

CEO Briefing



Steadfast Leadership

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There is a great deal of chaos in our world, our country, many businesses, and our personal lives. Responding to the chaos and the problems is a never-ending effort. I believe the great Norman Vincent Peale once wrote that difficulties are essential for life – if we have no issues, we will be dead.

Of course, we would appreciate a bit less chaos and the resolution of some of our problems. In the attempt to reach this nirvana, we often follow a problem resolution model: name and describe the problem, brainstorm some possible causes, identify what we believe is the root cause, and then make the changes necessary to remove the cause.

Simple, right? Not so fast. As an engineer, I can assure you that the process is slow, treacherous, and frequently not a specific path.

Why is this so difficult? Usually because of the unknowable. We proceed on the assumption that we mortals can analyze and debate, find the issues, and then take appropriate action. We use our own experiences to enlighten the landscape. We believe that we can accurately provide the solution. Better yet, if we get the composite view/opinion from our TEAM, we feel brilliant and confident.

Until we try out the proposed solution in the real world – our business, our life, our situation, there is no proof that it works. If it doesn't work, we start again at the beginning of the problem-solving process.

I frequently meet with groups of business owners to share our concerns from daily life and seek insights into how we can address these issues in business and life from a Christian viewpoint. Ideally, we get inspiration from each other and apply strategies that use Biblical principles to guide us. When we can engage our employees, suppliers, and customers with these Christian principles in mind, the red carpet of joy and peace awaits us.

Let's go back to problem-solving. As said, the typical approach is to start with the problem (issue-obstacle), analyze the environment (causes), then seek the solution (satisfactory outcome). But there is not a generic solution for all problem cases.

Each case is unique and requires a special resolution. The individual situation shades every problem-solving analysis. Gathering ideas to solve the problem may generate more opinions that may clarify or not even apply to the unique situation. We end up chasing the chaos and not solving the problem.

What if, before entering the problem-solving journey, we ask God for solutions that conform to His will, not just quick fixes.

When seeking God's will, we can use the seven cardinal virtues of **faith, hope, charity, fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence** as a guide to follow.

We can ask that our problem-solving outcome deliver an impact of at least one of the virtues. The subsequent problem resolution journey has a new purpose – bringing virtue to our problem-solving product.

When asked what problems our business owners face and keep them up at night (i.e., so disturbed that I cannot be at peace), I hear:

- **How do I grow the next generation of leaders?**
- **What is my unique business niche and differentiation?**
- **As a leader, how do I achieve work-life balance?**

- **How can I keep up with technology?**
- **How can I manage cash flow, risks, and ebbs/flows?**
- **How do I provide purpose in work for staff and myself?**

Seeking answers to these questions without God produces only human-sized solutions. The hidden causes of our problem may better identify with God-down thinking. That means Divine insights – listen to God! A human-sized view can generate ideas that can provide momentum for making change. But rarely do these ideas provide explosive breakthroughs. Divine solutions go further – they hold their Spirit of truth.

What is the alternate approach? Increase our problem-solving power by seeking Divine guidance. Instead of chewing over the problem with other mortals, we should approach it from an Outcomes perspective. What does God think is the right direction? God talks, certainly through the Bible. It pays to listen to what the triune God thinks with His Son and the Holy Spirit.

Once a person puts his trust in Christ, he is a new creation

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

and he will reflect the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”

(Galatians 5:22–23).

By God’s grace and through the work of the Holy Spirit, we become more like Christ and therefore filled with virtue. The transformation to Christlikeness is not primarily a self-help effort in which we seek to live virtuously; rather, it depends on the work of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:12–13).

Why should we fret over problems? Why should we struggle with problem-solving at a human-sized level? We should choose to be steadfast followers of Jesus Christ. Please pay careful attention to your spiritual journey. Each day, ask God to re-verify your mission.

To solve the typical problems of business today, a leader needs to rely on resources deeper than structured problem-solving models. This more profound resource is God's guidance model - listen for our mission. When guided by God's talk, we become a Steadfast Leader in business and life.

A Steadfast Leader follows Christian principles – the virtues. The truth in ethical leadership will set the Steadfast Leader free. The

truth is God-directed. As Christian leaders, we can expect the power of the Holy Spirit to join us, when we ask God. He will clarify our mission and equip us to solve the problems. How clearly do you understand your Godly mission?

A Steadfast Leader begins their problem resolution journey by recollecting the virtues. This foundation of truth enables the leader to deal with the problem with clarity from God Himself.

The problem to be solved is possibly rooted in some failure to meet a moral principle. If we analyze the situation after asking God to IMPACT our solution with the virtues, we release insights that follow God's will. Check that the resolution embraces as many virtues as possible:

Prudence — The ability to find the good in every situation and choose the proper means of achieving it.

Justice — The constant and firm will to give what is due to God and neighbor.

Fortitude — The demonstration of strength in difficulties and temptations; the ability to overcome fear and other obstacles in one's moral life.

Temperance — Balance in using created goods, using pleasure in moderation, and seeking that which is good.

Faith — The virtue by which one believes in God and that all He has said and revealed is true.

Hope — A desire for the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as one's happiness, placing one's trust in Christ's promises, and relying on the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Charity — Love for God above all else for His own sake and love for one's neighbor as oneself for the love of God.

Remember that all the virtues flow from charity, which "binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14, ESV).

Our challenge as Christian business leaders is to go beyond solving human-sized problems. Become a Steadfast Leader that guides their follower to pursue virtue first. We then share and enjoy the fruits of the Holy Spirit - **love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

May your leadership move you closer to God's mission for you. The rewards will change lives – yours and your followers.



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