

7 KEY INITIATIVES  
To  
TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS  
INTO A SPIRITUAL POWERHOUSE

BY  
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KAHLE

 BIBLICAL  
BUSINESS  
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## Foreward

I was introduced to Dave Kahle and his work in early 2017 when I interviewed him for The Kingdom Driven Entrepreneur Podcast. He carried a message concerning Biblical business and God's economy that frankly we need to hear much more of in the marketplace -- that business has always been a primary vehicle for engaging with God, building faith, building strong families, and expanding God's Kingdom.

*7 Key Initiatives to Transform Your Business into a Spiritual Powerhouse* provides a solid practical foundation for shifting your mindset and business operations to a focus on "business as ministry" with an eternal return on investment. To experience God's best as a business owner, we need a revelation in our hearts that our business has the ability to be a place of tremendous blessing, a testimony of God's character, and a revealer of His glory in our spheres of influence.

I encourage you to not only read the following pages, but to apply these initiatives as the Holy Spirit leads you. They will not only transform your business, but also hold the potential to change the world around you.

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## Introduction

There was a time when Christian-owned businesses were looked at with just a touch of disdain by the Christian community. In many places they still are. The real work of the Kingdom, or so the idea was, happens inside the institutional church, and is only done by pastors and missionaries and those who support and train them. Business was thought of as a necessary ‘secular’ activity whose real purpose was to make money to support the religious establishment.

Establishing and propagating that paradigm had to be one of Satan’s most effective strategies. Because of that mindset, literally millions of people could have been exposed to the Kingdom in the place where they spent 40 hours a week, and were not.

Instead of being exposed to the blessings, principles and practices of a Christian business, millions of people were excluded because of a mindset that promoted compartmentalization – that said Christianity is what you did on Sunday morning and had nothing to do with what you did during the week. Business was one thing, Christianity was another, and the two didn’t mix.

But, the Lord began a movement, 20 to 30 years ago, to destroy that paradigm and bring Christian businesses to the forefront in the Kingdom. The Business as Mission (BAM) movement was an early manifestation of that movement. Under the BAM concept, business could impact the world for Christ, if it served the interests and agenda of the institutional church. It initially began with the realization, on the part of some missionary groups, that while they were banned from a number of countries, businesses were welcome. Why not make a mission effort and disguise it as a business? The institutional church now saw businesses as tools to further their agenda.

In that modest beginning, BAM unleashed a virtual tiger. Instead of just disguised mission efforts, Christian businesses could actually do good in the world. They could develop wells for African villages and promote crafts from



developing countries, for example. Now, Christian business people were no longer compelled to think of themselves as second-class Christians. Their work, skills and gifts could be important in the Kingdom! Dozens of books were written, and conferences held all over the world promoting the BAM concept.

The BAM concept is now morphing into BIM – Business is Ministry. BIM realizes that business – your business – can be a powerful entity in the Kingdom, regardless of what it does or where it exists. Business doesn't have to be an arm of a mission movement, business is ministry all by itself.

When I was researching the scriptures for [The Good Book on Business](#), I discovered an even higher principle. Not only is business a ministry, but business is and was the priority for God to interact with his people, the primary place where He build leaders, and the most powerful place to build faith among His people. Business was established before Eve was created, before scripture was written, before prophets, priests or pastors.

Here are a few of the things I discovered about Biblical Businesses:

1. They are God's first priority for a venue in which to interact with mankind.
2. They are a powerful place to build faith among his people
3. They are a conduit for God's blessings.
4. They are the first venue for the application of spiritual gifts.
5. They are God's preferred venue to raise up Godly leaders.
6. They provide the perfect setting for wholesale conversions to Christianity.

That's a short list. The full list is in [The Good Book on Business](#).

Not only is business a ministry, but it is the original ministry. Unfortunately, most Christian businesses have no idea of how powerful their business (ministry) can be in the Kingdom.

As I researched Biblical businesses, I discovered a set of principles and



practices that set a Biblical business apart from others. Any Christian business person can implement these practices and principles and transform his/her business into a powerful entity in the Kingdom. It's not easy, and it doesn't happen on its own. But it can be done. The necessary ingredient is you -- you must decide to begin the process.

