents those under his authority to those over him. He also represents those over him to those under him. Leadership is therefore always mediatorial.

Our lives begin as infants in need of assistance. We begin under parental authority. This means that parents possess lawful authority on this basis: service to their children. They are stewards before God. God owns everything, but He owns it covenantally, meaning hierarchically. He has delegated to parents the responsibility of bringing up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” as the King James Version puts it (Ephesians 6:4). So, with respect to parental authority, there is a covenantal link between sacrifice and leadership. When their financial support of their children ceases, so does their parental authority to command their children’s obedience.

I find it helpful to distinguish between trusteeship and stewardship. Trusteeship is a legal category. A trustee has been granted legal authority by a trust document to act in the name of a beneficiary. A civil court upholds this legal authority. But the court reserves the right to intervene on behalf of the beneficiary if the trustee abuses his authority by not acting in the best interests of the beneficiary. The trustee must act on behalf of the beneficiary. So, I speak of trusteeship as acting *in the name of* the beneficiary. I speak of stewardship as acting *on behalf of* the beneficiary. The two activities are linked, but they are conceptually separate.

Parents are legal trustees. Trustees act legally in their children’s names. Parents are also economic stewards. They act on behalf of their children. Point 2 is authority. Authority is always hierarchical. Hierarchy involves representation. Representation is two-way: upward and downward. So, parents act *in the name of God* as legal trustees of their children, and they act *on behalf of God* as economic stewards. Covenant-breaking parents may not acknowledge their legal position as legal trustees and economic stewards of God, but they are nonetheless. This covenantal arrangement is hierarchical: God >

parents > children. This is a stewardship structure.

Consider the plans of parents. They do not want their children to be helpless forever. They want them to mature. This means that the children must accept greater responsibility. They must master the attitudes of adulthood, as well as the skills. This same outlook should govern all forms of stewardship that do not involve permanent childhood, such as people with mental deficiencies who must be cared for permanently. There are very few of these people in any society.

What we see clearly with respect to the service-based structure of the family, we should also see with respect to other institutional arrangements. Offices are defined by the concept of “in the name of.” This is the meaning of trusteeship. When we think of “in the name of,” we should think of “trusteeship.” Offices are also defined by the concept of “on behalf of.” This is the meaning of stewardship. When we think of “on behalf of,” we should think of “stewardship.”

There is another important distinction: the distinction between power and influence. If I possess the legal authority to impose sanctions on someone, I possess power. If I do not have institutional authority over someone, but that person is willing to do voluntarily what I recommend, I possess influence. Both power and influence are forms of leadership. Power involves greater responsibility than influence. A person with power can impose sanctions. He represents the institution that possesses the power to impose sanctions. He therefore acts in the name of the institution. In some cases, he can be held legally liable by a civil court for what he commands and the effects of these commands on those under his authority.

When someone accepts a position of leadership, his goal should not be to keep those under his authority in a state of permanent servitude. His goal is to help them increase their productivity. This is especially true in a business. This outlook surely applies to the military, especially on the battlefield. Someone who commands troops wants them to im-

prove their performance on the job. This is how the members of the unit will be able to complete their missions and come back to alive. Squad leaders get promoted when those under their command outperform other units. A leader who cares for his men will do whatever he can to improve their performance. Those under his command will perform better when he masters the skills associated with improving the performance of his unit. They appreciate being part of a unit that has a reputation for being the best.

A leader should care emotionally for those under his authority. He should therefore take care of them. Caring is an aspect of stewardship. It is in addition to trusteeship. There is no way institutionally to enforce caring. Caring is emotional. It is subjective. In contrast, trusteeship is objective. It can be enforced. Conclusion: caring is not an inherent aspect of trusteeship. The categories are separate. A leader who sees himself as a steward—someone who is acting *on behalf of* his subordinates—wants to see them prosper, however the organization defines and rewards increased individual output. He also wants to see the team prosper. He deals with individuals (the many) and the team (the one). He seeks to promote the success of individuals as a way to promote the success of the team. He acts on behalf of the team's individuals, but always in the name of the team.

God holds a leader accountable for the guidance of his subordinates. A leader's institutional superiors hold him accountable for their joint performance as a team. The superiors are interested in the performance of the team. They pay little attention to individual performances. (This does not apply to college presidents' assessments of coaches of major sports that bring in lots of fans, large donations, and television contracts. Stars can help generate revenue even if the team does not win a championship.)

A leader must know his subordinates well enough to judge how much responsibility to assign to them. Fathers have this problem with their children as they get older. The children

look for any deviation from the strict enforcement of previously announced rules. “He got to go!” “She stated out late!” “It’s just not fair!” That accusation—unfairness—is a constant threat to parental leadership. It is a constant threat to all forms of leadership. When subordinates think the leader is unfair, they are ready to cut corners. They are ready to produce as little as they think they can get away with. This threat has to do with the enforcement of rules by imposing sanctions: point 4 of the biblical covenant model. But it has to do with authority: the leader’s ability to generate improved performance from his subordinates.

Point 2 of the biblical covenant model involves representation. A leader represents his subordinates to his superiors, and he represents his superiors to his subordinates. He acts on behalf of both groups, each in relation to the other. This is what Jesus does as High Priest. He is a mediator (Hebrews 9:15). He intercedes on behalf of His people. “But because Jesus continues to live forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is also able to save completely those who approach God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” (Hebrews 7:25). God the Father appointed Him to this office. “During the days of his flesh, Christ offered up both prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to God, the one able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his godly life. Even though he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered. He was made perfect and became, for everyone who obeys him, the cause of eternal salvation. He was designated by God as high priest after the manner of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 5:7–10). He mediated. As prophet, priest, and king, He still does.

Here is a fundamental principle of biblical leadership: *every leader mediates*. He should defend his subordinates from unfair accusations by superiors. He should soften the blows that they would otherwise have received. In exchange for his superiors’ leniency, he promises benefits to them: improved future performance of his team. He exhorts team members

to meet the expectations of his superiors. A good example of mediatorial pleading was Moses' defense of the Israelites when God threatened to destroy them after the golden calf incident. He appealed on their behalf. But he did so in a persuasive way. He upheld the name of God. He acted on God's behalf. In doing so, he acted on his subordinates' behalf. He also forfeited great honor and glory that God promised him as the leader of a better group of people.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people. Look, they are a stiff-necked people. Now then, do not try to stop me. My anger will burn hot against them, so I will destroy them. Then I will make a great nation from you." But Moses tried to calm down the Lord his God. He said, "Lord, why does your anger burn against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'He led them out with evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth?' Turn from your burning anger and relent from this punishment on your people. Call to mind Abraham and Isaac and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self and said to them, 'I will make your descendants as many as the stars in the heavens, and I will give to your descendants all this land of which I have spoken. They will inherit it forever.'" Then the Lord relented from the punishment that he had said he would inflict on his people (Exodus 32:9-14).

Moses served as the mediator between God and Israel. In Egypt, he had been the mediator between Pharaoh and Israel. God was the supreme official in both cases. Moses had to rely on God to protect Israel from Pharaoh. He also had to rely on God to protect Israel from God. This argument sounds strange, but the text of Exodus 32 makes the arrangement clear. Moses changed God's mind. He did so as a leader. This is what leaders must do when the lives of their subordinates are at stake. But the subordinates had better shape up in response to such protection. Otherwise, the patience of the ruler at the top may run out. He may decide to ignore the next verbal defense by the mediator. That was what hap-

pened to Sodom, despite the negotiation by Abraham (Genesis 18:16–33).

Action Step

Write down the three most valuable assets that you possess which you would be willing to give away if you discovered that this would significantly extend the kingdom of God in history. These need not be assets that would be crucial in a leadership position. Leave space for additions, for you will continue to recall additional assets.

C. Goals

Point 3 of the biblical covenant model is the concept of boundaries. These are primarily ethical boundaries: right and wrong. Laws place limits in men's actions. Sometimes these are ethical laws. Sometimes they are judicial laws. Sometimes they are boundaries of nature: limits.

How does this apply to the principle of service? In this way: *your capital is limited*. You do not possess sufficient capital to meet the needs and wants of everyone under your authority or in need of your assistance. Neither can any organization. So, organizations must specialize. So must leaders. This is an extension of the principle of the mission field. You have limits.

Because service is the essence of hierarchy, which is point 2 of the biblical covenant, every organization must decide who its beneficiaries are. No organization can serve everyone. No organization possesses sufficient capital to do this. So, the goals of every organization are specific. It must identify certain tasks, procedures, and outcomes. Procedures are far easier to manage if there are numerical metrics attached to these goals. There is a familiar rule of modern management: "If you can't measure it, you can't improve it." Yet in most areas of life outside the competition of the free market, games, and sports, numerical

performance metrics are vague. Most of them relate to money: staying within a budget. Organizations are structured in terms of the budgetary process. Double-entry bookkeeping was one of the most important discoveries in history: the mid-1400s. But this technique has limits. We do not run our families primarily in terms of budgets. Church officers do not use budgets to define the success of a church. There are no specific metrics attached to this goal: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you” (Matthew 6:33). This is too broad a goal for a single set of metrics to govern.

A leader who does not convey clear goals to his subordinates faces a major problem. His subordinates are unable to focus on what is required of them. They need to focus in order to maximize their productivity. They must specialize in order to become efficient. The leader must articulate the goals for each member of the team. He must also make it clear to all members what the team must accomplish. So, it is a matter of solving the problem of the one and the many. This problem is encountered in every area of life. It is an implication of the Trinity, which is both one and many. The fact that the solution to this theoretical and operational problem is found in the Trinity offers legitimate hope to every Christian leader. There is an operational solution to this problem in specific cases. He task is to find it. He must balance competing claims. In a finite universe, there are always competing claims. As the economist says, “at zero price, there is greater demand than supply.”

Moses faced this problem. He was Israel’s judge. He settled all disputes. His goal was social peace through the application of God’s justice. But he was overwhelmed by the immensity of this task. His father-in-law, who was a priest of Midian, warned him that the task was too great.

Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not very good. You will surely wear yourselves out, you and the people who are with you. This burden is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it by yourself. Listen to me. I will give you advice, and God will be with you, because you are the people’s repre-

sentative to God, and you bring their disputes to him. You must teach them his statutes and laws. You must show them the way to walk and the work to do. Furthermore, you must choose capable men from all the people, men who honor God, men of truth who hate unjust gain. You must put them over people, to be leaders in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and of tens. They will judge the people in all routine cases, but the difficult cases they will bring to you. As for all the small cases, they can judge those themselves. In that way it will be easier for you, and they will carry the burden with you. If you do this, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure, and the entire people will be able to go home satisfied” (Exodus 18:17–23).

The goal was social peace. The means of social peace was God’s justice. But to dispense God’s justice, Moses had to balance many competing claims. There were too many claims. This was a one-many problem: one man, many claims. So, Jethro said, break the nation’s task into multiple local tasks. Appoint judges to handle lower-level disputes. Moses took this advice. The hierarchy of justice (points 2 and 4) solved the problem of competing claims of justice (point 3).

Notice the sequence of events. In Exodus 18, Moses announced a new judicial system. In Exodus 19, God covenanted with the nation at Sinai. In Exodus 20, God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses as the mediator of Israel. In Exodus 21–23, God gave laws that revealed specific applications of the general principles of the Ten Commandments in representative cases. It was only after Moses had announced the hierarchical structure of judicial authority did God covenant with Israel as a nation.

A leader should convey the organization’s general principles to his subordinates. A well-run organization will have an employees manual. It will also have written rules governing individual departments. In this structured framework, senior management issues assignments to specific departments. These are missions. The leader of a department must then make clear to everyone under his jurisdiction what he expects from him. He announces the goals, both individual and collective.

But what of the general goal of the organization? This is the crucial aspect of any organization. It defines the organization. It positions the organization. It is its mission. It may even have a mission statement. This is usually under 25 words. In English, there is an acronym for this: USP. In business, this is known as the unique selling proposition. I have altered this for use by non-profit organizations: unique service proposition. In fact, this is the more general principle. In the free market, sales are based on service to customers. The unique selling proposition operationally is the unique service proposition.

The organization's unique service proposition should guide every aspect of the organization. It places limits on the organization. *Anything that deviates from the unique service proposition threatens the organization's effectiveness.* Any deviation risks sending a conflicting message to employees. Eventually, it will send a conflicting message to the sources of the organization's funding: customers or donors or voters. It will create what is called cognitive dissonance.

Americans have a phrase: "You must walk the talk." Anyone who does not walk the talk risks the loss of trust. The same is true of an organization. Therefore, a major responsibility for a leader is to warn against the adoption of a program or policy that is inconsistent with the unique service proposition. He must first recognize the deviation. Then he must explain this to his superiors. If his superiors refuse to change the policy or program, a wise leader will resign his position. He will refuse to become the mediator of an unwise or immoral policy. He will refuse to lead his subordinates astray. If he can no longer walk the organization's talk, he will quit walking.

Action Step

Write down the three most important goals that you would like to attain in the next five years.

D. Sacrifice

Point 4 of the biblical covenant model is sanctions. These are positive and negative. They are always associated with point 2: hierarchy. They are also associated with point 3: laws.

How does point 4 apply to the biblical concept of service? To answer this, I begin with Jesus' mission of redemption: service to mankind. First, He began His life as the Incarnate Son of God. As the Second Person of the Trinity, He stepped down from a high position. Paul wrote: "He existed in the form of God, but he did not consider his equality with God as something to hold on to. Instead, he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, and he was born in the likeness of men. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-8). Second, God the Father applied the ultimate negative sanction to Him at the cross. "About the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice and said, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Matthew 27:50). In between His incarnation and His death, He sacrificed on behalf of His disciples in the name of His mission. This was both stewardship and trusteeship. This is the model for biblical leadership.

Sanctions are imposed by leaders on subordinates. But subordinates can retaliate against leaders who impose unjust sanctions. They can find ways not to obey yet also not get caught. These acts of resistance increase the organization's costs. These acts undermine the leaders' pursuit of the organization's mission. A leader therefore should find ways to reduce the unjust sanctions of his superiors. This is how he reduces the acts of resistance by those under his authority. How can a leader accomplish this dual task? One way is to have the negative sanctions imposed on him. He refuses to blame his unit. He takes full responsibility. He interposes himself between the hierarchy's negative sanctions and those under his authority. This is mediatorial sacrifice. Jesus adopted this approach. He announced this policy at the last supper, the night before His crucifixion.

No one has greater love than this—that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do the things that I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, for everything that I heard from my Father, I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain. This is so that whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you (John 15:13–16).

This was the supreme sacrifice. It was made by the Supreme Mediator.

Jesus had already announced this principle of sacrifice. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired servant is not a shepherd and does not own the sheep. He sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and escapes, and the wolf carries them off and scatters them. He runs away because he is a hired servant and does not care for the sheep” (John 10:11–13). He made the distinction between a hired servant and a shepherd. We do not expect hirelings to show exceptional courage in defense of those under their authority.

Nevertheless, in some areas of life, people are expected to make such sacrifices. Parents whose children’s lives are at risk make such sacrifices. Missionaries take such risks, and on occasion they lay down their lives on behalf of their congregations. On the battlefield, lower-ranking officers are expected by the troops to be willing to make such a sacrifice. Only when an officer is so highly placed that his death would endanger a large operation is this principle of sacrifice abandoned.

What about day-to-day leadership? The same principle applies. The leader should be willing to suffer the loss of his position on behalf of his subordinates when they are threatened by a corporate policy that undermines the integrity of the organization, and by extension, their moral integrity. Senior managers should take seriously the opposition of any

leader who is willing to put his career on the line on behalf of his subordinates. They should be willing to re-think the policy. An organization that is staffed by managers who have this degree of loyalty to those under their command will be highly competitive. The organization will gain the support of the employees, from bottom to top. Such support cannot be purchased with money. This is another reason why the famous bottom line should not be judged solely by profit-and-loss statements and balance sheets. There is more to life than money. There is more to leadership than money.

The principle of sacrificial leadership is taught in the Bible by negative examples. We find this in cases where the leader sacrificed his subordinate's well-being in order to save his reputation. This began in the garden of Eden after the rebellion. "God said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it'" (Genesis 3:11-12). Adam attempted to shift the blame to his wife. But he was really shifting blame to God: "the woman whom you gave to be with me." This was his implicit argument. "If you had made a better wife for me, I would not be in this situation. I had no choice in the selection. I was asleep at the time. Look, if you want top performance from senior management, you have to let us hire better people."

Probably the most shocking example of poor leadership in the Bible is David's handling of Bathsheba's pregnancy. He had committed adultery. This was a capital crime under the Mosaic law (Leviticus 20:10). The victimized spouse, her husband Uriah, had the right to require both of them to be executed if they were convicted by a court. David would have been convicted. Uriah had been away from Jerusalem on the battlefield, where David should have been as commander (2 Samuel 11:1). David was therefore judicially under Uriah's authority. He was dependent on Uriah's mercy. Instead of admitting his guilt publicly, and then pleading mercy from

Uriah on behalf of himself, Bathsheba, and his unborn child, he had Uriah murdered by Joab, the battlefield commander. He deeply compromised Joab, who obeyed an order that was unspeakable for a military commander either to issue or obey. Had Joab been honorable, he would have refused to obey. He would have sacrificed his career or even his life. But Joab was a dishonorable man. Solomon later had him executed for disloyalty (1 Kings 2:28–35). David acted treacherously.

So in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. David wrote in the letter saying, “Set Uriah at the very front of the most intense battle, and then withdraw from him, that he may be hit and killed.” So as Joab watched the siege upon the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew the strongest enemy soldiers would be fighting. When the men of the city went out and fought against Joab’s army, some of the soldiers of David fell, and Uriah the Hittite was also killed there (2 Samuel 11:14–17).

David thought he could get away with this. He was utterly blind. Nathan the prophet soon confronted him. He announced negative sanctions.

So why have you despised the commands of the Lord, so as to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your own wife. You killed him with the sword of the army of Ammon. So now the sword will never leave your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite as your wife. The Lord says, “Look, I will raise up disaster against you out of your own house. Before your own eyes, I will take your wives and give them to your neighbor, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. For you committed your sin secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, in the sunlight” (2 Samuel 12:9–12).

This is always the threat facing a leader who blames a subordinate for his own failure. He does this in secret, but the cover-up may become public. He sacrifices the reputation or career of a subordinate, but in doing so, he risks sacrificing his own career if the truth becomes a matter of public knowledge. His career may not survive.

Yet there are limits on sacrifice. Point 3 of the biblical covenant model imposes limits on our work. We cannot solve all problems. We must limit our mission fields (Pillar 1C). We must limit our goals (Pillar 2C).

God imposes the obligation of tithing on His people. They are required to give 10% of their net income to the local church. I have discussed this in my book, *The Covenantal Tithe* (2011). This requirement is minimal. The tithe also serves as a way to deal with guilt. Those theologians and pastors who insist that there is no obligation to tithe under the New Covenant usually insist that God may call on His individuals to give more than 10%. How much more? They do not say. This view of the non-binding tithe removes the boundary of guilt-free living. The vast majority of Christians donate far less than 10% to all charities, including the local church. They feel no guilt. They should feel great guilt. They are stealing from God. “Would a person rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation” (Malachi 3:8–9). But there is also potential guilt for those who donate 10%, but feel guilty for not donating more. They should not feel any guilt.

Another limit is the sabbath. One day per week is a day of rest. “Remember the Sabbath day, to set it apart to me. You must labor and do all your work for six days. But the seventh day is a Sabbath for the Lord your God. On it you must not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or the foreigner who is within your gates” (Exodus 20:8–10). This is the fourth commandment. The sabbath is associated with point 4: sanctions. This sanction is a blessing. But some Christians do not thankfully accept this blessing. They work seven days a week. They do not acknowledge the limits that God has placed on them judicially. They become implicitly messianic. They think that God cannot build His kingdom without their extra day of work each week. They sacrifice what is not theirs:

the rest that God has given to them. This is a sacrifice. It is not a biblical sacrifice. It is an assertion of man's autonomy: life outside of God's hierarchy (point 2) and its boundaries (point 3). It is this assumption: "I can maximize my effectiveness and my income by breaking the sabbath. So, if I do not work on the Lord's Day, I will suffer an economic loss. I must pay for my day off." This is the economics of autonomy. It does not see the blessings of God in terms of obedience to God. It denies that this day of rest is a blessing of God. On the contrary, it assumes that the day of rest is a curse of God: lower income per week. This has biblical sanctions backward. It sees economic blessings as the fruit of law-breaking.

Action Step

Write down three major sacrifices that one or more people have made on your behalf without expecting repayment from you. Leave space for additions, for you will continue to recall additional sacrifices. Then write down three sacrifices that you have made on someone else's behalf without expecting repayment from them. Leave space for additions, for you will continue to recall additional sacrifices (I hope).

E. Rededication

Point 5 of the biblical covenant model is succession. Men die. They are succeeded. Institutions also die. They are succeeded. This is not true of the institutional church, the bride of Christ. It is unique in this respect. It extends into eternity. The kingdom of God is also eternal. This is the civilization of God. It is the extension of the work of covenant-keepers. It will never be succeeded.

The issue of point 5 is continuity, which always involves succession. How does the faithful servant continue to serve?

By not abandoning his calling or his job unless there is an opportunity for greater service. “Jesus replied to him, ‘No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God’” (Luke 9:62). But there are ups and downs in life. Continuity is rarely smooth and uneventful. What is the biblical strategy for keeping your hand on the plow? Rededication. The obligation of rededication applies to individuals and organizations. God requires that each generation dedicate itself to the inter-generational cause of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. This is a rededication spiritually. It is analogous to covenant renewal: the Lord’s Supper. As with the Lord’s Supper, this establishes continuity to the mission. Each generation must be represented by leaders who articulate this inter-generational cause.