Because you are reading this little book, you are already positively disposed to the idea that your business can be more. There is more spiritual potential in your business than you realize. You can transform your business and begin to achieve that potential.

This book shows you how.



# Initiative One: Embed Prayer Disciplines into Your Business

One of the characteristics that distinguish a Biblical business from its competitors is the degree to which the executives of Biblical businesses embed prayer into the fabric of the business.

This is an uncomfortable thought to many Christian business people, who have been led to believe that prayer has no place in the business world. That idea may simplify their positions and absolve them, at least in their minds, of responsibility. However, there is no support for it in Scripture, nor in the practices of successful contemporary Biblical businesses. Both of those sources overwhelmingly support the case for an active, intentional and disciplined approach to prayer in business.



You may recall this passage in Philippians 4:6:

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by **prayer** and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (NIV)*

There is no limitation to that passage, no exception made for businesses. On the contrary, our businesses present us with a continuous, daily stream of things we could be ‘anxious’ about, of decisions and risks that carry significant consequences and rewards.

Should we hire this person or that one? Should we quote this price, or a higher one? Should we invest in this relationship? Should we pursue this customer? Should we give this person additional responsibilities? Should we extend terms to this customer?

The list of decisions and risks never ends. And that is exactly as it should be. In [The Good Book on Business](#), I make the case that God established



business as the primary venue for him to build faith, develop character and bless mankind, among other things. That continuous stream of decisions, relationships, and investments that come with owning or running a business is designed by God, intended by him to drive us to him.

He wants to bless our businesses and draw us closer to him. And the way he does that is to allow a continuous stream of decisions, challenges, and opportunities in our

businesses to prompt us to turn to him. And prayer, then, is the mechanism he uses to interact with us and become more involved in our businesses and our lives.

So, the question for a business person who wants to have a blessed business and lead a fulfilled life is not “Should I bring prayer into the business?” The answer to that is, “Of course. How could you have Christian business without prayer?”

Rather, the question should be, “How do I embed prayer into the fabric of my business?”

Here are some proven ideas from the practices of other Christian businesses.

### **1. Establish disciplines and practices to pray for the business.**

It should begin with you. Begin, like so many Christian professionals and executives do, with a daily time of prayer in which you lift up that day’s challenges, interactions and opportunities. Then, add in other key people in your organization. Find others in your company who share your Christian faith, and invite them to pray with you, regularly and methodically, as you pray for the business.

For years my customer service manager and I would meet at 7:45 on Monday morning, to lift up the week’s concerns and opportunities together to the Lord.

Other business people organize a weekly time of prayer and invite folks in the organization to join with them.



When big or important decisions are pending, think about organizing a prayer session specifically for those issues – a special time to seek the Lord's involvement in the big decisions you must make.

Consider organizing a prayer team. That is a group of committed prayer warriors who regularly intercede on behalf of the business. I have a team of six people who each pray for the business on one day a week. So, one prays on Monday, another on Tuesday, etc. Every Saturday morning, I send an email describing the previous week's progress and the issues facing us in the upcoming week.

Consider, also, having a paid relationship with someone who will intercede to God on behalf of your business. For years, I had such a relationship. At first, it was an individual who was gifted as a prayer warrior, and later, I contracted with an organization whose business was to intercede for its clients on a weekly basis.



## **2. Make prayer an element of your relationships with your employees, customers, and vendors.**

Imagine what would happen if you would ask, every time you talked with one of your employees, if there was anything for which you could pray on behalf of that person.

That's exactly what one of my clients, the CEO of a 100-employee manufacturing company, does to start every day. He walks the floor, and talks with as many employees as he can, and always asks them if he can pray for them in any way. Now, people often come into his office and ask him to pray for issues in their lives.

Another client CEO keeps index cards on each of his employees, compiles notes of discussions he has had with them, and items for which to pray. He views, and prays for, a certain number of those folks every day, noting his prayers on the card. Over a period of a couple of weeks, every employee is prayed for by the



head of that business.