The great example of personal rededication in the Bible is Caleb. But it was more than personal rededication. He and Joshua covenantally represented the generation of the conquest. The generation of the conquest affirmed the task that the generation of the exodus had publicly abandoned: the conquest of Canaan. Caleb had wanted Israel to invade Canaan as soon as the nation left Egypt. He was outvoted by eight of the other spies who came back from their investigation of the land. He had to wait for 45 years to participate in the conquest. But he had never lost hope. His testimony immediately before the invasion is a masterpiece of dedication.

Then the tribe of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal. Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, said to him, “You know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me at Kadesh Barnea. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy on the land. I brought him a report again as it was in my heart to make. But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear. But I completely followed the Lord my God. Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land on which your foot has walked will be an inheritance for you and for your children forever, because you have completely followed the Lord my God.’ Now, look! The Lord has kept me alive these forty-five years, just as he said—

from the time when the Lord spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. Now, look! I am this day eighty-five years old. I am still as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me out. My strength is now as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming. Now therefore give me this hill country, which the Lord promised me on that day. For you heard on that day that the Anakim [giants] were there with great fortified cities. It may be that the Lord will be with me and that I will drive them out, just as the Lord said" (Joshua 14:6–12)

The vision of victory that had motivated him all those years ago remained intact. He publicly rededicated his life to the conquest of Canaan. This vision of victory was the core of his outlook. He had no doubts about the looming success of the nation's invasion. He knew that he might be killed, but he had no doubt that Israel would win. Neither did Joshua, his spiritual ally for 45 years. They were willing to commit. They were willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of God's cause.

The generation of the exodus had Moses, Caleb, and Joshua to inspire them, but the Israelites ignored all three. Their lives were marked by a lack of faith in God's promises, despite His promise-confirming acts of deliverance. They died in the wilderness because of this lack of faith.

The link between dedication and strong leadership is universal. So is the link between a lack of dedication and second-rate leadership. The most successful modern imitation of Christianity was Marxist Communism. Karl Marx had been a Christian as a teenager, but he abandoned his faith in God at the university. He proclaimed a secular postmillennialism of inevitable world conquest. My friend and colleague F. N. Lee wrote a massive book on this: *Communist Eschatology* (1974). Communism promised to create a New Man. After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in October 1917, Communism attracted millions of followers. But, by 1975, the attraction of Communism was fading because faith in world transformation was fading. Communism by then had experienced the routinization of charisma in both Russia and China. Bureaucracies ruled both nations.

Douglas Hyde was a Communist Party leader and newspaper editor in England in the 1930's and 1940's. In 1948, he resigned from the Party. He converted to Roman Catholicism. He wrote an autobiography: *I Believed* (1950). In 1962, he presented a seminar to Catholic priests and nuns on the Communists' techniques of training leaders. It was published in 1962 as *Dedication and Leadership Techniques*. In 1966, Notre Dame University Press published an edited version: *Dedication and Leadership*. Hyde was correct: the two concepts are related. In 1980, I located a rare copy of the original book. I contacted Hyde in 1984. I asked him if I could reprint it. He refused. He wrote back that the international Communist movement was no longer dedicated. It had lost its fire. His book now gave the wrong impression, he said. I published my edited version of the book in 2006, since the copyright had lapsed a decade earlier. My edition appeared 15 years after the Soviet Union committed suicide. It served as an epitaph for Communism.¹

I have argued that service always begins with capital. This capital is transferred to others. For an institution to survive, this capital must be replenished. The Bible says that this will take place in response to the willingness of God's people to tithe. The prophet Malachi declared:

"Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord of hosts. "But you say, 'How will we return?' Would a person rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and test me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I do not open to you the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing on you, until there is no more room for it all" (Malachi 3:8-10).

There is more to capital than money. Far more important is the restoration of people's spirits. They lose hope when they see no progress. They conclude that things will never get better. They view their efforts as little more than treading

1. You can download it here: bit.ly/HydeTechniques.

water. They do not see the fruits of their labor. This grinds them down. This was the condition of the generation of the exodus. They needed leaders who inspire. They needed this message:

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not get tired or weary; there is no limit to his understanding. He gives strength to the tired; and to the weak he gives renewed energy. Even young people become tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall: but those who wait for the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar with wings like eagles; they will run and not be weary; they will walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:28–31).

It is far easier to raise money for a cause than it is to recruit followers who will become inspirational leaders. Inspirational leaders are always in short supply. It is not possible to increase the supply of inspirational leaders by raising more money in order to pay them larger salaries. They are not motivated by larger salaries. They are motivated by the thought of dedicating their lives to a cause that promises to transform the world. Few causes today offer such an opportunity or even such a goal. Those few that do only rarely can provide evidence that the offer is legitimate. The idea of progress in history still exists, but mainly as technological progress: the multiplication of gadgets. Man does not live by gadgets alone. The T-shirt slogan, “He who dies with the most toys wins,” is not believed, which is why it is a T-shirt slogan. Consumers surely like to buy toys, but an increasing percentage of them in the West no longer believe that their children will live in a better world, despite the proliferation of gadgets.

Christian churches in the West have suffered a similar decline in both dedication and leadership. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States is running low on priests. The total number of non-religious order (secular or diocesan) priests graduating from American seminaries is well under 500 a year. Yet there are officially almost 70 million members. Protestant churches have suffered major declines in atten-

dance, including evangelical congregations. The churches in the West have become ports in the cultural storm, not agencies of social transformation. Few evangelical churches have preached the connection between Christian faith and social reform for a century. They are suffering from a steady increase in the median age of their members. They find it difficult to attract young men who are willing to commit their lives to the original mission of Christianity.

In contrast, there are unprecedented revivals going on in Sub-Saharan Africa, China, and Latin America. In these regions, the major gains of Protestantism are coming from independent churches. (There is also a revival going on in Catholic countries in Africa.) There is some awareness of the connection between faith and world transformation, but the main growth among Third World Protestantism is Pentecostal. Much of this is premillennial. The call is to personal liberation from sin. The population growth in Sub-Saharan Africa points to a shift in Christianity's geographical dominance from the West to Africa. There, the prospects of both dedication and leadership are great.

Conclusion

Point 2 of the biblical covenant is authority. Authority is always hierarchical: God > man > nature. It is based on judicial representation. Leaders represent their subordinates to their superiors. They also represent their superiors to their subordinates. This two-way structure of representation applies to all forms of leadership.

The biblical model of leadership is based on service, beginning with Jesus' service to man and the cosmos. A Christian leader self-consciously serves God. He does so by serving his institutional superiors, who represent God, knowingly or unknowingly. He does so by simultaneously serving his institutional subordinates, who depend on God, knowingly or unknowingly. *People learn to lead by learning how to follow.* Sometimes this is called followership. This process is best

seen in the coming to maturity of children. They are small in their early years. Adults are big. As children grow, they become less intimidated by size. Adults must maintain their authority by means of something other than size.

Leadership means authority. Authority means responsibility. As people mature, they are supposed to exercise greater self-government. *Self-government is the pathway to leadership.* People take authority over their actions. This means that they self-consciously become judicially responsible for their actions. There is no biblical way to separate authority from responsibility. This judicial connection is built into the creation. Jesus said: "I say to you that in the day of judgment people will give an account for every idle word they will have said. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36–37). Therefore, the inescapable price of moving up any hierarchy of authority is greater responsibility and greater risk of negative sanctions.

Consider two types of managers. A faithful manager serves his superior by serving his superior's other servants. He acts of behalf of his superior by acting on behalf of the servants who are under his authority. Such a manager should be rewarded with greater authority. "The Lord said, 'Who then is the faithful and wise manager whom his lord will set over his other servants to give them their portion of food at the right time? Blessed is that servant whom his lord finds doing that when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his property'" (Luke 12:42–44). But there is another kind of manager. He uses his power to intimidate those under his authority. He does not act on their behalf. He acts on his own behalf. "But if that servant says in his heart, 'My lord delays his return,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink, and to become drunk, the lord of that servant will come in a day when he does not expect, and in an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and appoint a place for him with the unfaithful. That servant,

having known his lord's will, and not having prepared or done according to his will, will be beaten with many blows" (vv. 45–47) . In contrast, the faithful manager sees himself as a servant: both upward and downward. The unfaithful manager sees himself as an autonomous master who answers to no one: either upward or downward. The first manager will be elevated after the return of the master. The second manager will be beaten.

There is a third type of manager. He is poorly informed. As Americans say, "he never got the memo." He is not a self-conscious abuser of those under his authority, but he is not generous, either. He is therefore not a good leader. He has not understood the connections that bind authority, responsibility, and sanctions. "But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating, he will be beaten with a few blows. But everyone who has been given much, from them much will be required, and the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked" (v. 48). He does not escape negative sanctions. He is surely not rewarded with a promotion. Most people are like this manager. Most leaders are like this manager. They never got God's memo.

You have received the memo. I suggest that you continue reading. I also suggest that you take the action steps.

Main Action Step

You have already written your lifetime mission statement (Pillar 1). Now write two more: one for your calling and one for your career. Keep each under 26 words. They must be consistent with your mission statement. When implemented, they should help you achieve your mission statement.

PILLAR 3: TEAMWORK

Two people work better than one; together they can earn a good pay for their labor. For if one falls, the other can lift up his friend. However, sorrow follows the one who is alone when he falls if there is no one to lift him up.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9–10

Introduction

How does this passage apply to leadership? It applies to missions: the specific assignments that God has given to men (pillar 1). Men are not autonomous. They are not hermits. They are members of institutions. They cooperate with each other. Why? Because of the personal benefits from the division of labor. These benefits outweigh the inescapable costs of dealing with other sinners.

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 is the crucial passage in the Bible regarding the benefits of the division of labor. The passage extols the effectiveness of joint labor. Each of the participants in a joint effort earns more money than he could by working alone. Why are they both paid more? Economic theory says that this increased pay is the result of their greater individual productivity as team members. This passage also acknowledges the risk of working alone. People fall. They need help when they fall. A co-worker is crucial in such situations.

The division of labor is basic to the creation. God is a Trinity: three Persons, one God. In relation to the world, each has specific tasks to perform. God the Father is the source of our blessings. Paul wrote: “May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). James wrote: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. It comes down from the Father of lights. With him there is no changing or shadow because of turning” (James 1:17). God the Father sits on one throne of judgment; Jesus Christ, as both perfect man and God incarnate, sits on the other. John wrote: “The one who conquers, I will give him the right to sit down with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne” (Revelation 3:21). God the Son was the Creator (John 1:1–3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:14–16; Hebrews 1:1–2) and in His incarnate form, the Redeemer (Matthew 1:21; Romans 8:1–2; Titus 2:14). He is also High Priest (Hebrews 8:1). God the Holy Spirit is the Comforter. Jesus said: “However, the Comforter—the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and he will remind you of everything that I said to you” (John 14:26). He intercedes for us with prayers. Paul wrote: “In the same way, the Spirit also helps in our weakness. For we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groans” (Romans 8:26).

God gave Eve to Adam so that Adam could take advantage of the division of labor. “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him’” (Genesis 2:18). The family is the fundamental economic unit in every society. It is based on the division of labor. It is the earthly model for the division of labor. Every institution testifies to the efficacy of the division of labor. In all but the smallest organizations, we find teams of workers. Why? Because individuals increase their output when working in teams. Therefore, they receive more income

as team members than they could as individuals working alone. There are personal economic incentives for working in a team.

Sinful humanity is filled with divisions. These divisions impede cooperation. But there is a price attached to autonomy: reduced output, sometimes to the point of death. This price is too high for all but hermits to bear. People therefore find ways to work out their differences and thereby work together. They find ways to cooperate.

The doctrine of the Trinity points to the fact that someone is in charge of a division of labor. This is God the Father. Jesus Christ is subordinate to Him. So is the Holy Ghost. There is equality of righteousness, but there is a chain of command. Theologians call the first the ontological Trinity. They call the second the economic Trinity. Both concepts are valid. Neither stands alone.

A leader provides the active authority required to sustain a division of labor. Someone must take responsibility for the output of a division of labor. No created division of labor is autonomous. There is a chain of covenantal command: God > man > nature (point 2). A leader has two goals. First, he must carry out the tasks/missions issued by the top leader in the organization. Second, he must assist the division of labor under his authority—the team—to complete its corporate share of the institution's tasks/missions. To do this, he must coordinate the efforts of the members of the team.

Every society is composed of teams. Leadership is required for every team to survive. To discuss teamwork apart from discussing hierarchies and sanctions is to miss the point. All hierarchies are composed of teams. The productivity of the division of labor makes teams inescapable. Therefore, points 2, 3 and 4 are closely associated operationally.

A. Purpose

Point 1 of the biblical covenant model is God's transcendence, which is always associated with His presence. God is

the source of all purpose because He is the Creator. He actively sustains the universe by His providence. This is why the universe is personal.

With respect to the issues of teamwork, how does point 1, the sovereignty of God, apply to leadership? To answer this, I begin with the biblical concept of God: Trinity. Because God is a Trinity, there is cooperation among the Persons of the Godhead. There is complete agreement. Jesus said: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from my own authority, but the Father living in me is doing his work. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me, or else believe because of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will do the works that I do, and he will do greater works than these because I am going to the Father” (John 14:10–12). The Spirit is in full agreement. He reveals God’s will to us. Paul wrote: “These are the things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10). The kingdom of God in history reflects this underlying unity within the Godhead.

But when the Pharisees heard of this miracle, they said, “This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons.” But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive them out? For this reason they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:24–28).

God is the model. So, teams should be unified by a single overarching purpose: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you” (Matthew 6:33). Specific team purposes must be governed by this overarching purpose, reinforcing it.

Most organizations are not formally governed by this Trinitarian purpose. But when the organizations pursue goals that are part of God's *common grace order* for humanity, they are consistent with the outward manifestations of God's kingdom. If this were not the case, Christians would have to isolate themselves from the social division of labor. They would become impoverished. Millions of them would die. How can this common grace order exist? Paul provided an explanation: "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things of the law, they are a law to themselves, although they do not have the law. By this they show that the actions required by the law are written in their hearts. Their conscience also bears witness to them, and their own thoughts either accuse or defend them to themselves" (Romans 2:14–15a). The text does not say that the law of God is written on all men's hearts, but the law's actions are. This is what makes cooperation possible in history. (I wrote a book on this in 1987: *Dominion and Common Grace*.¹)

A team leader must understand the purpose of the organization. This means that he must understand the general rules issued by senior management. For profit-seeking firms, the general rule is clear: "make a profit." A team leader must also understand the specific instructions issued by his immediate superior, which are supposed to be consistent with this general purpose of the organization. If they are not consistent with the general purpose, then he must seek clarification from his superior. He does not want his team to be following divided rulership, which is the condition of Satan's kingdom. "If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself."

Once he is clear about the purpose of the command, he can better understand how the specific project assigned to his team is to be carried out. He must assign specific tasks to his team's members. He must recognize the skills of each member. Each has his own advantages in the division of labor. A leader must remind them of the purpose of the organization.

1. You can download it here: bit.ly/gngrace.

He may have to explain to each member how his task fits into the organization's overall purpose.

Most people want to believe that their lives have purpose. They also want to believe that their labor has purpose. They do not want to work at cross purposes with themselves. If they believe that their daily labor furthers their life's purpose, they are more likely to pursue their tasks with greater diligence. This makes them more efficient.

A leader should articulate the coherence of a specific plan. This begins with a correct understanding of the plan. Few people have an innate ability to articulate the connections between a plan's purpose and its specifics. They must develop this skill in real-world situations. This is another reason why leadership in a specific position of authority takes time to develop.

A family is an effective workshop for developing the skill of explaining orders. If a child understands which principle underlies an order, he is more likely to obey. Put differently, if he understands it, he is less likely to violate it. Why? Because he possesses greater responsibility because he understands it. He can therefore lawfully be held more accountable. Jesus said: "That servant, having known his lord's will, and not having prepared or done according to his will, will be beaten with many blows. But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating, he will be beaten with a few blows. But everyone who has been given much, from them much will be required, and the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked" (Luke 12:47-48). The old excuse, "I just didn't understand," is rendered impotent. It takes time for heads of households to develop the skill of matching specific instructions and general rules. If people learn this skill as followers when they are young, they will be more likely to become effective leaders. This is one of life's most important skills: the skill of good judgment. It is the fourth point of the biblical covenant.

Action Step

Write down the three most important purposes for the position you occupy at your job (not your calling).

B. Empowerment

Point 2 of the biblical covenant model is authority. Authority is always delegated from God, who is sovereign (point 1). All authority is hierarchical. All authority involves representation. A leader represents those under his authority to those over him. He also represents those over him to those under him. Leadership is therefore always mediatorial.

How does point 2 apply to teamwork? The correct procedure for answering this question is to begin with God. There is a hierarchy in the Trinity: a hierarchy of service. Jesus served God the Father faithfully. God the Father in turn empowered Jesus. He did this by publicly announcing His satisfaction with Jesus.

After he was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting upon him. Behold, a voice came out of the heavens saying, “This is my beloved Son. I am very pleased with him” (Matthew 3:16–17).

Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up a high mountain by themselves. He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his garments became as brilliant as the light. Behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with him. Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you desire, I will make here three shelters—one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, there was a voice out of the cloud, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him” (Matthew 17:1–5).

Verbal support of someone is a major form of empowerment. Public verbal support is even more empowering. This is why leaders award medals to winners. In a race, people strive to win medals.

To empower someone on a team increases his degree of personal responsibility in the team. There is no escape from increased responsibility when the level of authority increases. *Increased responsibility is the main biblical goal for seeking increased authority.* Someone higher on the chain of command is divesting himself of responsibility for decision-making by delegating this responsibility. He prefers to hold someone else responsible.

Why is it an advantage to be assigned greater responsibility? There may be higher pay. But, as a general rule, it is unwise to accept greater responsibility primarily to gain increased pay. In the biblical worldview, the primary goal of attaining greater personal responsibility is to gain a greater degree of authority. Responsibility is an aspect of maturity. This is basic to the process of dominion. It increases self-government. It increases personal experience. In Luke's version of the parable of the stewards, the economically successful stewards are rewarded by the master with greater responsibility. Conclusion: *responsibility is a reward, not a punishment.*

It happened when he came back again, having received the kingdom, he commanded the servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what profit they had made by doing business. The first came before him, saying, "Lord, your mina has made ten minas more." The nobleman said to him, "Well done, good servant. Because you were faithful in very little, you will have authority over ten cities." The second came, saying, "Your mina, lord, has made five minas." The nobleman said to him, "You take charge over five cities" (Luke 19:15-19).

The version in Matthew does not mention cities, i.e., politics. It does not identify the nature of the added responsibility. It does say that the efficient stewards will be put in charge. Being in charge of anything inescapably means greater responsibility.

Now after a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The servant who had received the five talents came and brought another five talents. He said, "Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things. I will put you in charge over many things. Enter into the joy of your master." The servant who had received two talents came and said, "Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things. I will put you in charge over many things. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:19–23).

The version in Matthew appears in the New Testament's passage describing the final judgment (vv. 31–46). Christians would be wise to take it seriously. Its presence in that context warns us that the degree of our success in exercising responsibility profitably for God has eternal implications. We are to accumulate capital beyond the grave by accumulating it in history. This process of capital creation has more to do with exercising responsibility than it does with accumulating money or power.

A team occupies a position in the organization's hierarchy. In some teams, there is a formal hierarchy. An example is an army platoon. There is a second lieutenant, sergeants with multiple stripes, corporals with two stripes, and privates with one stripe. If the second lieutenant is killed or incapacitated, the sergeant with the most stripes temporarily replaces him. If two sergeants have the same number of stripes, seniority counts: more time in the rank elevates his position. There is a clear chain of command.

Most teams lack a formal chain of command. Tasks are assigned by the team leader. Team members specialize. The team works as a unit. Members are interdependent. This interdependence creates personal vulnerability. Members suffer if one member fails to do his task on time, or if his output fails to meet the required specifications. Then one or more members must pitch in to cover for him. If this becomes a

pattern, it undermines the team members' morale. It eventually undermines their trust in the team leader's judgment.

There are some management traditions that assign collective responsibility to the entire team. Post-World War II Japanese business management is famous for this. In such a program, a team recommends changes to management. If the recommendation proves successful, and if it is adopted in the company, management pays bonuses to all members of the team. A team leader is more of a coordinator and facilitator than a commander. This is a bottom-up system of innovation. The team leader acts as a spokesman for his team in the counsels of the hierarchy.

A major advantage of such a system is the sense of empowerment it provides for team members. This structure increases their individual responsibility. But this responsibility is shared with other team members. Furthermore, members are protected from the hierarchy by the team leader, who represents their group interests.

The more rigid a hierarchy, the less there is a feeling of empowered status at the bottom. In the military, these people are called "grunts." They do "grunt work." This work is not seen as creative. Those members who do this work are less likely to develop an *esprit de corps*. Their degree of personal commitment is minimal. They do what they are told. They do not "go the extra mile."

Jesus trained the disciples face to face for three years. Nevertheless, they usually failed to understand the meaning of what He said and did. They had to ask him questions about the meaning of His general ethical principles. Matthew 13 records several parables of the kingdom. The main one, the parable of the wheat and the weeds (vv. 24–30), they did not grasp. He had to explain it (vv. 36–43). Yet when it came time to build the church, they were ready.

Modern management practices rarely allow for years of team-based training. It assumes that formal classroom training in a graduate school of business can be safely substituted

for years of training on a face-to-face basis in a specialized team. Classroom training equips a leader in matters numerical, but it does not prepare him to empower members of a team. Without strong support from members of his team, he will not maximize his team's level of performance, which means its responsibility. He does not make full use of the efficacy of the division of labor.

The model is God in the garden. On day one, He assigned Adam a task: naming the animals. He remained close at hand until this task was completed (Genesis 2). Then He departed. Adam and Eve were left alone to extend their dominion (Genesis 3). Only after their rebellion did God return to impose judgment. "They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8a). I call this *management by walking away*. The same management model was described by Jesus in the parable of the stewards (Luke 19; Matthew 25). The master prepared to go on a journey. He handed out capital to his stewards: coins. He let each of them decide how to invest these coins. He did not assign a specific portfolio to each steward. Two of the stewards turned out to be profitable investors. The third did not. The owner had suspected that this would be the case. He allocated more coins to the two stewards he thought might perform well. The third steward received only one coin. He buried it. He was a loser, just as the owner had suspected. The owner then announced a fundamental principle of biblical management. "For to everyone who possesses, more will be given—even more abundantly. But from anyone who does not possess anything, even what he does have will be taken away. Throw the worthless servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth" (Matthew 25:29–30). *This principle of rewards in history and eternity is the opposite of equality of economic outcomes.* Matthew's version of Jesus' parable of the three stewards is the most powerful biblical repudiation of the welfare state's standard of equality of outcomes through government-imposed wealth redistribution.

The biblical model is *absentee management of well-trained workers*. The apostles after Jesus' resurrection are the operational model. This will be the management system beyond the grave in the new heaven and new earth. To make a preliminary version of this management system work well in history, the owner must adopt a predictable system of rewards and punishments (point 4). The workers must be highly motivated to produce. They must be self-motivated. The less self-governed they are, the more tightly they must be managed. Micromanaging absorbs a manager's personal resources that could be put to more productive uses. It does not empower team members.

Action Step

Did anyone empower you in your career? Write down the person's name. Be prepared to imitate this person when you get the opportunity.

C. Specialization

Point 3 of the biblical covenant model is the concept of boundaries. These are primarily ethical boundaries: right and wrong. Laws place limits on men's actions. Sometimes these are ethical laws. Sometimes they are judicial laws. Sometimes they are boundaries of nature: limits.

With respect to teams, boundaries impose limits on capital and limits on skills. Specialization offsets some of the economic limits imposed by cursed scarcity (Genesis 3:17–19). Paul spoke of the specialization of function in two epistles: Romans and First Corinthians. The key term is "members." He was referring to church members. First, consider his words in Romans. "For I say, because of the grace that was given to me, that everyone who is among you should not think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Instead, they should

think in a wise way, just as God has given out to each one a certain amount of faith. For we have many members in one body, but not all the members have the same function” (Romans 12:3–4). Second, consider his words in 1 Corinthians.

For as the body is one and has many members and all are members of the same body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bound or free, and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not a single member, but many. If the foot says, “Since I am not the hand, I am not part of the body,” it is not any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not part of the body,” it is not any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But God arranged each part of the body as he designed it. If they were all the same member, where would the body be? So now they are many members, but only one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you.” Nor does the head say to the feet, “I have no need of you.” But the members of the body that appear to be weaker are essential, and the parts of the body that we think are less honorable, we give them greater honor, and our unrepresentable members have more dignity. Now our representable members have no need to be treated with dignity, for they already have dignity. But God has joined all the members together, and he gave more honor to those that lacked it. He did this so there may be no division within the body, but that the members should care for one another with the same affection. So when one member suffers, all the members suffer together; or when one member is honored, all the members rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then those who do powerful deeds, then gifts of healing, those who provide helps, those who do the work of administration, and those who have various kinds of tongues. Are all of them apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all do powerful deeds? Do all of them have gifts of healing? Do all of them speak with tongues? Do all of them interpret tongues? Zealously seek the greater gifts. But I will show you a more excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:12–31).

What can we learn from this? First, all of the church's members are important for the healthy operation of a local church. Second, some of the members possess greater authority: church officers. All members have legal access to the sacraments. But there is also a system of *functional subordination*. Put differently, they are all made in God's image, but some of them possess greater responsibility. But every member is important. No one wants to lose one of his body's members. His body functions best when all of its members are fully functional. Third, there is mutual service in the church. The members look out for each other's interests. Fourth, no single function defines the church. The church is defined in its totality. This describes every well-ordered team. This is the authoritative model for every team. This is the goal of every leader and every member. Until a team functions as a healthy body, it has room for improvement.

In economic theory, capital is the product of land and labor over time. High-value capital derives most of its value from intellectual labor: a formula or a series of digits. Capital is always scarce. An economist defines scarcity as follows: "At zero price, there is greater demand than supply." The owners of an organization, or else the senior managers they hire to run it, seek to maximize capital's return on investment. Most organizations can maximize this by providing capital to the small minority of employees who produce most of the value of the organization's output. This phenomenon of high return from a minority of employees is described by **Pareto's law**: the 20/80 law. About 80% of the work is produced by 20% of the employees. Another variation is **Price's law**: 50% of the work is produced by the square root of the number of employees. These rules do not match up numerically. Pareto's law is more radical. Detailed studies of wealth distribution have confirmed it ever since economist Vilfredo Pareto announced it in 1897. Something like this inequality of productivity exists in every organization. Leaders should seek to identify these high-output people. This applies to every

team within an organization. Each team leader should create a “short list” of people who must not be fired. Then, in order to maximize an organization’s productivity, senior leaders must design and then implement a system of rewards that motivates the highly productive minority of workers to continue to sell their services to the organization. Capital enables these workers to maximize their productivity. Leaders must provide this capital.

The best way to achieve an increase in productivity is through increased specialization. Each worker focuses his attention on a limited series of tasks. This is necessary because men are not omniscient. They are experts at best in only a few areas of life, and maybe none. So, they apply their specialized knowledge to the procedures they know best. They improve their productivity over time as they master these procedures. They generate a higher rate of return from their labor because they specialize.

The greater the degree of specialization, the greater the dependence of all of the team’s members on the performance of each of the other members. Each of them has a limited number of tasks to complete in a specific time period. The team as a unit has production goals. To meet these goals, each member must complete his portion of the production process.

The most productive members of the team should devote close to 80% of their efforts to a narrowly defined series of tasks. Other team members must become their support staff. Why? Because they are the equivalent of skilled but easily replaceable athletes on a team. Their task is to support the superstars. This is well known regarding sports teams. But this is how every team achieves more victories. A team needs every member’s contribution in order to function, but the high-value workers are the key to the team’s success. They must be kept contented. A good way to achieve this is to supply them with tools of their trade. They will be more likely to stay on the job.

Highly efficient workers usually love their work. They live for their work. Their work is their calling: the most important thing they can do in which they would be most difficult to replace. The goal of a Christian leader is to persuade these people to stay on the job, so that they will not have to be replaced. To do this, these high-output workers must be paid well in addition to being supplied with high-quality tools. Any organization that does not find ways to compensate these unique workers in terms of the value of their output risks losing them to competing organizations that will pay them more. The laborer is worthy of his hire.

The team leader's most effective strategy to increase his team's output is two-fold: *find out what motivates these people and then provide it*. He probably does not have the authority to give raises. He must therefore find other ways to motivate key workers. This may be by providing praise. It may be by leaving them alone. But he must keep them content as workers.

One of the inescapable weaknesses of mass production techniques is this: it treats all workers the same. On an assembly line, there is no favoritism by managers. Assembly line production worked well in the early stages of mechanization sometime around 1900. The assembly line divided each step in a production process into a series of easily performed tasks. People with minimal skills became more productive than ever before. They earned higher wages. But there is a huge problem with this system. On an assembly line, a worker produces cogs for a machine. He becomes the equivalent of a cog. For very low-skilled workers, this is legitimate, but as a model for all workers, it cannot survive the inevitable increase in production that results from new capital investment. Businesses buy more machines. The machines do the repetitive, mindless work. This frees up workers to become creative, which cannot be programmed. Men are not digital. They are analogical. They are made in God's image, and God is personal. God is also not predictable in the way that a machine is. He is not a robot. Neither are people.

With the increased productivity that comes from ever-greater investments of capital, businesses must shift from machine-based production to highly skilled human labor. This is work based on specialized knowledge. Management theory pioneer Peter Drucker (1909–2005) in 1966 provided a phrase to describe such workers: “knowledge workers.” In 1999, he wrote an article for the *California Management Review*: “Knowledge-Worker Productivity: The Biggest Challenge.” In the first paragraph, he made this observation: “The most valuable asset of a 21st-century institution (whether business or non-business), will be its *knowledge workers* and their *productivity*.” In this article, he returned to this theme again and again: how to increase the productivity of knowledge workers. He offered this assertion: “The crucial question in knowledge-worker productivity is: *what is the task?*” In short, what is the mission?

Manual workers in the United States were made more productive after 1900 by the adoption of a new production process: the assembly line. The production model that Henry Ford adapted to create 15 million Model T cars, 1908–27, was a Chicago meatpacking plant. This system was widely imitated after Ford revolutionized automobile production. The pioneer was the developer of what became known as scientific management, Frederick W. Taylor (1856–1915). His name, not Ford’s, became associated with this innovation: Taylorism. Managers found new ways to make repetitive manual labor more efficient. They designed new production systems. Then they trained workers to do these tasks. They employed supervisors to monitor them. This strategy increased manual labor’s output by 50 to one, 1900 to 2000, in the United States, Drucker estimated.

This assembly-line production model no longer works well in economically advanced nations. Today, knowledge workers must be allowed by management to be flexible. Only they possess the specialized knowledge that is required to complete their tasks. The crucial task of a leader is to encourage

the creativity of workers, especially the high-output workers. To do this, he must work with knowledge workers in order to help them understand management's expectations regarding the objective outcomes of each mini-task. The overall task is handed down from on high. It is (or should be) an extension of the organization's unique service proposition: its mission. Also, it is (or should be) related to a high-value worker's calling as he sees it. Team leaders must work closely with the minority of workers who produce the vast majority of the organization's output. As soon as knowledge workers provide feedback to a team leader that proves that they understand the task's objective outcome, he should allow them to do their specialized individual work. A team leader cannot accurately monitor their work, only their output. Thus, Drucker concluded: "It demands that we impose the responsibility for their productivity on the individual knowledge workers themselves. Knowledge workers *have* to manage themselves."

There is a biblical model for this management system. God gave Moses instructions about the construction of the tabernacle, which was portable. The list of the tabernacle's components fills Exodus 36 to 39. Building it was God's assigned task to them. God told Moses that He had selected two master craftsmen to provide instruction and guidance: Bezalel and Oholiab (Exodus 31:2, 6). They would supervise the project. They would also produce the most complex objects.

Moses summoned Bezalel, Oholiab, and every skillful person in whose mind the Lord had given skill, and whose heart stirred within him to come and do the work. They received from Moses all the offerings that the Israelites had brought for constructing the holy place. The people were still bringing freewill offerings every morning to Moses. So all the skilled people working on the holy place came from the work that they had been doing. The craftsmen told Moses, "The people are bringing much more than enough for doing the work that the Lord has commanded us to do." So Moses instructed that no one in the camp should bring any more offerings for the construction of the holy place.

Then the people stopped bringing these gifts. They had more than enough materials for all the work (Exodus 36:2–7).

The teams that worked on the tabernacle had been given more raw materials than they needed. They also had enough volunteers. They knew the task. Bezalel and Oholiab trained and then oversaw teams of workers. But the two men had specialized artistic work of their own to complete. This kept them from becoming full-time team leaders. There were too many skilled craftsmen to monitor hour by hour. Their output could be monitored, but their production efforts could not be monitored. No one else had sufficient knowledge of each task. This system of production worked. “Thus the people of Israel did all the work as the Lord had commanded Moses. Moses examined all the work, and, behold, they had done it. As the Lord had commanded, in that way they did it. Then Moses blessed them” (Exodus 39:42–43).

The more complex a task, the more that managers must rely on highly specialized tools of production and highly skilled users of these tools. This system of management must be designed jointly by managers and producers. They must come to agreement regarding the task and the quality of output. *The team leader operates as a mediator.* He must find ways to persuade highly specialized workers under his authority to maximize their output. He cannot do this primarily by command. He must persuade.

To maximize the output of workers who produce the bulk of an organization’s value, leaders must find ways to reduce the burden of low-value tasks. Reports and meetings are high on the list of low-value time. Leaders must find ways to separate these low-value tasks from high-value tasks. Then they must assign these low-value tasks to lower-skilled, lower-paid workers who use simple computer programs to complete these tasks. These low-output workers become increasingly productive because of computer technologies.

Leaders should reduce paperwork, upward and downward, to one-page weekly reports on potential looming crises: missed

deadlines, supply-chain disruptions, or blowups. These reports need not include details of what each worker has done during the week beyond completing those few tasks that were specified clearly and put in a time chart. Meetings should be mostly one-on-one. They should cover these issues: (1) gaining mutual understanding and mutual agreement on the overall task, (2) explanations and clarifications by the leader of any new orders from higher up the chain of command, and (3) requests from the team members for any tools or services needed to finish the task. The leader must be seen by team members as a facilitator who helps each team member accomplish his task.

Action Step

Could a micromanager effectively tell you how to do your job? If not, why not? Write this down.

D. Fairness

Point 4 of the biblical covenant model is sanctions. These are positive and negative. They are always associated with point 2: hierarchy. They are also associated with point 3: laws.

How does this apply to teamwork? Normally, I begin with God as the best way of understanding how a biblical principle applies to men. But I am unaware of any discussion in the Bible of fairness as it applies to the Persons of the Godhead. There is God the Father's declaration of His satisfaction with Jesus (Matthew 3:16–17; 17:1–5). Making such a declaration is a matter of exercising judgment. But I know of no way of associating this declaration with the concept of mutual fairness among the Persons of the Godhead. I therefore begin with mankind. Specifically, I begin with government, which is the setting of the issue of fairness, an inherently judicial concept.

All government begins with self-government. No government and no hierarchy possesses sufficient resources to

monitor all aspects of the production process. It can monitor non-human inputs. It can monitor physical output. The key production asset is human effort, and this cannot be assessed by outside monitors. No one knows exactly what another person is capable of producing. No one knows how to measure creativity in the production process. Thus, the key to leadership is to implement his model of personal productivity that subordinates want to imitate. "Do as I do, which is consistent with what I say." Then the leader must be able to teach these subordinates how he does this in his job.

A team leader must impose sanctions. But the primary sanctions in the modern production process are applied by team members on each other. Why? Because they alone understand each other's tasks and performance. Outsiders do not. These sanctions are matters of peer pressure, not hiring or firing.

Personal knowledge is crucial in every production process. It takes years to develop such knowledge in any large organization. Most of the rules are informal. It takes years for leaders to develop the intuitive understanding required to impose appropriate sanctions, either positive or negative. This is why promotion from within an organization is generally more effective than bringing in specialists from outside the organization and even outside the field of service. Subordinates see a leader's productivity first-hand. They assess his willingness to take responsibility for his actions. If he is not willing to do this, he will not gain their trust.

A leader must be perceived as competent to judge the output of those under his authority. He must also have some understanding of what kind of environment helps a specialist to produce high-quality output. Above all, he must be perceived as fair in assessing the performance of team members. The Bible mandates fairness.

For the Lord your God, he is God of gods and Lord of masters, the great God, the mighty one and the fearsome one, who favors no one and takes no bribes (Deuteronomy 10:17).

For there is no favoritism with God (Romans 2:11).

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them. You know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him (Ephesians 6:9).

But if you favor certain people, you are committing sin, and you are convicted by the law as lawbreakers (James 2:11).

A leader must be predictable. If he is, then subordinates will hesitate to bring updates of ancient disputes to him, hoping for a favorable decision. The person whose case is like previous cases that went against a complaining team member will decide to swallow his pride and conform to the rules.

Fairness is universally respected. It gains trust. It provides a sense of stability in any working environment. People want stability. They want predictability. Their work provides sufficient unexpected challenges to occupy their time. If they can focus on the technical problems at hand, they are more likely to complete their tasks.

Action Step

Write down the name of the most fair person under whom you have served. Then write down the name of the most unfair person.

E. Replacement

Point 5 of the biblical covenant model is succession. Men die. They are succeeded. Institutions also die. They are succeeded. This means that team leaders must seek successors to those under their authority. They must also train their own replacements.

The team leader's number-one task is to keep the most productive members of the team on the job. But he must face the fact that top people eventually move on. They start

their own businesses. They get lured away with better offers. Sometimes they get bored and move on in order to try new things. They retire. They die. *The key task of a leader regarding succession is to locate replacements for the most productive workers who leave.*

A wise leader offers support for anyone moving on. This seems counter-intuitive. Shouldn't he try to retain his most productive people? Yes. But to do this, he must find ways to reward them. A leader's superiors may not be willing to commit to substantial raises or other rewards. So, a wise leader makes it clear to subordinates that he wants to help them to become more productive, even if they decide to leave. This is how a leader gains maximum efforts from his most productive team members. They must see that their added productivity will not be extracted by the organization without rewards.

The biblical principle on payment of workers is clear: "For the scripture says, 'You shall not put a muzzle on an ox while it treads the grain' and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages'" (1 Timothy 5:18). When an organization's compensation system fails to reward high-value people, a team leader must make it clear to his team that he will do whatever he can to get them compensated, one way or another.

A team member who wants a promotion should work with the team's leader to train a replacement. He will not do this if he thinks he will suffer immediate negative sanctions for announcing that he wants to move up. If he decides to leave the team, he should make the transition easier for the team. This means that there must be no immediate firing in response to someone's notification that he is leaving. Organizations that violate this rule face disruptions when key employees simply do not show up for work one day.

There are also cases when employees must be fired. This also creates disruptions. How can a leader prepare to get a replacement for a person he plans to fire? One solution is for all employees to be required to produce training materials for their replacements as part of their jobs. The fact that they

are all asked to do this helps to reduce everyone's suspicions. When this task is assigned to everyone, the requirement to produce such a transition manual will not be seen as a prelude to dismissal. It can just as easily be seen as a prelude to a promotion when the time comes. A team leader must let each person know that this requirement is for the good of the team. Here is an obvious example. An army squad should have each man trained in more than one skill. Men get killed in battle. The squad needs to fill the position rapidly and efficiently. The lives of squad members are at stake. This training of replacements reduces the division of labor somewhat. In wartime, this policy is necessary for the predictable functioning of the squad.

Moses had a replacement: Joshua. Joshua was no match for Moses. "Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. The people of Israel listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses. There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. There has never been any prophet like him in all the signs and wonders that the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land. There has never been any prophet like him in all the great, fearsome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel" (Deuteronomy 34:9–12). Moses was a tough act to follow. But Joshua was the best man available for the position of national leader. He had served under Moses for almost 40 years. He saw Moses' decision-making. The best way to become a good leader is to serve under a good leader.

Elijah was a great prophet. He knew that he was not long for this world. So, he trained Elisha. He then departed in a unique way: being transported to heaven by a chariot.

As they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared, which separated the two men from each other, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and

their horsemen!” He saw Elijah no more, and he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. He picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen off him, and went back to stand by the bank of the Jordan. He struck the water with Elijah’s cloak that had fallen and said, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” When he had struck the waters, they divided on both sides and Elisha crossed over (2 Kings 2:11–14).

This separation of waters impressed Elisha’s subordinates, as well it should. It was a recapitulation of Moses’ separation of the Red Sea. “When the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him across from them, they said, ‘The spirit of Elijah does rest on Elisha!’ So they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him” (vv. 15–16). This completed the transfer of authority to Elisha.

Moses departed when God called him. So did Elijah. They were at the top of the chain of earthly command. Neither Joshua nor Elisha showed any desire to replace his superior. In Elisha’s case, he did not relish the transfer. “So it came about, when the Lord was going to take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven, that Elijah left with Elisha from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here, please, because the Lord has sent me to Bethel.’ Elisha replied, ‘As the Lord lives, and as you live, I will not leave you.’ So they went down to Bethel. The sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came to Elisha and said to him, ‘Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from you today?’ Elisha replied, ‘Yes, I know it, but do not talk about it’” (2 Kings 2:1–3).

If there is formal training involved in moving up the chain of command, a team leader should submit himself to it. But he should not go through the training in order to be promoted. Paul was clear on the moral necessity of being content with your position in life. “Each one should remain in the calling he was in when God called him to believe. Were you a slave when God called you? Do not be concerned about it. But if you can become free, take advantage of it” (1 Corinthians 7:21–22). The correct biblical goal is to accept greater

responsibility, but only when it is offered. A free man has greater responsibility and greater authority than a slave does. The slave should not be concerned about his slave status, but if he is offered a way to get out, he should take it. The idea here is to let God select from the best of the candidates. *Offer yourself as a qualified candidate, but do not actively seek the promotion.* This lets God decide where you are best fit to serve efficiently and responsibly.

The key here is contentment. For some people in some cultures, this is an elusive thing. Paul wrote: “For I have learned to be content in all circumstances. I know what it is to be poor, and I also know what it is to have plenty. In every way and in all things I have learned the secret of how to be well-fed or to be hungry, and how to have an abundance or to be in need” (Philippians 4:11a–12).

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we have brought nothing into the world. Neither are we able to take out anything. Instead, let us be satisfied with food and clothing. Now those who want to become wealthy fall into temptation, into a trap. They fall into many foolish and harmful passions, and into whatever else makes people sink into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people who desire it have been misled away from the faith and have pierced themselves with much grief (1 Timothy 6:6–10).