**3. Seek, in your prayers, to advance from petition to conversation.**

In [The Good Book on Business](#), I point out that God established business as the place where he will interact with us and work with us. He wants to use your business as the venue in which he grows you closer to him.

When we are new and immature in our faith, we often see God as sort of a supernatural vending machine. We put in our prayers and get specific things back. Later, as we grow in our faith, we begin to see that prayer is two-way communication in which God communicates with us. Not only does he provide answers to our prayers (sometimes answers which we don't like), but he also communicates his agenda to us.

This ability to hear God and to recognize his communication through a variety of means is a higher order spiritual skill. It takes time and work to develop your prayer to the level of two-way communication, but it is worth it, not only for you for the benefit of the business.

Prayer, in a Biblical business, is the mechanism that invites God into the business and makes him the general partner. It requires a bit of faith and risk to begin, and a heavy dose of commitment and discipline to continue. It is both commanded by the scriptures and evidenced as a best practice by Christian business worldwide. I don't think you can approach the potential for your business and your life without it.



# Initiative Two: Acknowledge God in Your Foundational Documents

***“But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”***

(Joshua 24:15)

In his parting address to the Hebrews, whom he has led for most of his life, Joshua declares the commitment upon which he has lived his life. He will serve the Lord.

Note that his commitment is not just for himself, but for his entire business. “Household” is the Biblical word used to describe everyone in a person’s business – all the family, servants, slaves and employees who made their living by doing the work that the head, in this case, Joshua, has given them to do. In this passage, Joshua is declaring that he and all the people who make a living in his business will serve the Lord.

The Hebrews to whom he was speaking responded in kind: *“We will also serve the Lord, for He is our God.”* (vs. 18). The commitment that they made influenced their lives and the lives of the next generation. We read at the end of the chapter, that *“Israel served the Lord all the day of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua...”* (vs. 31).

Here’s the sequence of events:

1. A well-known, well-respected, highly visible person of significance publicly declares that he and all the folks associated with him in his business will follow the Lord.
2. The people who hear that commitment respond in kind, following the lead of that significant person.
3. They follow through on that commitment.
4. The nation is transformed.

**What’s the lesson for us?**



There is a certain power and attractiveness that accrues to those folks who take a stand and publicly express it. That's called leadership, and the world is full of people looking for a leader. There is something compelling about a person who is committed to a cause that is bigger than just himself, who has the courage to declare that commitment not only for himself but on behalf of those in his sphere of influence, and to do so publicly for anyone who wants to hear it. The impact can be incalculable -- spreading across geographies and dripping down into several generations.

Of course, we've all seen this principle in our lives -- significant people influencing multitudes with the strength of the commitment to a cause. My mind leaps to Billy Graham on the positive side, and Hitler on the negative. These are grand-scale examples, but there are scores of others in our families and communities who don't get the same level of notoriety, but for whom the principle is just as operative.

If we want to make this actionable, we just reverse engineer the process. If we want to impact generations of people, we need to make a commitment to a cause larger than ourselves (serving the Lord) and publicly declare that commitment, not only for ourselves but for our entire business. Like a stone thrown into a pool of water, the ripples of impact can spread beyond our ability to discern. It may even be the tipping point to transform a community.

There is so much power in this process that it rises to the level of a fundamental Biblical principle, a promise to us:

<sup>32</sup> *"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. <sup>33</sup>But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven."* Matthew 10:32, 33

For a Christian business person, the question then becomes, not "if" but "how." How exactly can you do that? What is the mechanism that would give you a platform for expressing a commitment to acknowledge and serve God?

### **Is There a Practical Solution?**

Our foundational documents – the Vision, Mission and Values statements



we create for our businesses provide an ideal venue for expressing such a commitment. They not only express the deep desires and values of the business owners, but they also bind the employees to that same set of values. While you can't, in our society, commit someone else – particularly your employees – to following Christ, you certainly can declare your commitment to do so.

In your Vision statement, which articulates the highest aspirations of your business, you can acknowledge the role that God plays in your business.

In your Mission statement, which describes the work that you do and the markets that you serve, you can acknowledge the role of God in that providing that opportunity to you.