There is a legitimate biblical reason for wanting a promotion: you will gain greater authority, meaning greater responsibility. This is a legitimate complaint: “My talents are not being used well in this job.” What is the solution? First, perform so well in your present job that your boss’s boss cannot ignore you. Second, train at least two replacements. This will reduce management’s cost of promoting you. Third, on your own time, create a website of real value to others, especially people who are in a position to hire you. Fourth, start a side business that enables you to make good use of your talents. But, while you are waiting for God to intervene, be content with your job. Master it.

Action Step

Write down the corporate position in your job that you would like to be appointed to. Write down your reasons for wanting to move up or out.

Conclusion

The universe was created and is sustained providentially by a cosmic Team. It relies on the division of labor. This is a fundamental doctrine associated with the Trinity. The family was the first institution created by God. It functions as a team. It relies on the division of labor. The Christian church is a team. It relies on the division of labor. Civil government is a team. It relies on the division of labor. Conclusion: every institution is a team. Every institution relies on the division of labor.

Every team involves a hierarchy. This is point 2 of the biblical covenant model. There is always a chain of command. In the Trinity, the head is God the Father. In the family, the head is normally the father, unless he has departed. In the church, this is the eldership. In civil government, this is elected officials. Functionally, however, in civil government bureaucrats exercise most of the power. They cannot be fired except for cause, which rarely happens.

Because there is a hierarchy, every institution has leaders. The primary function of the leaders is to coordinate the operations of the teams inside the organizations. Large organizations are subdivided into teams, and these teams must be managed. Specialists in management known as leaders motivate members of the teams to work in a coordinated fashion to extend the mission of the organization. Leaders therefore are mediatorial. They represent senior management to employees, and they represent employees to senior management.

Successful leadership is always highly personal. This is because God is a Person. Men are made in His image. So,

any attempts to redefine leadership as essentially a numerical function are doomed to failure. People commit to other people, not to philosophies, management systems, or profit-and-loss statements. God holds people responsible for their actions. He does not hold robots responsible for their actions. Therefore, senior managers hold team leaders responsible for the performance of their teams. At the same time, members of the teams hold team leaders responsible for the success of the teams. They hold them responsible for dealing with senior management. Leadership involves personal responsibility. Leadership is the exercise of authority, and all authority involves personal responsibility.

Organizations are hierarchical. Therefore, all organizations differentiate responsibilities at the top versus responsibilities all the way down the hierarchy. Those people who bear greater responsibilities are by definition more important to the survival of the organization than people who bear reduced responsibilities. In other words, there is no equality within any organization. There is always hierarchy. It is ultimately a hierarchy of personal responsibility. Paul was quite clear about this with respect to the institutional church. “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work with the word and in teaching. For the scripture says, ‘You shall not put a muzzle on an ox while it treads the grain’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages’” (1 Timothy 5:17–18). What is true of the church is true of every organization.

There is no equality in an army. There is no equality in any other organization. *Leadership is inescapably mediatorial.* A leader represents those below him to those above him, and he represents those above him to those below him. Any leader who does not understand this is going to be a failure, biblically speaking. Any leader who does not become an expert in mediatorial service is not going to be successful, biblically speaking. The essence of a tyrant is his unwillingness to serve those below him.

A wise leader is aware of the as-yet unexplained outcomes of the rules known as Pareto’s law and Price’s law. He under-

stands that most of his superiors produce very little of the organization's output. Most of his subordinates produce very little in the team he manages. He must therefore pay close attention to the skills, commitments, motivations, and eccentricities of the small percentage of those people under his jurisdiction who contribute half or more of the team's productivity.

The Bible is clear on this point: *fairness is crucial to successful leadership*. The Bible requires that leaders not show favoritism. They are required to enforce the rules predictably. When their subordinates trust them to do this, and when their superiors trust them to do this, this gives them considerable latitude in making decisions on their own authority. The task of applying fixed ethical principles to historic situations is called casuistry. We all are called on by God to be casuists. Most of us are not good at it. We are supposed to get better at it for as long as we live. In this sense, God requires us to improve our leadership skills for as long as we live.

This means that God requires us to improve our skills as leaders, so that we can become members of the 20% of leaders who produce 80% of the effective leadership within our organizations. We should continue to strive until we enter the ranks of the 4% who produce two-thirds of the effective leadership within our organizations. We do this by pursuing mastery. That is Pillar 4.

Main Action Step

You are a team member. You are not autonomous. Write down those areas of service that you perform that provide the greatest value to other members of your team. Write down the reasons why the other members are dependent. This will give you some sense of your level of responsibility in the team. You must concentrate on these areas of service. There are others who are counting on you. Do not let them down.

PILLAR 4: MASTERY

Also, one who is slack in his work is a brother to the one who destroys the most.

PROVERBS 18:9

Do you see a man skilled at his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before common people.

PROVERBS 22:29

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

Whatever you do, work from the soul as to the Lord and not as to people. You know that you will receive from the Lord the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

COLOSSIANS 3:23–24

Introduction

This is a rhetorical question: “Is God glorified by mediocre work?” Clearly, He is not. There are almost 50 verses in the Old Testament Bible that prohibit offering blemished animal sacrifices. This requirement began with the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:5). Here is the Mosaic law’s general rule: “If it

has any blemish—for example, if it is lame or blind, or has any blemish whatever—you must not sacrifice it to the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 15:21).

Despite what is obvious in these passages on glorifying God with our work, the vast majority of Christians do not pay close attention to the quality of their work. They are among the 80% of the members of any society who produce about 20% of the output. Among this multitude of negligent servants of God, a few may set aside one area of their lives where they strive to excel, such as a hobby. But they do not strive, from morning to night, to improve their performance in their jobs and callings. They do not adopt a program of systematic self-improvement in even one area of their lives, sticking with it all of their lives.

This is a widespread attitude among Christians. “Jesus died for my sins. He has forgiven me. Therefore, with respect to my mediocre work, you must also forgive me.” They do not say this openly, but it governs almost everything they do. It is a mindset. They do not worry that their work is substandard. They pay little attention to its quality. They assume that it is good enough. But, if challenged by their employers or by their customers, they deeply resent the criticism. After all, they think to themselves, “it’s good enough for Jesus, so it should be good enough for you.” It never occurs to them that their work is not good enough for Jesus, nor is their attitude of just getting by.

Yet, in their prayer lives, they do have moments of guilt. They correctly suspect that their lives do not measure up. They may feel the need to buy a book that helps them feel more holy, despite the fact that their performance in every other area of life is mediocre. In 1927, the widow of Rev. Oswald Chambers published a collection of 366 of his brief presentations. It had a powerful title: *My Utmost for His Highest*. It is a daily devotional book. It is not a how-to book. It does not show the reader how to apply the title’s principle in every area of life: family, church, citizenship, work, business, and so

forth. I call it a self-improvement book, but this improvement is limited to the Christian's prayer life and mental attitude. It does not discuss the steps needed to improve our performance in the world of what is sometimes called the prayer closet. It is a book suitable for what Christians sometimes call their quiet time. It is not a book about Christian activism. It is about *anti-activism*. In his devotion titled "The Unheeded Secret," he wrote this:

The great enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ today is the idea of practical work that has no basis in the New Testament but comes from the systems of the world. This work insists upon endless energy and activities, but no private life with God. The emphasis is put on the wrong thing. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation . . . For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20–21). It is a hidden, obscure thing. An active Christian worker too often lives to be seen by others, while it is the innermost, personal area that reveals the power of a person's life.

We must get rid of the plague of the spirit of this religious age in which we live. In our Lord's life there was none of the pressure and the rushing of tremendous activity that we regard so highly today, and a disciple is to be like His Master. The central point of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is a personal relationship with Him, not public usefulness to others.

There is a term for this type of religion: *quietism*. This book directs readers' vision away from the world of service in business or any area of life that is outside the family. It is a kind of manifesto against the idea of mastery in our occupations and callings. Such a concern for dedicated performance in the world outside the prayer closet is supposedly not only irrelevant spiritually, it is a sin, a "plague." I regard Chambers' advice and the theology it represents as a plague. So, you must decide which outlook is the plague and which is the pathway to Christian leadership in every area of life, i.e., comprehensive redemption: fulfilling the Great Commission. Chambers' book was published in the United States in 1935. It is still in print. It is one of the best-selling Christian books of all time.

The year after Chambers' book was published in the United States, the most popular self-help book in American history was published: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. It was published in 1936, in the midst of the Great Depression. It was written by a salesman and successful public speaker, Dale Carnegie (1888–1955). He soon transformed his seminars for teaching public speaking techniques into a highly successful leadership-development seminar program. It continues to attract people seeking to learn and then master the techniques of success. These seminars are presented in cities around the world, month by month. Warren Buffett, for years the richest man on earth, took the seminar as a young man in order to master the skill of public speaking.

The contrast between Chambers' book and Carnegie's is the contrast between evangelical Protestant pietism's retreat from the world and the legendary American tradition of diligently pursuing success. The pietist seeks a sense of peace regarding his personal relationship with God, especially prayer. This sense of peace has little to do with his objective success in other areas of life. The pietist often dismisses success outside the prayer closet as barely worth pursuing, since he sees economic success as a snare of the devil. Jesus also warned about this: "Jesus said to his disciples, 'Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God'" (Matthew 19:23–24). Yet we are also told this: "Now Abram was very rich in animals, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:2). God did not tell him to give away his wealth. Solomon in the Book of Proverbs announced: "The good gifts of the Lord bring wealth and he adds no pain to it" (Proverbs 10:22). Yet he also announced: "Do not work too hard to gain wealth; be wise enough to know when to stop" (Proverbs 23:4). So, we need wisdom to find balance in our lives. Solomon spoke of wisdom as personified.

By me kings reign, and rulers make laws that are just. By me princes rule, nobles, and all who govern with justice. I love those

who love me, and those who diligently seek me, find me. With me are riches and honor, lasting wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold; my produce is better than pure silver. I walk in the path of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice. As a result, I make those who love me inherit wealth; I fill up their treasuries (Proverbs 8:15–21).

There is a biblical balance between prayer and wealth. There is also a link between them. The biblical road to wealth often begins in the prayer closet. But a closet always has a door. It usually swings out from the closet, not inward. When Christians lose their wealth, they usually head back into the prayer closet. They do not pray for God to enable them to remain poor. Rather, they pray to regain what they had lost . . . and perhaps a little more.

It is worth noting that the Protestant pietist tradition arose in the English-speaking West, which became the richest culture in the world after 1800. What the typical pietist has regarded as bare economic subsistence, somehow favorable to spiritual holiness, the rest of the world has regarded as great wealth.

In stark contrast to pietism was the founder of Methodism, John Wesley (1703–1791). Here was his advice in Sermon 50, “The Use of Money.” First, gain all you can. Second, save all you can. Third, give all you can. His once poverty-stricken British and American followers believed him. They took his advice. Within a century, they were middle class. Within two centuries, they were upper middle class. This is the biblical pattern.

This pattern begins with an awareness that we are unproductive servants. Jesus said:

But which of you, who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, “Come immediately and sit down to eat”? Will he not say to him, “Prepare something for me to eat, and put a belt around your clothes and serve me until I have finished eating and drinking. Then afterward you will eat and drink”? He does not thank the servant be-

cause he did the things that were commanded, does he? Even so you also, when you have done everything that you are commanded, should say, “We are unworthy servants. We have only done what we ought to do” (Luke 17:7–10).

There is a solution for unproductive service: *systematic self-discipline*. Peter wrote:

All the things concerning divine power for life and godliness have been given to us through the knowledge of God, who called us through his own glory and excellence. Through these, he gave us precious and great promises, so that you might be sharers in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world that is caused by evil desires. For this reason, do your best to add goodness to your faith; and to goodness add knowledge; knowledge add self-control; to self-control add endurance; to endurance add godliness; to godliness add brotherly affection; and to brotherly affection add love. If these things are in you and grow in you, you will not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever lacks these things is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten he has been cleansed from his past sins (1 Peter 2:3–9).

Wesley lived what he preached. He rode on horseback across England, 250,000 miles, preaching his sermons: over 40,000 of them. He kept a daily journal. He wrote grammars in English, French, Latin, Hebrew, and Greek. He wrote over 300 books. He organized several hundred local societies, i.e., Methodist congregations. My conclusion: the world could use additional unprofitable servants similarly afflicted with this “plague.”

I end this Introduction with Wesley’s concluding words in Sermon 50.

I entreat you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, act up to the dignity of your calling! No more sloth! Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might! No more waste! Cut off every expense which fashion, caprice, or flesh and blood demand! No more covetousness! But employ whatever God has entrusted you with, in doing good, all possible good, in every possible kind and degree to the household of faith, to all men! This is no small part

of “the wisdom of the just.” Give all ye have, as well as all ye are, a spiritual sacrifice to Him who withheld not from you his Son, his only Son: So “laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may attain eternal life!”

A. Providence

Point 1 of the biblical covenant model is God’s transcendence, which is always associated with His presence. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is God incarnate: the Second Person of the Trinity. He entered history at a specific point in time and in a specific place. He dwelt among men. He was uniquely transcendent and uniquely present in history. He is now transcendent, sitting at the right hand of God (Acts 2:32–33). He is present judicially in the sacraments.

I begin my discussion of mastery with the doctrine of providence. Why? Because a Christian who strives for mastery in any area of life should plan with confidence that the time, effort, and emotional commitment that it will take for him to achieve mastery is part of a God-designed, God-supported system of cause and effect. He should first believe that God calls him to pursue mastery. Second, he should also believe that God possesses the power to guarantee him success if he follows his plan. Otherwise, he may fear that he may be wasting his time. The doctrine of God’s power over the affairs of this world is the doctrine of God’s providence. Providence is the doctrine of God’s sovereignty over history. Sovereignty is point 1 of the biblical covenant.

How comprehensive is God’s sovereignty? Total. *God is in total control.* Paul wrote:

We know that for those who love God, he works all things together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Because those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Those whom he predestined, these he also called. Those whom he called, these he also justified. Those whom he justified, these he also glorified. What then shall we say about these things?

If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but delivered him up on behalf of us all, how will he not also with him freely give us all things? (Romans 8:28–32)

A Christian would be wise to review this passage whenever he begins any project or whenever he gets stuck on some aspect of an existing project. Put in modern slang, “God has your back.” We are not in control, but He is. A problem may baffle us, but it does not baffle Him.

God has a program of success that applies to every area of life. I wrote a book on this: *The Five Pillars of Biblical Success* (2008).¹ This model works. Cause and effect are unified because of God’s providence. We do not live in a chaotic universe. We live in an ordered universe. It is ordered by the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. Paul wrote: “The Son is the image of the invisible God. He is the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, those in the heavens and those on the earth, the visible and the invisible things. Whether thrones or dominions or governments or authorities, all things were created by him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15–17).

In contrast is a covenant-breaker who denies God’s providence. He denies that the universe is personally controlled by an omniscient, omnipotent God. He believes in cause and effect, but he cannot explain how this system works and how he is able to understand it. He cannot say why he is confident that there is a program of self-mastery that brings success in history, project by project. He may be self-confident, but he cannot defend his self-confidence with a coherent theory of cause and effect. This puts him at a disadvantage when he competes against a Christian who has spent years disciplining himself in order to attain mastery in the same field. This is not to say that he will lose every competition. But, with regard to the issue of mastery, people are looking for a pattern of success. The covenant-breaker who does not accept

1. You can download it here: garynorth.com/success.pdf.

the Bible's doctrine of providence cannot plausibly assert that God has his back.

The best biblical example of faith in God's providence as a means of encouraging mastery is Joseph in Egypt. After he had been raised to the position of second in command under Pharaoh, he explained to his brothers how this had been possible. "As for you, you meant to harm me, but God meant it for good, to preserve the lives of many people, as you see today" (Genesis 50:20). Their motivations had been irrelevant. God's providence had directed the outcome of their plans. Joseph had never lost hope in God's providence. As a young man, he twice saw in dreams that his brothers would bow down to him (Genesis 37:5–11). This enraged his brothers, who kidnapped him, threw him in a pit, and sold him to slave traders (vv. 18–28). In Egypt, he was sufficiently talented to become the ruler in Potiphar's household. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh (Genesis 39:1). This was a high position. "The Lord was with Joseph and he became a prosperous man. He lived in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord prospered everything that he did. Joseph found favor in his sight. He served Potiphar. Potiphar made Joseph manager over his house, and everything that he possessed, he put under his care" (vv. 2–5). After Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of attempted seduction, Potiphar had him thrown into prison (vv. 19–20). "But the Lord was with Joseph and showed covenant faithfulness to him. He gave him favor in the sight of the prison warden. The prison warden gave into Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever they did there, Joseph was in charge of it. The prison warden did not worry about anything that was in his hand, because the Lord was with him. Whatever he did, the Lord prospered" (vv. 21–23).

In prison, he correctly interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's two servants (Genesis 40:9–13). He told one of them that he would be restored to his position in three days. Joseph had such faith in this outcome that he hoped that this would be his path-

way out of prison. “But think of me when it goes well with you, and please show kindness to me. Mention me to Pharaoh and bring me out of this prison. For indeed I was abducted out of the land of the Hebrews. Here also have I done nothing that they should put me in this dungeon” (vv. 14–15). The dream came true, but there was no immediate deliverance. “Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot about him” (v. 23). Joseph stayed in prison for an additional two years (Genesis 41:1). Only when Pharaoh had two dreams that his soothsayers could not interpret did the servant recall Joseph and tell the Pharaoh about this amazing man he had met in prison (vv. 9–13). Joseph was still in the dungeon (v. 14). But there is no indication that he had been “rotting” in prison. There is no indication that his position of authority had changed. He was still a valuable servant to the warden. He was still gaining valuable experience for exercising leadership, though he was far out of the limelight. He would soon become the most valuable servant in Egypt. He saved the nation from the famine.

Consider also the story of the four Hebrews in Nebuchadnezzar’s school for future leaders in the Babylonian empire (Daniel 1).

The Lord gave Nebuchadnezzar victory over Jehoiakim king of Judah, and he gave him some of the sacred objects from the house of God. He brought them into the land of Babylonia, to the house of his god, and he placed the sacred objects in his god’s treasury. The king spoke to Ashpenaz, his chief official, to bring in some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility— young men without blemish, attractive in appearance, skillful in all wisdom, filled with knowledge and understanding, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the Babylonians’ literature and language. The king counted out for them a daily portion of his delicacies and some of the wine that he drank. These young men were to be trained for three years, and after that, they would serve the king. Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, some of the people of Judah (vv. 2–6).

These men became the best students in the program.

As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and insight in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel could understand all kinds of visions and dreams. At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. The king spoke with them, and among the whole group there were none to compare with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. They stood before the king, ready to serve him. In every question of wisdom and understanding that the king asked them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and those who claimed to speak with the dead, who were in his entire kingdom (vv. 17–20).

They demonstrated mastery. They were far superior to the king's magicians. The king therefore elevated them to high positions. But this later seemed to be a dead end, literally. The king had dreams that his soothsayers could not interpret. So, he announced that all of them should be executed. "So the decree went out that all those who were known for their wisdom were to be put to death. Because of this decree, they searched for Daniel and his friends so they could be put to death" (Daniel 2:13). Daniel intervened. "Then Daniel went to his house and explained to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, what had happened. He urged them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that he and they might not be killed with the rest of the men of Babylon who were known for their wisdom. That night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven" (vv. 17–19). He told the king what he had dreamed. Then he interpreted it. The king allowed him and the three Hebrew youths to live. Not only that; he elevated them to higher positions. "Then the king made Daniel highly honored and gave him many wonderful gifts. He made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon. Daniel became chief governor over the wisest men of Babylon. Daniel made a request of the king, and the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be administrators over the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court" (vv. 48–49).

There is a pattern here. God has built this pattern into the

creation. He providentially sustains it through His providential system of sanctions. Positive sanctions outweigh negative sanctions in the lives of covenant-keepers. Throughout the Bible, we see evidence of the truth of this biblical principle: *masterful service is faithful service*. It leads to greater authority. Greater authority means greater responsibility. This is the process of dominion that undergirds the dominion covenant (Genesis 1:26–28).

He who does not pursue mastery in whatever position God has placed him is being unfaithful to God. He is avoiding God's program of dominion. He does not recognize the covenantal connection between mastery and success. He does not pursue excellence because he has rejected the concept of dominion in history, both individual and corporate. He has chosen to disobey this command: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you" (Matthew 6:33). He has adopted this approach to Christian living: "my mediocrity for his highest."

Action Step

Write down the most important thing you are doing with your life that you are confident that God fully supports.

B. Subordination

Point 2 of the biblical covenant model is authority. Authority is always delegated from God, who is sovereign (point 1). All authority is hierarchical. All authority involves representation. A leader represents those under his authority to those over him. He also represents those over him to those under him. Leadership is therefore always mediatorial.

With respect to mastery, how does point 2 apply? To answer this, I begin with Jesus, the perfect man. How did hierarchy apply to His mission? In His incarnation, Jesus Christ

was subordinate to God the Father. “Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, the Son can do nothing of himself, except only what he sees the Father doing, for whatever the Father is doing, the Son does these things also. For the Father loves the Son and he shows him everything that he himself does, and he will show him greater things than these so that you will be amazed”” (John 5:19–20). This is the model for biblical mentorship. Moses trained Joshua. Eli trained Samuel. Elijah trained Elisha. Jesus trained the disciples.