In your Values statement, which paints the picture of the ethical boundaries of your business and portrays the higher values to which you aspire, you can develop those out of a deep understanding of Biblical business and Christian ethics.

I've attached the foundational documents which I created in 1994 to guide my business. Were I to revise them today, they would look someone different. But they expressed my desire to make a commitment to acknowledge and serve God and to do so in writing, publicly, for all the stakeholders in my business to see, understand and accept. All prospective employees were given a copy, they were posted in prominent places around the office, and were regularly reviewed in company meetings.

If you want to make an impact in your business, if you want to create ripples of impact that could skip across geographies and drip down through generations, then acknowledging God in your foundational statements is a necessary step.

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## The DaCo Corporation Vision

To continually increase our positive impact on people and organizations while remaining in the center of God's direction and reflecting His character.

## Mission

To help people grow their organizations, their sales, their people, and themselves. We do this through the application of our abilities to provide consulting services, create educational products, create and deliver presentations, and provide training.

## Values

- Profit:** We will earn a better than average profit as this allows us the flexibility to do other things.
- Integrity:** We will be honest in everything we do, never over promise, and zealously work to fulfill our commitments.
- Value:** We will strive to provide our clients more value than they expect.
- Personable:** We will be pleasant and easy to work with.
- Knowledgeable:** Understanding that we are in the business of "selling knowledge," we will be on the cutting edge of new knowledge.
- Open-minded:** We will constantly be open to new or different ideas, methods and concepts from all sources, especially our clients.
- Learning:** We will value individual and organizational learning (the ability to continually take in new information, acquire new insights, and change in positive ways because of that information) as our primary competitive advantage.
- Humility:** We will constantly be aware that the resources we use and the clients we serve are gifts from God, entrusted to our temporary stewardship.

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*Quality: In everything we do, we will strive to do it as well as, or better than, the very best companies in the world like ours do it.*

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## Initiative Three: Gather a Group of Advisors

*"Plans fail when there is no counsel, but they succeed when **advisers** are many. " (Proverbs 15:22)*

This is an often-quoted verse, a piece of advice from King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. While the advice doesn't appear to be pointed only at business people, the application of that wisdom can make the difference between success and failure for a business person.

How do you apply the wisdom of this passage in a practical way to a business?

It begins with an attitude of humility. You must have the attitude that there are people in your world who may be wiser than you, and who have experience and expertise in areas that you do not. Even the wisest, smartest, most experienced person is subject to flawed perspectives, emotionally-influenced decisions, and paradigms and prejudices that can negatively impact a set of decisions. If you think you know it all, then a set of advisers is going to be a waste of their time and yours.

While humility is about you, and how you think of yourself, it helps if, at the same time, you have a healthy respect for the experiences, wisdom, motivation and thinking skills of people around you. If you don't have people in your life who you respect, you are probably not a good candidate to be positively influenced by a group of them.

So, the necessary foundation is a sense of humility on your part coupled with a healthy respect for some of the folks in your world. Having laid that foundation, here are three proven practices for bringing a group of advisers into your business.

### **1. A formal advisory board.**

This is a group of people who meet with you on a regular basis and react and respond to a set of questions and issues that you bring to them. In most



cases, they are paid on a per-meeting basis.

You elect each advisor based on the experience and skill he/she has accumulated along the way and ask each to make a commitment for a definite time period – at least a year or two. That gives them enough time to educate themselves on your business and grow an interest in your success.



For about ten years, I was on the advisory board of one of my clients. There were eight of us who met formally once a quarter, in a three-hour meeting. The company owner would prepare the agenda, which generally required us to discuss and recommend actions for some aspect of the business.

Minutes were kept and circulated, and a formal agenda was prepared and distributed in advance of the meeting. We did things like review quarterly financial statements, help with key decisions, interview candidates for key positions, vet potential acquisitions, and serve as an on-going strategic planning task force. The owner felt like he had a group of high-power advisors who contributed the best of their experience and thinking, for a fraction of the cost of a similar group of employees.