This training begins in the family. Every family is hierarchical. It is a hierarchy of authority. It is therefore a hierarchy of responsibility. The hierarchy of parental authority is temporary. “Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, he will be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). So, those who exercise lawful authority in the family are required by God to train their children to become responsible adults. “Teach a child the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction” (Proverbs 22:6). What is crucial is the content of the instruction. The hierarchy exists in order to further the content of the instruction.

In principle, kingship ended definitively with the ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God. He alone is prophet, priest, and king. These three offices of the Mosaic order ceased to exist historically with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It took just under two millennia for the world to catch up institutionally with the demise of kingship. Kingship visibly ended by the end of World War I in November 1918. Consider the three grandsons of Queen Victoria. Two of them no longer ruled. Russia’s Czar Nicholas II had been overthrown in a revolution in 1917. He was executed in July 1918. Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated in November 1918, fleeing to the Netherlands. The third grandson, King George V, remained on the throne, but he possessed no power. The fourth monarch, Austria’s Emperor Charles I, was sent into exile in Switzerland in 1919. There are no longer significant monarchs

by birth who retain power for their lifetimes. As Great Britain's puppet "King Farouk" of Egypt said in 1948, four years before his overthrow by a military coup: "The whole world is in revolt. Soon there will be only five Kings left—the King of England, the King of Spades, The King of Clubs, the King of Hearts, and the King of Diamonds." That witty statement was an anachronism in 1948. The King of England no longer possessed power. He was a respected figurehead whose power was little more than liturgical. This had been true ever since the early 1800s.

Leaders come and go. They occupy authority briefly, but then they depart. They serve as mentors, either formally or informally. They are models only briefly, except in rare occasions when bits and pieces of their institutional legacies turn them into posthumous role models. Even here, they are mostly faded memories. Rare is any large institution that remains a self-conscious reflection of a previous leader.

Thus, the legacy of a leader is mostly through those he serves: those above him and those below. He may make an occasional decision that shapes the team substantially, but the effects rarely last long. Conclusion: *leadership has its main impact through making subordinates more productive.*

This is why a leader's work ethic is crucial. Subordinates see this work ethic in action. *The stronger a leader's work ethic, the more long-term impact he will have on his team.* This work ethic is the main source of a leader's output. His unique skills cannot be transferred to his subordinates, but they see traces of the quality of his output. They see the care that he shows for their performance. A leader should have these three priorities, in this order: (1) the completion of the team's mission; (2) the individual success of his subordinates after this completion; (3) enhancing his reputation as a leader with those above him after this completion. He must make this clear to his subordinates at the beginning of each major mission. Then his behavior must reflect this hierarchical system of priorities. Over time, he will gain the trust of those above him

and also those below him if he is supervising the successful completion of a high percentage of missions on these terms.

He needs to impress his superiors. His main goal here should be to demonstrate that his team is highly reliable, assuming that it really is. Decision-makers higher up in the chain of command should learn to trust the performance of his team. They will then be more likely to rely on his team. This increases the degree of responsibility of his team. *This is the goal of the dominion covenant: increased responsibility.* This will be followed by increased authority. The team leader must lobby the higher-ups to provide individually meaningful rewards for team members because of their increased performance as a unit. In a world of scarcity, we do not get something for nothing. Senior management should recognize this. If they don't, the organization will not maximize its output. The laborers are worthy of their pay.

Developing the skills of leadership is a lifetime calling before God. The biblical model is service. This must be high-quality service. The obligation of service is upward and downward (point 2). It is based on these factors: a clear presentation of the mission (point 1), effective training for all members of the team (point 3), decision-making that produces successful completion (point 4), and maintaining the team's above-average performance over time (point 5).

Action Step

Write down why you deserve a promotion. Then write down why you have not received it.

C. Concentration

Point 3 of the biblical covenant model is the concept of boundaries. These are primarily ethical boundaries: right and wrong. Laws place limits on men's actions. Sometimes these

are ethical laws. Sometimes they are judicial laws. Sometimes they are boundaries of nature: limits.

How does the concept of boundaries apply to mastery? The Bible provides no information on Jesus' work prior to His calling of the disciples. He was a builder, a *tecton* (Mark 6:3). This may mean a carpenter. We are not told if He was a master craftsman. We know Him only from the gospels' records of His work as a teacher. In terms of the impact of His teaching, we can safely conclude that He was a master teacher. We know this: He did nothing else but teach for three years. He left His profession as a builder. Teaching was His calling: the most important thing He could do in which He would have been most difficult to replace. Teaching was central to His work as Redeemer.

Achieving anything that approaches perfection takes specialization. It also takes concentration. Should you strive for perfection? Yes. Jesus said: "Therefore you must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). You will not attain this in history, but it is still a mandated biblical goal. It is not optional. The problem is this: *you cannot attain perfection in every area of life*. So, you must concentrate on just a few areas. You must strive to perform adequately in most areas. You must strive for perfection in a few.

A leader must concentrate on a limited area of responsibility. He must not attempt to become a jack of all trades, but a master of none. He must become a master of a limited number of skills that are required by both his job and his calling. These may be separate skills. But some skills cross over from job to calling, such as skills of communication: writing and public speaking. Because so few people ever develop these two skills, anyone seeking to increase his responsibility and therefore his authority should invest time and emotional commitment to master them.

Mastery of a new job takes time. There are debates over how much time it takes to become competent in a new job. A common guess is 500 hours. Others think it is 1,000 hours. It

depends on the complexity of the job and the innate skills of the worker. I do not think it takes this long. That is because employers expect minimal performance within a week or two from a new person on a job. The smooth running of the organization requires a rapid climb up the front end of the learning curve. So, basic competence that is sufficient to keep you from being fired does not take 500 hours. But to become the equivalent of a journeyman probably does.

Once a worker has become sufficiently competent to be left alone to perform his tasks, meaning his mission, he should begin to study what it takes to gain mastery. If this takes formal training, he should volunteer for this training. Before he volunteers to take this training, he should be an above-average performer in his narrowly defined, institutionally confined mission. This takes time. It takes careful observation of the task. It takes asking lots of questions of experienced performers. It surely takes writing down their answers. It takes reading of specialized manuals. The long-term goal is mastery. This requires a systematic process of self-discipline.

How much time beyond competence on the job does it take to become a master? A common guess is 5,000 hours. But hours are chronological. Different people have wide variations in their ability to learn new material well enough to implement what they know on the job.

It is far more important to master the skills necessary for above-average performance on the job than it is to read books on the techniques of leadership. Any time that you invest beyond mastering the advanced requirements of the job should be limited to better writing and better public speaking. In the long run, these two skills will prepare you for leadership far better than any other skills that can be learned off the job. It will take you at least five years to develop these skills unless you have an innate gift in either area. Even if you do have an innate gift, you should be patient. Invest at least five hours a week on writing and two hours a week public speaking. Your ability to write clearly and persuasively will help you become

a better public speaker. You should develop these two skills on your own time. Your time at work should be devoted to improving your assigned performance, not your skills as a leader.

If you become so good in your job that your superiors cannot ignore you, you will eventually be offered a promotion. You will be asked to leave behind the job that you love or at least in which you have mastery. You will be asked to take on responsibilities that are only loosely connected to your present job. This kind of promotion is almost always a pathway to leadership. I advise you to accept the promotion, but only after you are convinced that this different mix of responsibilities will advance the kingdom of God more effectively than remaining in your present position. *Move up even though you must move out.* That is what Joseph did in Egypt. That is what the young men in Babylon did. That is what Jesus did. He did not remain a carpenter. (I do not recommend taking a promotion that requires more time on the job than your present job requires. You need this time after your salaried work to pursue your calling and to perform other duties.)

This career strategy of up and out is basic to life. Here is an obvious example. A mother may love being a mother. However, unless she dies young, she will eventually cease performing the tasks generally associated with motherhood. She will move to grandmotherhood. The skills that she perfected while rearing her children will become obsolete in her life. She would be unwise to offer unsolicited advice to her daughters about what they should do as young mothers. Her expertise becomes excess baggage. So, what should she do? She probably should start a blog aimed at young mothers. This is point 5 of the biblical covenant: succession. But it is also point 2: authority. Other people will consider her advice. They may even try to implement some of it. If she is wise, her site will offer forums for mothers to discuss with each other how to deal with specific problems. The division of intellectual labor is extended by blog forums. (She will eventually have to bar access to trouble-makers.)

Become the best performer at your task. You will need the cooperation of your peers if you want to move up without being transferred off of the team. Your peers' opinion of you matters. They must not regard you as a slacker. To achieve the goal of becoming the best performer, you must focus on those few tasks that will maximize your value to the team, as determined by your boss. There will be few of these high-value tasks. Perform the other tasks adequately. Do not strive for mastery here. *You must become highly skilled at whatever you are required by your boss to perform.* This is your pathway to leadership. You must find out from him what the key requirements of your job are. His opinion counts. Work with him to identify those few elements in your assignment that produce most of the value of your output.

If you manage a team, work more efficiently to make your team a top performer. Here is the best strategy: identify those members of your team who produce 80% of the value of the team's output. There will be only a few of them. Work face-to-face with these members to find ways to increase the value of their output even more. Help them to focus on the 20% of their mission which produces 80% of their output. They should devote most of their time to this vital 20%. About 80% of your time should be devoted to this 20/80 task. At every stage, the key is focus on those few activities that maximize the value of the team's output. The quest for mastery should begin here.

Action Step

Write down what you think is the most important task that you are required to perform in your job that produces the greatest value of your output, as determined by your boss. Tomorrow, check with your boss to see if he agrees with your assessment.

D. Judgment

Point 4 of the biblical covenant model is sanctions. These are positive and negative. They are always associated with point 2: hierarchy. They are also associated with point 3: laws.

The task of judgment is to apply permanent laws to specific situations. This is the art of *casuistry*. It is the essence of biblical wisdom. It is the heart of maturity.

The biblical model of judgment is in Genesis 1: God's creation of the universe. At the end of each day, except for day two, God announced: "It is good." First, He had standards of judgment (point 3). Second, He had a plan of action (point 2). He carried out the plan daily. Then He assessed the quality of His work (point 4).

We are to do this in our own lives, day by day, issue by issue. Jesus warned: "Why do you look at the tiny piece of straw that is in your brother's eye, but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take out the piece of straw that is in your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the piece of straw that is in your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5). How is this self-judgment possible? Because we are made in God's image. What He did and continues to do perfectly, we can do provisionally. God holds us accountable for rendering accurate judgment: judicially, aesthetically, and economically. We should improve in this area of our lives as we gain more experience. This is an aspect of progressive sanctification.

A master of declaring judgment was Solomon. He was the author of the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the two books in the Bible most focused on both the limits and benefits of wisdom. Proverbs begins: "The proverbs of Solomon son of David, the king of Israel." Here is the first proverb: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge—fools despise wisdom and instruction" (v.7). He had learned this from David. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.

His praise endures forever (Psalm 111:10; ESV). It should be obvious that developing good judgment is crucial to everyone's calling in life. Mastering the skill of imposing good judgment brings positive sanctions. "Wisdom is more precious than jewels and nothing you desire can compare to her. She has length of days in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor" (Proverbs 3:15–16).

Solomon practiced what he preached. His reputation as a wise leader spread beyond the borders of Israel. The queen of Sheba journeyed to Jerusalem to see him in action. She was impressed. His wisdom was not mediocre.

When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very long caravan, with camels loaded with spices, much gold, and many precious gemstones. When she arrived, she told Solomon all that was in her heart. Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing she asked that the king did not answer. When the queen of Sheba saw all Solomon's wisdom, the palace that he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the work of his servants and their clothing, also his cupbearers, and the manner in which he offered burnt offerings in the house of the Lord, there was no more breath in her. She said to the king, "It is true, the report that I heard in my own land of your words and your wisdom. I did not believe what I heard until I came here, and now my eyes have seen it. Not half was told me about your wisdom and wealth! You have exceeded the fame that I heard about" (1 Kings 10:1–8).

If you intend to become a leader, use Solomon as a role model. He is the biblical model of a wise man (except in marital matters: 1 Kings 11).

A leader must communicate to his team whatever the organization's latest task/mission is for the team. To do this, he must recognize and then enforce the details of what each member is expected to produce. But he cannot judge how a worker should produce it. A leader in the West probably does not supervise an assembly line. He must work with each team

member to help him put together a plan to achieve his assignment. This is a joint effort. He assists a subordinate to maximize the subordinate's contribution to the team's mission.

President Ronald Reagan (1981–89) negotiated a 1987 nuclear weapon disarmament treaty with the Premier of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev (1985–91). A Russian language expert taught Reagan a phrase in Russian that rhymed: “doveryai, no proveryai.” Translated: “trust, but verify.” Reagan used this phrase repeatedly with Gorbachev in the negotiations. He also used it with representatives of the American media. The phrase identified two crucial aspects of every joint plan of action. Trust is subjective. It must be based on objective evidence that a continuation of this trust is warranted. (Gorbachev oversaw the dissolution of the Soviet Union on December 25, 1991. That event ended the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, which had begun shortly after World War II [1939–45].)

The phrase, “trust, but verify,” applies to every leader's overall task of management. His superiors must trust him, but they will ask for verification along the path of every mission. He must do the same with his subordinates. Up and down the chain of command, every participant should expect to be trusted, but he must also expect to have those above him ask for verification. This means that every mission must have specific final objectives and a deadline. It must also have specific intermediate performance markers along the timeline. There must be mutual agreement regarding the realism and legitimacy of these markers. Otherwise, the deadlines will produce this response. “I love deadlines. I love the whooshing sound they make as they go by.”

Once there is agreement on the mission's final deadline and also the reporting requirements that apply to each team member's performance, the leader must assess the likely objective output of each member, deadline by deadline. He is not equipped to judge each team member's creativity. This process is far too complex. Knowledge work requires judg-

ment by the workers. It requires a division of intellectual labor. It requires a degree of specific knowledge that a leader does not possess. But there must be scheduled output markers that let the leader know that a subordinate is on track to completing his part of the mission. A team leader and each worker must agree to these markers. Then the leader must enforce them.

It requires judgment to devise the output markers and the deadline. The mission's deadline is announced higher up the chain of command, but devising a team's intermediate deadlines is the responsibility of the team leader. He must get agreement on these markers early in the process.

A crucial component of any plan is an accurate estimate of the performance of that small minority of workers who will produce the lion's share of the output. The organization's senior planners had better take this inequality of output into account. The implementation of the plan must be made by team leaders. They must do the hard work of allocating the assignments in terms of the expected output of their teams. They must know how to motivate team members to meet performance standards on time. The key workers ("players") are the Pareto distribution minority.

Here is the crucial managerial task of leaders in a complex world. A leader must devise sanctions that are perceived as fair by most team members, but which will also motivate the Pareto minority to maximum effort. This is the challenge facing every coach. He must devise rules that motivate his star players, but which do not create resentment by the players whose performance in support roles is crucial to victory.

Here is my advice to you. Imitate a sports coach, but with this exception: formulate your plan of action in consultation with your team. A coach does not consult with team members. Recognize that all of your team's members want to win. You must persuade them that the agreed-on plan and its sanctions will maximize the likelihood of a victory. Then you must enforce the sanctions impartially. You must apply the

permanent rules to specific cases. This is no easy task. Yet it is the essence of leadership. It is the essence of wisdom. It takes years of experience to develop this degree of wisdom. It takes mastery at every level up the chain of command.

There are three aspects of rendering judgment that are important for improving your performance. The first is repetition. The professional pianist who practices playing the scales daily understands this. The craftsman who concentrates on doing the same procedure over and over understands this. He gets better at it. He can see that he gets better at it. He evaluates his own work, and he knows that he is still improving. When he stops improving, he searches for an explanation. He tries to overcome this impediment.

Yet repetition is not enough. There is a second aspect of rendering judgment. Not only must you practice the familiar exercises, you must also push yourself to new levels of performance. You must push beyond your comfort zone. You must set aside time every week to train your mind or your mind-body coordination to perform a new, complex, difficult task that you cannot presently do. This technique has a name: *deliberate practice*. There are books and websites devoted to it. This is mandatory for both success and leadership. I mean this. It is not optional. You will have to do this at home after your salaried hours if you are applying this technique to your calling. You must adopt this technique for the sake of the Great Commission and your calling. Here is the rule: “Do you see a man skilled at his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before common people” (Proverbs 22:29). Common people may not recognize or understand your degree of mastery. This does not matter if kings do. Most important, it matters that the King of kings notices. You want Him to ask: “Is this to please Me?” You want to be able to answer: “Yes, Lord.”

This leads me to the third important aspect in rendering judgment: *feedback*. A performer needs feedback. When a person is starting out, he usually needs a teacher. The teacher

assesses his performance, exercise by exercise. He makes suggestions on how to improve. The student makes rapid progress if he has a skilled teacher. In the modern world, this kind of instruction is expensive. In the stage between journeyman status and mastery, the journeyman should seek out a master mentor. Master mentors are difficult to locate and even more difficult to retain. They usually do this only because they see it as part of their calling (point 2): either replacement or else aiding another person's inheritance (point 5). They donate their time. A journeyman could not afford to pay the hourly fee.

If you pursue self-mastery and then performance mastery, you will be greatly aided if you can locate a master mentor. If you persuade him to aid you, make a vow (point 4) to yourself, and maybe even to God, that you will serve as a free mentor to at least one journeyman after you have mastered the field. If you ever become a virtuoso, vow to train a master.

Action Step

Write down some area of your work that is micromanaged by your boss.

E. Destiny

Point 5 of the biblical covenant model is succession. Men die. They are succeeded. Institutions also die. They are succeeded. This is not true of the institutional church, the bride of Christ. It is unique in this respect. It extends into eternity. The kingdom of God is also eternal. This is the civilization of God. It is the extension of the work of covenant-keepers. It will never be succeeded.

If you have a sense of personal destiny, you have a sense of personal destination. You are headed somewhere special. You feel destined to achieve something. Maybe you believe

yourself to be predestined by God. That makes you difficult for someone else to stop.

Jesus had a sense of destiny from a young age. This was because He understood the importance of His mission. The only biblical account of His youth is the story of His time in Jerusalem, speaking with the Jewish leaders. His knowledge amazed them. Then His parents found Him in the temple. They had lost track of Him. They were concerned. “He said to them, ‘Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I had to be about my Father’s business?’” (Luke 2:49). He was reminding them of what they should already have understood. He was at work in building the kingdom of God. His focus was on this task, not the normal tasks of childhood.

God gives a Christian leader this advantage over his competitors: he sees his efforts as part of a long-term mission that extends into eternity. Whatever he does today will affect what he hears on the day of final judgment (Matthew 25), and also what he inherits on the far side of the final judgment (Revelation 21, 22). If Christians do not understand their work in these terms, they lose this advantage.

The advantage has to do with their confidence in the tasks of life. This is not autonomous self-confidence. Rather, it is self-confidence based on God’s decree. Paul wrote:

God chose us beforehand for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will. Our adoption results in the praise of his glorious grace that he has freely given us in the One he loves. In Jesus Christ we have redemption through his blood and the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. He lavished this grace upon us with all wisdom and understanding. God made known to us the hidden purpose of his will, according to what pleased him, and which he demonstrated in Christ, with a view to a plan for the fullness of time, to bring all things together, all things in heaven and on earth, under one head, even Christ. In Christ we were appointed as heirs. We were decided on beforehand according to the plan of him who works out everything according to the purpose of his will. God appointed us as heirs so that we might be the first to

have a certain hope in Christ, so we would be for the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:5–12).

Paul's steadfast faith in God's eternal decree sustained him in his many tribulations. He could not be dissuaded from completing his mission.

From Jews I received five times the “forty lashes minus one.” Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day on the open sea. I have been on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, in danger from robbers, in danger from my own people, in danger from the Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the wilderness, in danger at sea, in danger from false brothers. I have been at hard work and in hardship, in many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often in fasting, in cold and nakedness (2 Corinthians 11:24–27).

He did not complain. He said he was content. “Therefore I am content for Christ's sake in weaknesses, in insults, in troubles, in persecutions and distressing situations. For whenever I am weak, then I am strong” (1 Corinthians 12:10). He had a sense of destiny. He knew that God had selected him to carry Christ's message of salvation to the gentiles. This knowledge empowered him in the face of persecutions.

Paul did not write much, but his handful of letters reshaped the world. They have had far more lasting impact on more people than the writings of Plato or Aristotle (who opposed each other). There are few followers of Plato or Aristotle today. Hardly anyone reads their books. Hardly anyone ever has. In contrast, there are hundreds of millions of people who read and believe the letters of Paul. Some of them even believe Ephesians 1:5–12. I hope you are one of them.

Action Step

Write down why your commitment to mastery should imitate Paul's commitment.

Conclusion

There are few Christians who have as their life's goal the attainment of mastery in any area of life. They share this lack of commitment with the vast majority of people who have ever lived. The vast majority of people throughout history have drifted through life, oblivious to the opportunities for leadership that are all around them. They do not want leadership, although they cannot escape it. They are members of families, and when they marry, they cannot escape the responsibilities of leadership. But they do not take great care to be leaders of their families. They do not take great care at anything in their lives.

This offers tremendous opportunities for others to exercise leadership. Most people avoid taking extra responsibilities if they are given the opportunity to turn down the offer. In contrast, a leader seeks out opportunities to take on extra responsibilities. He understands that this is the path to leadership. *Influence flows to people who take responsibility.*

Most people are aware of the fact that, in order to be an effective leader, they must devote above-average time and effort to mastering the techniques of leadership. But few people understand the sequence of mastery. They are unaware that gaining leadership almost always requires that a leader first attain an abnormal degree of mastery in his daily work. Leadership is awarded by leaders who are higher up on the chain of command. This is a basic law of leadership: *leaders do not promote slackers to positions of leadership.* It is too risky to become dependent on slackers.

Leadership is rarely purchased, and when it is purchased, the followers are not committed to any great degree. If would-be leaders are willing to spend enough money, they can purchase the obedience of others, but they cannot purchase the kind of dedication that is required to leave a lasting mark on the world. I ask: What is the point of accepting the burdens of leadership if not to leave a positive mark on the world?

Paul wrote this to the church at Corinth. "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run the race, but that only

one receives the prize? So run to win the prize. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a wreath that is perishable, but we do it to receive one that is imperishable. Therefore I do not run without purpose or box by beating the air. But I subdue my body and make it a slave, so that after I have preached to others, I myself may not be disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:24–27). He understood the meaning of hard work. It was comparable to training for a race. This is the price of mastery. *Mastery is the pathway to leadership*. Toward the end of his life, he wrote this to his former trainee Timothy. “For I am already being poured out. The time of my departure has come. I have competed in the good contest; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. The crown of righteousness has been reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6–8). He had paid the personal price of this victory. He had no inkling of the world-transforming effects his letters would have. He had walked across the Mediterranean world for decades. He had planted churches. Yet his letters were the key to his retroactive success.

There is nothing in the Bible that justifies the idea that a person who is redeemed by God’s grace should strive for anything less than mastery in his calling. No one can attain mastery in every area of life. But God gives us the power to attain mastery that will leave a lasting legacy in history and eternity in specific areas of our lives. That is the great promise of redemption. A redeemed person can make a difference. But he cannot make a difference at zero price. He cannot make a significant difference at a discount price. He must pay the price, just as Jesus Christ paid the price for his redemption. Therefore, he is expected to pay the price as an unprofitable servant to become a less unprofitable servant.

There are tens of millions of Christians who have adopted the philosophy of life encapsulated in this slogan: “my mediocrity for His highest.” They understand that they cannot be ef-

fective leaders without mastering some area of their lives. They choose not to. This philosophy is the enemy of leadership. They understand that they could not raise an army with a banner that says “my mediocrity for His highest.” They understand that they could not mobilize the Christian army with this call to action: “your mediocrity for His highest.” They may sing the great hymn written by Arthur S. Sullivan, *Onward Christian Soldiers*. But they do not believe its message, than they believe this hymn: *O How Love I Thy Law*.² The words of these hymns condemn them.

Do not let your words condemn you.

Main Action Step

You can master only a few things, but it is crucial that you really do master them.

Most people become proficient in their jobs. They spend at least five days a week at these jobs. They are paid to improve. You must devote one hour a day on the job to learning new skills or improving existing ones. This will require time management. This will not be easy.

Most salaried workers pay little attention to their callings. You should. You must first identify your calling. Then you must devote ten hours a week to mastering it. That is about 500 hours a year. This will take you at least a decade to achieve mastery if you stick rigorously to the program.

Use a time-management book or website. Block out one hour a day after the end of your salaried day, five days a week, plus five hours on Saturdays, to devote to mastering a calling. You must balance reading and implementation: word and deed. Write down the titles of three books you will read over the next 12 months on your calling. Then write down five hours of projects per week over the next two months. At the end of two months, repeat the process. Then stick to your program.

2. Read the hymn here: bit.ly/ThyLaw.

PILLAR 5: INHERITANCE

You must not make for yourself a carved figure nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water below. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I punish the ancestors' wickedness by bringing punishment on the descendants, to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me. But I show covenant faithfulness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

EXODUS 20:4–6

Introduction

This is God's second commandment. Christians have recited it for centuries. Yet rare is the Christian who has ever thought about what the text says. Christians take these words seriously: "third and fourth generation." But they pay no attention to the word "thousands." The text creates a contrast: three or four generations vs. thousands. Thousands of what? Commentators are agreed: *thousands of generations*. The text surely does not mean thousands of people. God loves only thousands of people? There are hundreds of millions of Christians alive today. There have been millions throughout history. This leaves us with no alternative: "thousands" refers to thousands of generations.

The word is plural. Let us assume a minimum of 2,000

generations. At 40 years per generation, that is 80,000 years. But, in Moses' day, when God gave the Ten Commandments, the listeners would have imagined that a generation was at least 60 years. Moses was 80 when he received the Ten Commandments from God, and he died at age 120 (Deuteronomy 34:7). His brother Aaron died at 123 (Numbers 33:39). So, the listeners would have concluded that a generation was at least 60 years. That meant that there were about 120,000 years to go . . . minimum.

Have you ever considered this time frame? Have you ever heard a sermon preached on this time frame? The answer to both questions is probably "no." Think about the implications of this time frame. Here is one implication. The conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men has barely begun. *Christianity is in its infancy.*

You may be thinking this: "This interpretation cannot be correct. The word 'thousands' cannot possibly refer to generations." If this is your view, you need to read this: "Therefore know that the Lord your God—he is God, the faithful God, who keeps covenants and faithfulness for a thousand generations with those who love him and keep his commandments, but repays those who hate him to their face, to destroy them; he will not be lenient on whoever hates him; he will repay him to his face. You will therefore keep the commandments, the statutes, and the decrees that I command you today, so that you will do them" (Deuteronomy 7:9–11). The Hebrew word "thousand" applies to the word "generation." There are two words in the text.

In this passage, there are only a thousand generations of God's grace, whereas in Exodus 20, there are thousands. This points to the likelihood that the numbers in both passages should not be interpreted literally. Otherwise, there would be a discrepancy of at least a thousand generations. Exodus 20 teaches otherwise: God's covenantal faithfulness is continuous, generation after generation. So, we should interpret the words "thousand" and "thousands" figuratively. But most

Bible-believing Christians resist taking this approach to what are clearly literal words in what appear to be literal passages. When Christians refer to the Ten Commandments authoritatively to other people, they do not tell their listeners this: “Of course, everyone knows that the word ‘thousands’ is figurative. It is symbolic. But the rest of the Ten Commandments must be interpreted literally.” So, I ask you: what does the word ‘thousands’ symbolize? I see only one possibility: “until the end of time.” Do you have a better suggestion?

I think sin-filled history will end in much less than a thousand generations. Why? Because of my confidence in the long-term expansion of Christianity’s influence in society. The disparity in God’s visible blessings between Christian civilization and its rivals will become immense if the promised compounding process of Christian cultural expansion continues. Such a discrepancy would make ludicrous the final rebellion of Satan at the end of time (Revelation 20). So, because I take seriously the promises of success for covenant-keepers, I prefer to interpret “thousands of generations” figuratively. Another reason is this: the text of the Bible indicates that God created the world around 4,000 B.C. The covenantal story in the Bible took only 4,000 years. Why will it take 120,000 years to work out the implications of sin versus redemption? Finally, how will anyone remember all the important events of 120,000 years? We can barely make sense of the past since Jesus’ time. My conclusion: today’s sin-filled world does not have 80,000 to 120,000 years ahead of it. Then when will time end? Nobody knows.

There are three main views of eschatology: the doctrine of final things. Some Christians think that Jesus may return at any time. They think the final judgment will begin then. These people are called amillennialists. Other interpreters think the final judgment will take place a thousand years after Jesus returns with angels to set up His millennial kingdom. These people are called premillennialists. I think the world has about a thousand years to go before the final judgment, but I am not adamant about this time frame. I am a postmil-

lennialist. But if Christians take literally the words of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 7, the world is just getting started.

I hope I now have your attention. I am going to draw a conclusion that will now seem almost self-evident. The Bible says clearly that covenant-breaking societies do not survive intact for long, at least not when compared with how long Christian civilization has survived and will survive. The contrast is between three or four generations versus this (minimum): until the end of time. God has clearly spoken to His people. He has said that, compared to the society that bears His name, all societies are short-lived. They will not stand the test of time. Why not? Because God controls time. He brings negative sanctions against covenant-breakers and covenant-breaking societies.

This time frame is important for understanding the biblical concept of leadership. Biblical leadership is not supposed to last for only one generation. It is not “one and done.” It is inter-generational. It is inter-generational for thousands of generations, say the Ten Commandments. If you do not want to take this number literally, then you had better say this: *biblical leadership extends until the end of time.*

I will put it differently. *Any concept of leadership that does not insist on and plan for inter-generational continuity and also growing Christian influence is not biblical.* A Christian leader should not mentally restrict the time frame in which his efforts may have positive effects to his own lifetime, or perhaps at most his grandchildren’s lifetime. Such a short time frame is not biblical for Christians. Why? Because it is the curse that God imposes on His enemies: three or four generations.

Americans have a phrase: “to sell something short.” This phrase comes from the world of investing. When an investor sells a commodity or a stock short, he does so because he thinks its value will fall. I therefore say this. If you think Christian leadership extends for only a few generations, you are selling Christianity short. You are selling the kingdom of God short. *You are selling yourself short.* You are operating in

terms of what is clearly a covenant-breaker's time frame. I am asking you to adopt the Bible's time frame for covenant-keepers. This is necessary if you are to understand correctly the Bible's concept of leadership.

A. Promises

Point 1 of the biblical covenant model is God's transcendence, which is always associated with His presence. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is God incarnate: the Second Person of the Trinity. He entered history at a specific point in time and in a specific place. He dwelt among men. He was uniquely transcendent and uniquely present in history. He is now transcendent, sitting at the right hand of God (Acts 2:32–33). He is present judicially in the sacraments.

With respect to inter-generational effects, what did Jesus do that manifests His sovereignty? I suggest that we look at His promises. He gave promises to His people. One of them is this: "I give to you a kingdom, even as my Father has given a kingdom to me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29–30). This is a promise of leadership. Leadership involves the imposition of negative sanctions. This leadership began before Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70. Church leaders publicly preached against the leaders of Israel. This undermined the authority of these leaders. After A.D. 70 and the destruction of the temple by Roman soldiers, the twelve tribes of Israel disappeared from history.

Jesus' final words to the disciples just before His ascension were these: "But you will receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This power came from the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Thus began the transformation of the world beyond the borders of tiny Israel in Palestine. This transformation is still going on. If Exodus 20:6 and Deuteronomy 7:9 are taken literally, it has just barely begun.

The Bible is filled with promises to God's people. Some of these apply to individuals. Others refer to institutions. Some are positive. Some are negative. Here is what Isaiah promised with respect to what he called the new heaven and the new earth.

For see, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or be brought to mind. But you will be glad and rejoice forever in what I am about to create. See, I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and her people as a delight. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and be glad over my people; weeping and cries of distress will no longer be heard in her. Never again will an infant live there only a few days; nor will an old man die before his time. One who dies at one hundred years old will be considered a young person. Anyone who fails to reach the age of one hundred years old will be considered cursed. They will build houses and inhabit them, and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build a house and another live in it; they will not plant, and another eat; for as the days of trees will be the days of my people. My chosen will fully outlive the work of their hands. They will not labor in vain, nor give birth to dismay. For they are the children of those blessed by the Lord, and their descendants with them (Isaiah 65:17–23).

This passage does not refer to the world after the final judgment. How do we know this? Because there will still be death, Isaiah said. But we know that there will not be death after the final judgment. Why not? Because there will be no sin. Therefore, Isaiah's promise has yet to be fulfilled. Premillennialists argue that Jesus will return to earth to set up a millennial kingdom. This will fulfill it, they say. Postmillennialists argue that this will be fulfilled before the final judgement. Amillennialists argue that this prophecy's references to death must be ignored. This prophecy has to refer to the post-resurrection world, they say. But the promises regarding death are too clear. They are central to the passage. They are literal. This promise is literal: "They will not labor in vain, nor give birth to dismay. For they are the children of those blessed by

the Lord, and their descendants with them” (v. 23). *This is an inter-generational promise.*

Jesus’ mother made this declaration before He was born. “His mercy lasts from generation to generation for those who fear him. He has displayed strength with his arm; he has scattered those who were proud about the thoughts of their hearts. He has thrown down princes from their thrones and he has raised up those of low condition. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent away empty” (Luke 1:50–53). Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, made this declaration immediately after John’s birth.

Praised be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has come to help and he has accomplished redemption for his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. He will do this to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he spoke to Abraham our father. He swore to grant to us that we, having been delivered out of the hand of our enemies, would serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days (Luke 1:68–75).

These are promises of comprehensive social victory—victories by Christians. These promises make it clear that the foundations of Christian leadership that were laid in Jesus’ time will extend until the end of time. These were not temporary foundations. They established institutional continuity. Therefore, any discussion of biblical leadership that ignores these promises and their time frame is incomplete. Such discussions are worse than incomplete. They are profoundly in error.

First and foremost, such discussions shorten the time frame that should govern the thinking of Christians. We are in this for the long haul: until time ends. Second, they limit Christians’ understanding of the comprehensive nature of their responsibility: the whole world, meaning every nook and cranny—wherever sin reigns or has even a small influ-

ence. Third, they underestimate the commitment of God to fulfill His promises, which are comprehensive. Fourth, they overestimate both the authority and the influence of covenant-breakers in history. Covenant-breakers are divided. They have competing worldviews. They make war against each other, not just against Christians. Their kingdoms are divided. Jesus was clear on this point.

But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons drive them out? For this reason they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. How can anyone enter the house of the strong man and steal his belongings without tying up the strong man first? Then he will steal his belongings from his house. The one who is not with me is against me, and the one who does not gather with me scatters (Matthew 12:25–30).

Therefore, any group of them has only three or four generations to develop, implement, and extend its collective influence. The group gains the benefits of compound kingdom growth for a brief time: a few generations. Then it fades. In contrast, Christians gain the benefits of compound kingdom growth until the end of time. Compound growth eventually becomes exponential growth: filling the environment, which in this case is the whole world.

How do I know? The Bible tells me so.

Action Step

Write down the long-term promise to Christians that inspires you most.

B. Discipleship

Point 2 of the biblical covenant model is authority. Authority is always delegated from God, who is sovereign (point 1). All authority is hierarchical. All authority involves representation. A leader represents those under his authority to those over him. He also represents those over him to those under him. Leadership is therefore always mediatorial.

With respect to inter-generational effects, how does hierarchy apply to the biblical theory of leadership? It applies to the process of making disciples. Jesus told His disciples to imitate the training that He had begun with them. This was the Great Commission. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey all the things that I have commanded you. See, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20). The five points of the biblical covenant structured this brief but comprehensive mission statement. This was a command that was accompanied by the promise of His continuing presence (point 1): “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” There was a covenantal sacrament (point 4): baptism. There were ethical laws to be obeyed (point 3): “the things I have commanded you.” There was a teaching requirement, which is always hierarchical (point 2). There was a time frame (point 5): “the end of the age.”

Jesus had discipled these men constantly for about three years. Yet they were still blind regarding their mission prior to His resurrection. They remained nearly blind until after His ascension. We see this in John’s account of the last supper the night before His crucifixion. Jesus said He was going away to a place where they could not come (John 14:1–4). This meant heaven. Thomas asked Him what this meant. Jesus did not answer him directly. Jesus told him that it was through Him that they could come to the Father (vv. 6–7). Philip asked Him to show them the Father (v. 8). In response, He offered to them a challenge: to exercise extraordinary leadership—

leadership based on a covenantal hierarchy: Father > Son > Holy Spirit > themselves.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me, or else believe because of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will do the works that I do, and he will do greater works than these because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father will be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me, you will keep my commandments, and I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Comforter so that he will be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive him because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you alone; I will come back to you (vv. 11–17).

They still did not understand Him. That was because they lacked the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, they could not understand.

I have said these things to you, while I am staying with you. However, the Comforter—the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and he will remind you of everything that I said to you. I leave you peace; I give you my peace. I do not give it as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not be afraid. You heard that I said to you, “I am going away, and I will come back to you.” If you loved me, you would be glad because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I am. Now I have told you before it happens so that, when it happens, you will believe (vv. 25–29).

The Comforter first manifested Himself to them in Acts 2. After that, they began to exercise leadership. Thousands of converts professed faith in Christ (Acts 4:4). The disciples set up a system of church charity, establishing a new office: deacons (Acts 6:1–6). “So the word of God continued to spread, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly, and a large number of the priests became obedient to the faith” (v. 7). There was rapid growth of the church. The disciples had to learn on the job how to be leaders. Deacons also

had to learn on the job. Stephen was executed because of his preaching (Acts 7). At his stoning, Paul was both present and complicit (8:1). He was soon converted (9:3–6). He became the most influential Christian in history through his letters. But no other disciple taught him. He was taught directly by Jesus.

The speed of this transformation was remarkable. The training of the disciples had been continuous for three years. They learned almost nothing—not from observing Jesus, not from listening to him interact with others, not from His direct instruction. Then, in less than two months after Christ's resurrection, they became the core of a rapidly growing movement. It never stopped growing. What had changed them? The advent of the promised Comforter: the Holy Spirit. This definitively marked their transition from disciples to leaders.

From that point on in church history, there has been a general pattern of discipleship: preaching, baptism, teaching, training, and then sending out newly trained leaders to extend the process. At the center is the institutional church, which possesses the sacraments. One example is the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by the newly appointed deacon Philip (Acts 8:26–38). Philip had no time to train him. Yet he was a high official in the queen's household (v. 27). He had to learn on his own on the job, but in the days before the Bible. How was this possible? The Holy Spirit.

The Bible consolidates the authoritative teachings of the Holy Spirit. Today, Christian leaders train disciples by means of the Bible. The disciples are supposed to study the Bible, pray for wisdom, and begin to implement what they have learned: first as individuals (self-government), then in their families, then in church, then as citizens. Here is the process, according to James:

Be doers of the word and not only hearers, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word but not a doer, he is like a man who examines his natural face in a mirror. He examines himself and then goes away and immediately forgets what he was

like. But the person who looks carefully into the perfect law of freedom, and continues to do so, not just being a hearer who forgets, this man will be blessed in his actions. If anyone thinks himself to be religious, but if he does not control his tongue, he deceives his heart, and his religion is worthless (James 1:23–26).

Leadership begins with followership. Exercising authority over others begins with obedience to others. The family is the model. Children obey. Then they learn to take greater responsibility in their lives. Biblical leadership outside the family also begins with self-government: control over what you say. James went into detail on this. What he wrote should be the beginning of every church training program. Leadership begins with self-control over the tongue.

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in words, he is a perfect man, able to control even his whole body. Now if we put bits into horses' mouths for them to obey us, we can also direct their whole bodies. Notice also that ships, although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, are steered by a very small rudder to wherever the pilot desires. Likewise the tongue is a small body part, yet it boasts great things. Notice also how small a fire sets on fire a large forest. The tongue is also a fire, a world of sinfulness set among our body parts. It stains the whole body and sets on fire the course of life. It is itself set on fire by hell. For every kind of wild animal, bird, reptile, and sea creature is being tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we praise the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things should not happen. Does a spring pour out from its opening both sweet and bitter water? Does a fig tree, my brothers, make olives? Or a grapevine, figs? Neither can salty water produce sweet water (James 3:1–12).

This is step one. After training, and after self-control over the tongue, comes the next step: good works.

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let that person show a good life by his works in the humility of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and ambition in your heart, do not boast and lie against the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above. Instead, it is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where there are jealousy and ambition, there is confusion and every evil practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace among those who make peace (vv. 13–18).

The system of leadership is based on on-the-job training. This concept of job extends beyond employment for a salary. It is much broader than this. It refers to a person's life and lifestyle. Paul clearly warned churches that prospective leaders should not be elevated to positions of authority until they have undergone supervised training on the job of life (1 Timothy 3). So did James. This training must be based on patience: patient teaching and patient learning. Adam lacked patience. He did not spend time mastering his tongue, performing good works, and showing productivity in his work. He wanted instant authority. He wanted to be at the top of the pyramid of power, knowing (determining) good and evil.

Jesus showed enormous patience with the disciples, to whom the phrase "slow learners" applied very well. But the disciples also showed patience. They wandered around Judea for three years, never knowing where their next meal was coming from. They had abandoned their jobs and their families for this strange calling. For what? For service to the Master.

Action Step

Write down the long-term project in your life for which you need someone to disciple you.

C. Manuals

Point 3 of the biblical covenant model is the concept of boundaries. These are primarily ethical boundaries: right and wrong. Laws place limits in men's actions. Sometimes these are ethical laws. Sometimes they are judicial laws. Sometimes they are boundaries of nature: limits.

With respect to inter-generational effects, how does the principle of ethical limits apply to discipleship? Where do we find Christianity's primary source of continuity in the discipleship process? We find it in the Bible. The Bible provides the principles of ethical continuity: God's laws. It also shows how these laws are to be applied throughout history. In this sense, the Bible is a manual. It is the authoritative manual of manuals.

In every military establishment there are field manuals. They are written to train inexperienced, poorly educated people in the skills necessary to perform a specific task. As military service has grown more mechanized and computerized, the level of training imparted by manuals has increased.

No military establishment trains its troops only with manuals, but the training system is designed around manuals. There is a system of objective performance, observation by trainers, and objective feedback from these trainers. It is a learning process. But always at the heart of the training process is a manual. It specifies what must be mastered. It is the core of the training.

The supreme field manual is the Bible. There are also tens of thousands of books that explain, or are said to explain, what the Bible teaches in specific areas of service. You are reading such a book. The reason why I keep quoting from the Bible is this: I am persuaded that it has supreme authority. You will remember an extract from the Bible long after you have forgotten what I have written. If you decide to become a leader in your field, I recommend that you imitate me in this regard. Your task is to explain to a disciple what the Bible requires, not what you require on your own authority. It is

your task to find out what the supreme manual requires in a narrow field of service and then explain this to a disciple. The on-the-job evidence that you have done this well is this: your disciple performs well when you are no longer there to instruct him. When you have done this successfully with several disciples, you will be ready to write a manual and video support materials.

I am writing this book in April 2021 because I could find no other book on Christian leadership that gets to the point—or, in this case, five points—of biblical leadership. I set aside two weeks to write the first draft. I am doing what I did in July 1980 when I wrote most of *Unconditional Surrender* in two weeks. I did it because I could not find a competent, compact book that surveyed the main ideas of Christianity. I am writing this book for eighth-grade students who I hope will take my online course on Christian worldview. I would teach a full year's course on leadership if I had enough theologically reliable and practical materials to assign—manuals. After two millennia, the leaders of the church of Jesus Christ have not yet produced the manuals that are sorely needed by young people. There is no Christian equivalent of the merit badge-based program of the scouting movement.

I wrote my first manual at age 17 in 1959. I was leaving high school. I had spent a year as the president of District 7 of the California Scholarship Federation. It had been my assignment to organize the annual convention of the CSF for all of southern California. Over a thousand students attended. District 7's adult advisor had not warned any of the candidates for president that it was the district's responsibility that year to organize the conference—surely a self-interested decision on his part. He then told me it would be my job. I could have quit immediately, but that did not occur to me. (Actually, it occurred to me only as I was writing this paragraph.) So, when it was all over, I decided that I would do for the next sacrificial lamb who was given this job what no one had done for me. I typed a 15-page guide on the steps I had taken,

month by month. In response to this voluntary service on my part, I received letters of thanks from my successors over the next ten years. (Not a chance.)

The ability to teach is a mark of a successful leader. I strongly recommend that you learn how to teach. You must learn how to organize your thoughts on paper, meaning on a computer screen. You must also learn how to lecture. Combining these skills, you should then write a manual on some aspect of your present leadership assignment. You should also produce a series of teaching videos. Screencasts of PowerPoint presentations are simple to produce. (Two centuries from now, there will still be PowerPoint presentations, and most of them will be as boring as they are today.) The videos should be supplemental to the manual. They should teach students how to use your manual. The manual is central to the process. If you cannot write a step-by-step manual that contains only a few errors in the first edition, you are not ready to become a serious leader.

Knowing how to do something makes you a skilled technician. It does not make you a leader. To gain this skill of teaching, follow this plan. First, teach something of minimal importance that requires minimal competence to learn. Teach this as masterfully as you can. Learn what it takes to teach a procedure that is not crucial. Second, teach something of somewhat greater importance. Continue to produce manuals and video support materials. Get feedback from your students. Improve the manuals. Improve the videos. Produce at least one course per year. After a few years, increase this to two courses.

If you plan to become a high-level leader in any field, you must first produce a course on how to produce courses. You must show your disciples how to train disciples. This is where multiplication begins. *Until a discipleship program harnesses the power of multiplication, it is peripheral institutionally.* If you train your disciples to train disciples by creating and then using their own teaching materials, you will empower them. Your

ministry will grow rapidly. It will survive your departure. *Developing a ministry that survives your departure is the main point of Pillar 5.* You are dispensable. Your goal is to make your organization indispensable. You leave. It stays. If it dies, your efforts have not have been in vain, but they will have been short-circuited.

There is far more to leadership than implementing a manual. But followership begins with implementing a manual or its equivalent. Leadership visibly advances when an aspiring leader produces a manual, plus support materials. The only excuse for not producing such a manual is that it already exists. The leader should be using it on a systematic basis. Do not try to reinvent the wheel. Use an existing wheel to get things rolling. But you will soon find that there are not enough reliable, low-cost wheels to take you to the next level of leadership. You will have to produce your own.

Action Step

Write down a skill that you possess that deserves a really good manual. Then consider writing it.

D. Success

Point 4 of the biblical covenant model is sanctions. These are positive and negative. They are always associated with point 2: hierarchy. They are also associated with point 3: laws.

With respect to inter-generational effects, how do we discover continuity of sanctions? We find them in the Bible's promises (See category A.) There are promises of success in the Bible. These promises are conditional. They are always associated with ethics. The early section of Leviticus 26, which was recapitulated in Deuteronomy 28, is the archetype.

If you walk in my laws and keep my commandments and obey them, then I will give you rain in its season; the land will yield

its produce, and the trees of the field will yield their fruit. Your threshing will continue to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest will extend to the planting season. You will eat your bread to the full and live safely where you make your home in the land. I will give peace in the land; you will lie down with nothing to make you afraid. I will take the dangerous animals away from the land, and the sword will not pass through your land. You will chase your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword. Five of you will chase away a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand; your enemies will fall before you by the sword. I will look at you with favor and make you fruitful and multiply you; I will establish my covenant with you. You will eat food stored a long time. You will have to bring out the stored food because you will need the room for the new harvest. I will place my tabernacle among you, and I will not detest you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, so that you would not be their slaves. I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you to walk standing up straight (Leviticus 26:3–13).

Everyone who is placed in a leadership position should review this passage on a regular basis. This passage describes the degree of success that members of a God-fearing society should expect. This degree of success is the norm. This degree of success is both normal and normative.

The remainder of Leviticus 26 lists negative sanctions for refusing to obey. Deuteronomy 28 has the same structure. The negative sanctions far outnumber the positive sanctions. This should get our attention. That is because most people fear losses more than they desire success. They fear losing what they possess. Jesus offered two parables on this: the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:3–7) and the parable of the lost coin (vv. 8–10). The field of economics known as behavioral economics has rediscovered this aspect of human psychology.

This fearful mentality restricts innovation and entrepreneurship. When decision-makers fear losing what they possess, they are more likely to refuse to make decisions that might lead to a loss of their capital in an uncertain invest-

ment, despite the fact that they might profit a great deal from this temporary sacrifice. A small percentage of people are willing to make such investments, despite the fact that most new ventures fail. The entrepreneurs who make such investments are optimists. They are also people who recover from losses psychologically. They enter the market for uncertain ventures.

In English, we have sayings that reflect both attitudes. The entrepreneur adopts these two. “Nothing ventured, nothing gained.” “He who hesitates is lost.” The risk-averse person adopts this one: “A bird in hand is worth two under the bush.” He holds tightly to the bird in his hand. But this may kill the bird.

The biblical perspective is on the side of the risk-taker. In the debate between Caleb and Joshua on one side versus the ten spies on the other, we should favor Caleb’s argument. The ten spies saw that the promised land was good, but not good enough to be worth the uncertainties of warfare. “They told Moses, ‘We reached the land to which you sent us. It certainly flows with milk and honey. Here is some produce from it. However, the people who make their homes there are strong. The cities are fortified and very large. We also saw descendants of Anak there’” (Numbers 13:27–28). They did not go unanswered.

Then Caleb silenced the people who were before Moses and said, “Let us go up and take possession of the land, for we are certainly able to conquer it.” But the other men who had gone with him said, “We are not able to attack the people because they are stronger than we are.” So they spread around a discouraging report to the people of Israel about the land that they had examined. They said, “The land that we looked at is a land that eats up its inhabitants. All the people whom we saw there are people of great height. There we saw giants, descendants of Anak, people who came from giants. In our own sight we were like grasshoppers in comparison with them, and this is what we were in their sight, too” (vv. 30–33).

The Israelites supported the ten fearful spies. The spies represented them well. “That night all the community wept loudly. All the people of Israel criticized Moses and Aaron. The whole community said to them, ‘We wish we had died in the land of Egypt, or here in this wilderness! Why did the Lord bring us to this land to die by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become victims. Is it not better for us to return to Egypt?’” (Numbers 14:1–3). The nation was angry with God for having exposed them to such uncertainty.

Because this was a matter of representation, it was a matter of leadership. The Israelites preferred slavery under a Pharaoh. Slavery was a low-risk existence. It allowed little creativity. It paid low wages. But it was the preferable life in their eyes. So, they wanted a new leader. “They said to each another, ‘Let us choose another leader, and let us return to Egypt.’ Then Moses and Aaron lay facedown before all the assembly of the community of the people of Israel” (vv. 4–5).

Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were some of those sent to examine the land, tore their clothes. They spoke to all the community of the people of Israel. They said, “The land that we passed through and examined is a very good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, then he will take us into this land and give it to us. The land flows with milk and honey. But do not rebel against the Lord, and do not fear the people in the land, for they are bread to us. Their protection will be removed from them, because the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.” Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel (vv. 6–10).

God threatened to destroy them with a plague. Moses pleaded with God not to do this. He appealed to God’s pride of name, not the people’s need of mercy.

Moses said to the Lord, “If you do this, then the Egyptians will hear about it, because you rescued this people from them by your power. They will tell it to this land’s inhabitants. They have heard that you, the Lord, are present with this people, because you are seen face to face. Your cloud stands over our people. You go be-

fore them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations that have heard of your fame will speak and say, ‘Because the Lord could not take this people into the land that he swore to give them, he has killed them in the wilderness’” (vv. 13–16).

God relented. He contented Himself with imposing this negative sanction: none of them would enter the Canaan except Joshua and Caleb (vv. 23–24). This sanction was consistent with their sin of fearfulness. They had preferred not to invade the land. So, they never entered it.

This mentality of fearfulness reflects a lack of confidence in God’s promises of victory. It denies that such promises were ever made by God, or else if they were, that was in another historical dispensation. Fearful people argue that a new world order exists today, a world order in which covenant-breakers maintain control over society, and covenant-keepers must content themselves to be servants. This is the reverse of Exodus 20:5–6.

The Bible is clear: the covenant’s system of sanctions favors covenant-keeping in the conflicts between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men. Christian leaders and their followers should assume that God is on their side because they are on His side.

Christian leaders should prepare their disciples for cultural combat. This training should begin with biblical law. Covenant-keepers must obey God’s law. Here is the key passage in the Bible on this issue. Moses announced a warning to the generation of the conquest after the generation of the exodus had died off, just as God had promised they would. “He fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors had never known, so that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end, but you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand acquired all this wealth.’ But you will call to mind the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is today” (Deu-

teronomy 8:16–18). Wealth for the covenant-keeper confirms the covenant. Why? Because of the covenant’s system of sanctions. This system lays the foundation for point 5 of the covenant: compound growth.

Action Step

Write down the most significant lifetime goal that would be the most difficult for you to attain.

E. Compounding

Point 5 of the biblical covenant model is succession. Men die. They are succeeded. Institutions also die. They are succeeded. This is not true of the institutional church, the bride of Christ. It is unique in this respect. It extends into eternity. The kingdom of God is also eternal. This is the civilization of God. It is the extension of the work of covenant-keepers. It will never be succeeded.

With respect to the principle of inter-generational succession in history, how do we apply category D, success? We find it in the word “succession.” The structure of sanctions in history is covenantal. That means it is ethical. The conflicts in history do not take place on a level playing field. It is tilted against covenant-breakers (Exodus 20:5–6).

If you invest money without suffering serious losses, you will be successful. The rule is this: “Cut your losses, and let your profits run.” But success in life is not a matter of avoiding losses. It is a matter of making key decisions when the outcomes are inherently unknowable in advance. Covenant-keepers are required to make these decisions. Life’s challenges are like battles on a battlefield. The fog of war blinds participants, but it does not blind God. Thus, the actions of millions of Christians over thousands of years extends God’s church, thereby extending the kingdom of God, which is the

civilization of God. The church cannot be defeated. Jesus said that the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18b). The phrase, “the gates of hell,” indicates that Satan’s kingdom is on the defensive. Christian leaders should not assume that the church is on the defensive.

When an investor gains positive returns from a long series of investments, he becomes wealthy. The effect of compound growth over time is to create an exponential curve. No matter how low this rate of growth is, if the time period is long enough, the curve eventually turns sharply upward.

This brings us back to the promise of Exodus 20:5–6. “...I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I punish the ancestors’ wickedness by bringing punishment on the descendants, to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me. But I show covenant faithfulness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.” The time period, if not immense, as the text indicates, at least extends to the end of the world. Covenant-keepers’ rate of return remains positive through the generations. In contrast to this are the long-term rates of return for covenant-breakers. They are not long term. They are by comparison short term. They last a few generations. They are overwhelmed by the long-term grace of God to His people.

This fact is not widely understood by most of today’s Christians, who are short-term thinkers. So are their leaders, who make decisions in terms of outcomes that extend no more than three generations. They do not understand that a positive rate of return over centuries produces astronomical results.

We have seen this process economically since 1800. The world of 1900 was not conceivable to someone who was a young person in 1800. The world of 2000 was not conceivable to someone who was young in 1900. Yet for the Tyler family, this was only three generations. President John Tyler was born in 1790. His grandson is still alive as I write this. His other grandson died in late 2020. Yet the annual rate of per capita economic growth was under 3%, 1800 to 2020.

Christian leaders should assess the potential effects of their leadership in terms of centuries. They should not make decisions about venturing into a new field by imagining the good their efforts may produce in their lifetimes, their children's lifetimes, or their grandchildren's lifetimes. They should make their decisions in terms of the effects that their work could have on someone six centuries from the present. If they believe that their work's positive effects will be swamped by the effects of the work of covenant-breakers, they will grossly underestimate the importance of their efforts. If they are making a decision with respect to their callings, their underestimation will be even greater. They fail to understand these words:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways—this is The Lord's declaration—for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and snow come down from heaven and do not return there unless they saturate the earth and make it produce and sprout and give seed to the farmer who sows and bread to the eater, so also my word will be that goes from my mouth—it will not return to me empty, but it will achieve the purpose for which I sent it. For you will go out in joy and be led along peacefully; the mountains and the hills will break out in joyful shouts before you, and all the trees of the fields will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbushes, the cypress will grow; and instead of the brier, the myrtle tree will grow, and it will be for the Lord, for his name, as an everlasting sign that will not be cut off (Isaiah 55:8–13).

By relegating these promises to a future millennial kingdom that will be ruled in person by Jesus and His angels, pre-millennialists create an unbridgeable discontinuity between their work today and the world beyond the return of Christ. They cut short the compounding effects of their efforts beyond their deaths. In contrast, amillennialists defend continuity, but it is a continuity devoid of compound growth of the kingdom of God. Some amillennialists argue that the rate of return is less than that achieved by covenant-breakers. Others say that the rates of return on all sides is random: neither

covenant-breakers nor covenant-keepers gain an advantage. But, because the kingdom of God today is barely visible culturally, especially in industrial nations, this is an eschatology of despair. Amillennialists believe that God's rules governing the race between the kingdoms favor the kingdoms of men until the end of time. Christian civilization supposedly will not replace humanism's civilization.

The cultural pessimism of both premillennialism and amillennialism gives an advantage to postmillennialists, who see God's historical rules as favoring the kingdom of God. They see Christian leadership as productive of comprehensive victory in history for the kingdom of God. They see their efforts in terms of a positive compound rate of return over centuries. For a clear, concise description of postmillennialism, read David Chilton's book, *Paradise Restored* (1985). I paid him to write it.¹

Action Step

Write down the most important Christian kingdom-building project that you would like to see become successful within a century. Explain why.

Conclusion

Christian leaders should adopt an eschatology of victory. This eschatology is based on these premises. This is the *first premise*: God has promised victory to His Son. This is not victory beyond the resurrection. Jesus already sits on a throne at God's right hand. It is victory in history.

But now Christ, who is the firstfruits of those who died, has been raised from the dead. For since death came by a man, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, who is the firstfruits, and then those who belong to Christ

1. You can download it here: bit.ly/dcparadise.

will be made alive at his coming. Then will be the end, when Christ will hand over the kingdom to God the Father. This is when he will abolish all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “he has put everything under his feet.” But when it says “he has put everything,” it is clear that this does not include the one who put everything in subjection to himself. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subjected to him who put all things into subjection under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:20–28).

This will be the fulfilment of Psalm 110, the most often cited Old Testament passage in the New Testament.

The Lord says to my master, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.” The Lord will hold out the scepter of your strength from Zion; rule among your enemies. Your people will follow you in holy garments of their own free will on the day of your power; from the womb of the dawn your youth will be to you like the dew. The Lord has sworn, and will not change: “You are a priest forever, after the manner of Melchizedek.” The Lord is at your right hand. He will kill kings on the day of his anger. He will judge the nations; he will fill the battlegrounds with dead bodies; he will kill the leaders in many countries. He will drink of the brook along the road, and then he will lift his head up high after victory.

Jesus told the Pharisees that Psalm 110 spoke of Him.

Now while the Pharisees were still gathered together, Jesus asked them a question. He said, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” Jesus said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ If David then calls the Christ ‘Lord,’ how is he David’s son?” No one was able to answer him a word, and no man dared ask him any more questions from that day on (Matthew 22:41–46).

The *second premise* is this: the church has a great deal of time ahead of it. The Bible’s language points to long-term transformation: thousands of generations for covenant-keepers. This

raises the issue of compound rate of cultural return. This is the *third premise*. The compounding process is short-lived for covenant-breakers: a few generations. This puts them at a tremendous disadvantage when competing against covenant-keepers.

The *fourth premise* is this: obeying God's laws brings positive sanctions in history. Disobeying God's laws brings negative sanctions. The playing field is not level. *The compounding process produces the exponential curve for covenant-keepers*. As Americans say, "a little goes a long way" when the process is long enough.

By refusing to think in terms of generations, Christians have underestimated the power of the gospel to shape civilization. Christian leaders have announced this: "The Bible has answers for all your questions." But when humanists have asked Christian leaders to offer biblical solutions to the social problems of the day, the leaders have become even more evasive than their predecessors were. The result has been the fading of Christian influence in an increasingly humanist West.

But this is not the whole story. Evangelists in sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing greater numerical success than any generation of evangelists ever has. In China, there has been a revival since 1975 that would have dwarfed any previous revival, had Sub-Saharan Africa's revival not taken place at the same time. The gospel is spreading to hundreds of millions of people. These converts have no tradition of eschatological pessimism to reduce their confidence in what God's word can accomplish in society. The compounding process has begun in regions that have been ignored by Christians in the West. The rate of return is historically high in terms of new converts per year.

Christian leadership is necessarily shaped by a specific view of eschatology. If leadership in the churches is not committed to a culturally optimistic eschatology, then it will focus on short-term results. It will assess the productivity of programs in terms of these short-term results. It will misallocate capital because it refuses to invest time, money, and prayer in terms of a steady rate of return. This rate of return is not based on an above-average rate of success for every venture. Most

ventures fail. Jesus made this clear in the parable of the four soils. The sower scattered seed. In three soils, the seeds did not produce a permanent crop. The fourth soil did. This crop was abundant (Matthew 13:18–23). Rather, it is based on a predictably positive rate of return on the churches' portfolios of kingdom-building projects, most of which fail, but a few of which transform the world if given enough time.

God has promised us that we have plenty of time.

Main Action Step

Begin two daily journals: one for your calling and one for your career. Every day, write down the major challenges you faced. Write down your preliminary steps to solve them. Leave space for later solutions. Date each entry.

Over time, you will see patterns of your problem-solving. When you see these, you will become a more successful leader. You will be able to disciple people in the area of problem-solving.

Your goal is to write at least one leadership manual in each field, career and calling, plus support materials, before you die. These can be used by those people to train disciples.

These manuals should be your main long-term legacy. Long after the world has forgotten what you did, your disciples will learn how you did it. They will not care about your achievements in life except insofar as they can learn how to achieve something similar, or even better, in their lives. Show them how to achieve something better. Jesus is the model. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will do the works that I do, and he will do greater works than these because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12). You are also going to the Father. Show your disciples how to do greater works than you do. Write the manuals.

CONCLUSION

When they were assembled together they asked him, "Lord, is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has determined by his own authority. But you will receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When the Lord Jesus had said these things, as they were looking up, he was raised up, and a cloud hid him from their eyes. While they were looking intently to heaven as he went, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. They said, "You men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into heaven? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, will return in the same manner as you saw him going into heaven".

ACTS 1:6–11

This is the biblical model of leadership training: one-on-one training by a master, then an unexpected departure by the master. This was the model in the garden. God trained Adam on the job. He watched as Adam named the animals. Next, He gave Adam a wife. Then He departed, leaving Adam in charge of his wife, and the two of them in charge of the garden. He did not return until after they had rebelled. "They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8a). This was *management by walking away*. This system had to be modified because of sin and its effects. But it still prevailed. God did not confront Cain until after Cain had killed Abel. Then God brought judgment (Genesis 4:9–15).

In contrast is Satan's system of leadership development. He first made the serpent his covenantal representative. Then the serpent lured Eve with a promise: *immediate knowledge without training*. "For God knows that the day you eat it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). The key word for understanding Satan's leadership development model is "day." The serpent offered her a no-cost increase in her authority. This was also a no-responsibility increase in authority. There was no risk. "The serpent said to the woman, 'You will surely not die'" (v. 4). It was a lie then. It still is a lie.

The serpent did not arrive until God had departed. God's departure made possible the temptation and the rebellion. We could say that God was missing in action. In fact, we should say this. This is the nature of biblical leadership. When it is time for someone to make a decision, God is usually missing in action. This does not mean that He is inactive. It means that He is operating behind the front lines. In the military, being away from your post is called "absent without leave." It is a military crime. But this is the correct understanding of leadership: God is absent with leave. He is supposed to leave. This is how Christians are supposed to learn how to lead. On-the-job-training by a master produces opportunities for on-the-job leading without the master. If the master will not leave, the apprentice cannot lead. The goal of a master is to train leaders, not order-takers.

Here is the fundamental leadership principle that we find from beginning to end in the Bible: *God is not a micromanager*. Instead, He macromanages. He is sovereign. Joseph announced this principle to his brothers after he had saved their lives from the famine. "As for you, you meant to harm me, but God meant it for good, to preserve the lives of many people, as you see today" (Genesis 50:20). God did not interfere with (1) Joseph's kidnapping brothers or (2) Potiphar's lying wife or (3) Potiphar's refusal to inquire into his wife's behavior or (4) the warden's refusal to speak up on Joseph's behalf

or (5) the cupbearer's two years of forgetfulness. God did not intervene until it was time for a major change in Egypt's structure of leadership. Then He sent two dreams to Pharaoh that no one could interpret, except for Joseph. Here, we see the biblical program of leadership training: years of on-the-job training, accompanied by years of restricted authority, accompanied by years of cumulative successes, and then an overnight triumph. In America, there is this phrase: "He was a 20-year overnight sensation." This is the biblical pattern.

A. From Disciples to Apostles

Jesus established the leadership model that Christians call discipleship. We have a name for the dozen men He trained: disciples. Jesus invited a dozen men to join Him in a project that He did not describe. He trained them by walking through Judea, leaving the tiny nation of Israel only once to journey to nearby Tyre, where He cured a woman's demon-possessed daughter under protest only after hearing her remarkable profession of faith in His ministry (Matthew 15:21–28).

This kind of discipleship required enormous patience. Jesus walked and talked with these men for three years, and they learned almost nothing. Yet He stuck with them. They also stuck with Him. Year after year, they did not know what he was doing or what they were doing with Him. They kept asking Him questions, often the wrong questions . . . right up until He ascended into the sky. They must have thought to themselves, "What is this guy talking about?" But they stuck with the program to the bitter end, and then 40 days longer.

Then things changed, literally overnight. "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in the same place. Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. There appeared to them tongues like fire that were distributed, and they sat upon each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them to speak" (Acts 2:1–4). On

that day, the disciples ceased to be disciples. They became apostles. As apostles, they possessed authority. Some of them possessed great authority. Peter possessed life-and-death authority, as Ananias and Sapphira learned to their dismay (Acts 5:1–10). With the death of Sapphira, word spread fast. “Great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard these things” (Acts 5:11).

Jesus’ long training of the disciples now paid off. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they became clear-headed. They also became courageous. They became decision-makers. They lost any fear of retribution by the religious or civil authorities. This confounded the authorities. “They called Peter and John in and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to obey you rather than him, you judge. We are not able to stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard’” (Acts 4:18–20). The good news of the gospel spread.

Today, the Bible constitutes the completed authoritative revelation by the Holy Spirit. Christian disciples do not have to wait for the arrival of the Holy Spirit to empower their productivity. Discipleship therefore should be a process of on-the-job training. This requires systematic hands-on instruction from a mentor and constant feedback from the mentor. It requires sanctions that accompany general rules. The sanctions announce: (1) do more of this, (2) do less of this, (3) don’t do this at all. This mentor-based training must be accompanied by constant inquiry into the Bible. This procedure develops the crucial skill of *casuistry*: applying fixed principles to changing circumstances. This is what the Bible calls wisdom.

There are few examples of such training in today’s world. Training is classroom-based, not mentor-based. The modern mentor is a lecturer to a room full of listeners. The lectures usually last for less than an hour. Then the students depart until the next scheduled lecture. There are few hands-on ex-

ercises except in the natural sciences (laboratory work), other than writing term papers and taking exams.

Consider this discipleship process for preachers in hierarchical Christian denominations. College graduates are required to spend additional years in theological seminaries. It takes at least three years in Protestant seminaries. It takes longer in Roman Catholic seminaries. This classroom-based training suffers from the same problems that discipleship did prior to Jesus' ascension. It is slow. It trains few leaders at a time. Worst of all, there is no day of Pentecost after the training to speed up the process of evangelism and discipleship. There is no on-the-job training.

Christian education established the classroom-based model in the West, beginning in the 1100s: the university. This model has not changed. In 1808, Congregational Calvinists in New England invented the theological seminary. (Actually, one man invented it: Rev. Jedediah Morse, the father of a far more famous inventor, Samuel F. B. Morse, who invented the first commercial telegraph in 1844.) They did this because Harvard College had appointed a Unitarian to teach moral philosophy. The seminary extended the number of years of classroom-based training. It did not change its format. Exactly a century later, in 1908, Harvard University opened the Harvard Business School. The HBS became the equivalent of the theological seminary for young men seeking to become business leaders. After 1970, the business school degree began to replace years of on-the-job training as the preferred screening device for managers of large American businesses.

Mentor-based training is costly. The time requirement is high for the mentor and the apprentice. It is far cheaper for students to be trained in large lecture rooms or online. With mass education, this works. You can learn the basics that will prepare you to begin a highly disciplined program of mastery under a mentor. You can make a decision regarding the Christian worldview and what it means to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. But you then will need

to prepare for the promised blessings: all the things that will be added unto you. What things? Capital (Pillar 2, Section A): tools of production, technical skills, marketing skills, wisdom, and a good reputation. You must be prepared to use the finest tools of production that God will provide. How should you prepare? By using elementary tools of production under the watchful eyes of a master who has decided to prepare you for lifetime service.

When it is time to begin your life's job or your calling, it is time to seek a qualified master to teach you. There will not be many of them. You must prove to him that he will not be wasting his time by taking you on as a low-paid apprentice. How will you prove this? The best way is to prove that you have mastered something worth doing, something that was not part of your formal education. This is Pillar 4: mastery.

B. The Five Pillars

The five points of the biblical covenant model are these: sovereignty, authority, law, sanctions, and succession. The parallel five pillars of biblical leadership are these: mission, service, teamwork, mastery, and inheritance. Each is divided into five categories, and these categories parallel the five points of the covenant. These five pillars apply to all institutions, covenantal and non-covenantal. These leadership principles are universal because the biblical covenant structure is built into the creation. Through God's common grace, the structure applies to all institutions.

The heart of the biblical leadership model is God's principle of delegated responsibility. This goes back to the dominion covenant.

God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in his own image. In his own image he created him. Male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful,

and multiply. Fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26–28).

God is sovereign because He is the Creator. He is plural: “let us” He delegated authority to mankind before Adam was created. He transferred to mankind the responsibilities associated with dominion. Dominion is a judicial trusteeship function. It involved legal representation: “in the name of God.” It was also an economic stewardship function: “on behalf of God.” There is no escape from this hierarchical responsibility in history. This was God’s original mission for mankind.

Adam’s rebellion did not nullify the dominion covenant, but it did make it impossible to fulfil. Adam broke covenant with God. He thereby disinherited himself and his biological heirs. He acted as a covenantal representative of mankind. He acted in their name. To restore this lost sonship and therefore the lost inheritance, God the Son came into history as Jesus Christ in order to redeem His people. After His resurrection, He announced a new mission, now called the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). It is the redeemed version of the original dominion covenant. Covenant-keepers are required to act as God’s trustee/stewards in building the kingdom of God in History (Matthew 6:33). This is Pillar 1. It is an act of God’s sovereignty. God the Son declared it.

The five categories of Pillar 1 are these: commission, calling, field, sanctions, and transmission. These are specific aspects of God’s mandated mission: seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness. In principle, the same five categories apply to the other four pillars. For instance, consider Section B: calling. Someone serving as a leader in Pillar 2 as a steward (Section B) is called by God to do this. Section C of Pillar 1 is field, as in a mission field. A leader’s task in Pillar 2 is to identify goals of service as mission fields. Goals are highly specific fields of service. They are less geographical. So, we specify the five categories of each pillar in terms of the primary function of the pillar in developing biblical leadership. We search

for more appropriate, more specific ways to implement these leadership components in each of the pillars. But these components all follow the five points of the biblical covenant.

The five categories of Pillar 2, service, are these: capital, trusteeship, goals, sacrifice, and rededication. This is the stewardship function, which also is a trusteeship function. It is hierarchical. Christ has made redeemed people responsible for exercising leadership in history. This is accomplished by their service. How? Because leadership is a mediatorial function. Redeemed people represent Christ to the world. This includes those people under their authority. They also represent the world to Christ. They serve God by serving men. Jesus' description of the final judgment made this inescapably clear.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you cared for me; I was in prison and you came to me." Then the righteous will answer and say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you a stranger and take you in? Or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?" Then the King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, what you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me." Then he will say to those on his left hand, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels, because I was hungry, but you did not give me food; I was thirsty, but you did not give me a drink; I was a stranger, but you did not take me in; naked, but you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, but you did not care for me." Then they will also answer and say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked,

or sick, or in prison, and did not serve you?” Then he will answer them and say, “Truly I say to you, what you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.” These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:31–46).

The biblical strategy for being lifted up into leadership is this: subordinate yourself to others. This was the leadership strategy of the second Person of the Trinity. Paul wrote: “He existed in the form of God, but he did not consider his equality with God as something to hold on to. Instead, he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, and he was born in the likeness of men. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death of a cross! Therefore God also highly exalted him. He gave him the name that is above every name. He did this so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend, the knees of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth. He did this so that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:6–11). Christians should imitate this strategy.

The five categories of Pillar 3, teamwork, are these: purpose, empowerment, specialization, fairness, and replacement. Teamwork is an aspect of the division of labor. Here is where leadership is visibly displayed. Someone has been assigned specific responsibilities as a member of a team. The team is a unit devoted to specialized service. It fulfills this task through the division of labor. The team’s new leader is responsible to those above him. Because he has been placed in a leadership position, he is also responsible to those beneath him. He must make clear the tasks assigned to them. He is responsible for guiding them, encouraging them, and helping them complete the mission on time. He is a mediator between those higher and lower in the chain of authority. A mediator represents each group to the other.

The five categories of Pillar 4, mastery, are these: providence, subordination, concentration, judgment, and destiny. Mastery establishes a person’s good reputation. A leader had

better be perceived by those above him and those below him as reliable. He must understand what is required of the team's members. Those below him had better believe that he understands their problems. If he has served as a member of the team, his former peers must respect his abilities as a producer. He should be a model of production before he is elevated to a position of authority. When, as a leader, he threatens sanctions in order to motivate subordinates, they had better believe that he knows the limits of what they can achieve. So, above-average performance on the job is a major qualification for biblical leadership. Jesus did not begin His ministry as a young man. He was about 30 when He began (Luke 3:23). He had been a craftsman before this. He called working-class men, except for Levi/Matthew, the tax collector.

The five categories of Pillar 5, inheritance, are these: promises, discipleship, manuals, success, and compounding. A biblical leader is supposed to see that what he does, and what those under his authority do, is part of an inter-generational process that leads to the fulfilment of the dominion covenant as part of the Great Commission. This inheritance is the Adamic inheritance restored. The Christian leader who sees the importance of his efforts in terms of the comprehensive redemption of the Great Commission in history has a psychological advantage over those Christian leaders who see the kingdom inheritance as limited to a few generations. A long-term strategist recognizes that he can afford to take greater risks with God's capital (Pillar 2, Category A), for whom he is a steward (Pillar 2, Category B), knowing that if he fails in a project, a successor will achieve something even greater. The threat of sustaining a loss is less of a psychological burden for him. This is because he believes in the long-term success (Pillar 5, Category D) that is guaranteed by adherence to God's law.

C. Leadership: Theory, Training, and Technology

Throughout most of history, the family was the working model for all other forms of leadership. People learned how

to lead as adults because they served for almost two decades as children in homes led by their parents. Fathers took their sons into the fields to train them in planting, weeding, and harvesting. Mothers kept daughters at home a few hundred feet away. There, daughters learned the skills of homemaking. This model of family training began to be replaced in Great Britain when the factory system appeared in the late 1700s. By 1800, farm families were moving to cities. This economy spread to the United States. In cities, fathers left the household and labored all day in factories. Soon, boys and girls followed their fathers into the factories. But they had no contact with their fathers in these factories. They were told what to do by floor supervisors. They fed machines with raw materials, and the machines produced finished products. Conclusion: the arts of parental training for adulthood were radically changed by the evolving system of production. With each innovation in production, traditional apprenticeship by parents was replaced by long years of apprenticeship in factories. But there was not much to learn. There was no training for life outside the factory.

The instruction system for children changed again after 1875. Long years of instruction in tax-funded school classrooms replaced on-the-job factory training. Hands-on instruction on the factory floor ended. Children now listened to lectures by teachers, read textbooks, and took examinations. They received no one-on-one training. By 1945 in the West, this was universal.

Beginning around 1775, one-on-one training of children for leadership was steadily abandoned. The family ceased to be the model for learning lifelong skills. This meant that the family's leadership training was replaced. There was little leadership required to work on an assembly line in 1910. There was little leadership required in a high school classroom in 1910. There was little training in leadership in the family or anywhere else except the military. There was little one-on-one discipleship. In every field, formal classroom in-

struction steadily replaced hierarchical, one-on-one apprenticeship. The impersonal feedback system of classroom examinations replaced the personal feedback system of master and apprentice.

Today, technology is changing the world again. Parental instruction in homes is making a comeback. The factory system has been abandoned in wealthy nations. As of 2020, with the worldwide political lockdowns to deal with COVID-19, the centralized corporate office system of the West was challenged by digital communications technologies that allow people to work from home. Digital communications are also forcing changes in the classroom lecture system. Because of the Internet, significant parts of the production process are moving back to the home-based production and instruction systems of 1750, but with vastly greater output and wealth.

No new form of leadership theory has been widely adopted over the last century. There are multiple theories, but they are not compact in the way that this book's theory is. There is also no agreement on the correct approach to leadership training. There is not much leadership training going on outside of a few large institutions, most notably the military and profit-seeking corporations. This presents an opportunity for Christians who are willing to commit to the five-pillar model that I have presented.

D. Specialization and Delegation

God is omniscient. Creatures are not. He can see everything. People can, with great effort, see what is under their noses. Barely.

God is omnipotent. Creatures are not. God controls everything from on high. He is transcendent. God could afford to delegate responsibility to mankind (Genesis 1:26–28). He could afford to leave Adam to his own devices. Adam did not threaten Him. Neither did the serpent. Neither did Satan.

People are immersed in history. Most of life is a fog for most people most of the time. People rarely concentrate, but

when they do, they specialize. To benefit from this, they need the voluntary cooperation of others. They need to participate in teams. Teams require leaders. Teams do not coordinate themselves. Leaders do this. They bear the responsibilities associated with telling others what to do.

Leaders need to delegate authority. They need to relinquish controls over the details of the world beneath them. They need to specialize (Pillar 3, Category C). They need to concentrate (Pillar 4, Category C). They need to recognize that they can maximize their production by concentrating on the approximately 20% of their time at work that produces 80% of their output (Pareto). This means that they must delegate authority. The model is God in the garden and Jesus in the ascension.

Because of sin, each person believes that the world centers around him. He mistakes the very real fruits of specialization for the illusory fruits of micromanaging others. He does not see that the fruits of micromanaging specialized work are threatened by the time and effort required for him to micromanage tasks outside his narrow zone of specialization.

With the vast increase of specialization that has taken place since about 1800, the illusion of omniscience should have faded away. But there remains a continual lure of centralized planning. This is the lure of exercising power over others. Centralized planning is thwarted by the spread of specialization. The vast increase in productivity provided by worldwide specialization of production moves the economic world away from centralized planning. But individuals find it difficult to abandon the lure of power. They find it difficult to decentralize.

Built into families is a biological necessity to turn loose. Parents age. Throughout most of history, aged parents have become dependent on their children. So, they know they must turn loose. They focus on training children for the responsibilities of adulthood. Yet parents often find it emotionally difficult to turn loose. Even after sons and daughters

leave to set up their own families, parents are tempted to interfere. This was true in patriarchal societies where sons lived in their fathers' houses. But as soon as a generation reached the West, with its enormous productivity and its tradition of separate households for sons, patriarchal traditions disintegrated. Sons refused to comply. They did not move in with fathers. Aged parents moved in with sons. This was the biblical pattern from the beginning. "Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, he will be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). The new family created a new division of labor with new specializations and new avenues for exercising responsibility.

The more capital that is available for investment, the more there are new opportunities for specialization. The strategy of the dominion covenant is greater dominion through greater specialization, which means greater authority and therefore greater responsibility. All forms of micromanaging others' tasks is a threat to this development. The greater the specialization of production, the greater the threat that micromanaging will lead to unforeseen disasters. This is sometimes called the law of unintended consequences.

If you do not trust the judgment of another person, do not get involved with that person in joint ventures. This rule begins with marriage. Do not marry someone with poor judgment. You will spend your life waiting for the roof to cave in. Also, do not marry someone who does not trust your judgment. You will spend your life with someone who is waiting for the roof to cave in. This rule extends to all other joint ventures.

A leader's desire to micromanage undermines joint ventures. The more important the joint venture, the more that leaders must resist the temptation to micromanage. They should heed the words of Peter Drucker: "It demands that we impose the responsibility for their productivity on the individual knowledge workers themselves. Knowledge workers *have* to manage themselves."

What is the correct strategy? *Empower your subordinates*

(Pillar 3, Category B). As I wrote: “To empower someone on a team increases his degree of personal responsibility in the team. There is no escape from increased responsibility when the level of authority increases. *Increased responsibility is the main biblical goal for seeking increased authority.* Someone higher on the chain of command is divesting himself of responsibility for decision-making by delegating this responsibility. He prefers to hold someone else responsible.” A Christian should accept the offer of a leadership position if he is ready for this responsibility. Once in the position, he must then imitate the leader above him who delegated responsibility to him. He must begin to delegate responsibility to competent people below him. *There should be systematic delegation of authority from top to bottom.* This is the biblical program of dominion through delegated leadership to qualified performers. This program began in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2). To get a promotion requires the recipient to abandon his existing structure of delegated authority. Micromanagers then face a major psychological problem: turning loose. Anyone who thinks “I just cannot turn lose of this authority” should not accept a promotion. Successful leadership mandates the continual delegation of authority to qualified people. The leader’s task is to recruit and then train qualified people: discipleship (Pillar 5, Category B).

E. Mediator

The essence of Christian leadership is to serve God as a mediator. Leadership is mediatorial. The leader has people above him and people below him. The model is Jesus Christ, who serves God the Father as a Mediator. He represents the Father to His people, and He represents His people to the Father. He does this in the three offices of prophet, priest, and king.

As a mediator, you must seek to understand what your superiors expect from you and the team you lead. You must also seek to understand what your subordinates expect from you and the team you lead. You must serve as the coordinator

of a complex production process. This production process is specialized. It requires highly specialized team members. You cannot understand the details of their work. You do not know what makes each of them productive. These are aspects of their personalities. These are subjective. Members probably do not understand the connections between their minds and their hands. They are craftsmen, but they cannot put into words how they do what they do. Yet you must coordinate the efforts of a team of these creative people.

Your main task is to see that they meet deadlines and production standards. These are objective constraints. Your superiors have established these constraints. Your task/mission is to manage team members so that the team meets its corporate requirements. Your superiors cannot show you how to do this, any more than you can show your subordinates how to do their jobs. But the production process requires that output plans of all the teams are coordinated, so that production is predictable. This has become known as just-in-time production. It reduces costs by reducing physical inventory and spare parts. It also reduces the space required to house this inventory. This process requires a highly complex production process. Computers are vital to this process, but computers handle only objective data. They cannot control digitally what are highly personal, subjective components of the process.

The leader develops what is called a feel for the process. He cannot put this feel into words. This is because it is inherently subjective. The fact that he cannot verbally describe this process does not mean that it does not exist. It is at the heart of the leadership process. It takes months or even years to develop the undefined feeling that guides him in developing and then implementing a program of encouraging his subordinates by means of sanctions, mainly positive but sometimes negative (point 4). This skill cannot be taught in a classroom. It is the product of on-the-job learning.

F. Preparing to Lead

The best way to become a good leader is to serve under a good leader. Joshua served under Moses. The disciples served under Jesus. It takes time to absorb the lessons. In the case of the disciples, three years did not do the trick. It also took the Holy Spirit.

By now, you should have lists of people's names that you wrote down in the action steps, chapter by chapter. If you failed to write these down, it is time to review each chapter again and then take the action steps. If you are not willing to do this, you are not ready to lead.

Once you have names of people who have been either good leaders or poor ones, you can begin the two-fold process of emulation and avoidance. You can begin to think about the skills they possessed or did not possess that shaped their leadership. It is more important that you identify these people and evaluate their performance than it is for you to identify specific areas of leadership where you lack skills. You lack too many skills. Developing these skills takes time. You need role models to identify your weakness. Good role models are few and far between. Pareto's 20/80 distribution is at work here.

If you have not begun your two daily journals, begin today. These should be leadership-focused. At the end of the day, write down the daily challenges you faced. Then write down what you did to begin to meet these challenges. Leave space to come back to update the section on solutions. This daily writing exercise will help you become aware of your approaches to solving problems. You will almost certainly have to make some changes in these approaches. The journal will help you make these changes and then follow through. (Warning: [1] All guns are loaded. [2] All journals will get stolen and then have their juicy parts published online.)

As a send-off, I am assigning this task. Listen to the 2014 graduation speech at the University of Texas at Austin.¹ It

1. It is available here: bit.ly/SealTraining.

was delivered by a leader, four-star Admiral William McRaven. He was the senior officer in the U.S. Navy's SEALs, the Navy's elite warriors. Three months after delivering this speech, he retired from the Navy to take over the University of Texas. In this sense, this speech was a highly successful job candidate presentation. At the time of the speech, he was the longest-serving officer still in the SEALs. Here, he describes basic training in 1977. His vision of comprehensive world transformation through discipleship is worth considering. So are his ten principles of success. Christians should adopt a similar vision of victory. But they should adopt a more realistic series of decentralized, specialized training programs. What he described is boot camp. What Christianity needs is a series of lifetime training programs for people with varying degrees of commitment.

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