In a very mature market, that business grew consistently more rapidly than the competition, survived the major economic downturn, and regularly acquired its competitors. Some of the credit for that success rested on the insights and recommendations of this group of people.

## **2. An executive roundtable group.**

This is a group of executives who meet, usually once a month, under the management of a facilitator, to educate themselves on best practices, to learn from one another, and to discuss one another's businesses. The advantage is that this kind of group is often composed of other business executives and the costs are less than maintaining your own advisory group. The disadvantage is that you are not the sole subject of the meeting, and the group exists to help each business in



the group. The quality of these groups varies dramatically, and it is not unusual to join a group where everyone is guarded, and no one shares their real problems, challenges, and financial performance.

These kinds of groups have become very popular, and there has arisen an industry of people who organize them. They range everywhere from the free or inexpensive groups supported by your local Chamber of Commerce to secular groups like Vistage and TAB, to Christian-oriented groups like C-12, Convene and Truth@Work.

I have been involved as a member and a facilitator of these groups for 30 years, with lots of experience in local CEO roundtables, and manage and facilitate two groups called [Christian Business Impact Groups](#). These groups meet via video and have members from around the continent. (Learn more [here.](#))

We have dealt with a range of issues and challenges in these groups – everywhere from “should I buy this building,” to “should I fire this person,” to “my wife just filed for divorce.” The longer you are a part of one of these groups, the deeper and more transparent are the issues that the group confronts.

### **3. Temporary decision-specific groups.**

These are groups of people that you pull together, typically for just one meeting, or one meeting a year, who react and respond to an issue that you bring to them.

For example, if you are contemplating a new product, you could bring together a group of customers in a focus group to react to the new product and make specific recommendations. In customer groups that I have facilitated, the insights and ideas gained have been worth their weight in platinum, both smoothing the path to success for a new product and preventing costly mistakes.

If you are considering a major building project, you could pull together a group of financiers, developers, and folks who have gone through a similar project and have them look closely at your plans and point out the potential obstacles and hurdles.

The point is you bring together a group of people who have experience in the



issue you are facing and gather their input before making a final decision.

There are other variations on the theme of ‘multiple advisers.’ One of my clients, for example, makes it a practice to “invite a good thinker from outside the industry to lunch once a month.” Each of these variations requires an openness on your part to proactively seek out formal input, an underlying sense of humility, and an appreciation for the wisdom of the scripture:

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*"Plans fail when there is no counsel, but they succeed when advisers are many. " (Proverbs 15:22)*

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# Initiative Four: Plan with The Holy Spirit

Guest article by (c) Morris E. Ruddick

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Making God your Senior Partner is a lot more than lip-service. It entails proactive planning with the Holy Spirit. That means input and guidance from the Lord on decisions. That requires consciously hearing from God.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the heroes of faith has been hearing from God. Yet, from the days Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, the people were inclined to be terrified to hear His voice. They asked Moses to leave the camp when talking with God. However, when Moses returned they wanted him to let them know what God had said.

This same reluctance in hearing God's voice was reflected in later generations when the Lord appeared to Gideon. It is revealing that the Lord's first words to Gideon were: "Peace be with you. Do not fear. You will not die."

So it is today, that among God's people there continues to be this hesitation in proactively bridging that gap between the seen world and the unseen world by consciously discerning revelation from God. Sometimes this is because of doctrinal precepts that have no foundations. Sometimes it is due to the fear of risk or simply of getting it wrong.

## Foundations to Spirit Planning

Yet, it is written: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the days of the wilderness."

Planning together with the Holy Spirit requires prudence and practice. It calls for mastering planning. It is written that David gave his son Solomon the plans for all that David had gotten by the Spirit. "All this," said David, "the Lord made me to understand in writing, by His hand being upon me, for all the works of these plans."



David planned together with the Spirit of God. He captured these plans in writing.

As a prelude to discussing these steps, two things need to be noted. First, those who seek Him will find Him. Second, not every thought that comes into our minds is from God. We need to approach this process with an expectation, but also wisdom.

We live in a time when we have available a treasure trove of the principles of God's truth along with scriptural models of a history of interactions of God with His people. Getting revelation from God needs to be approached with reverence. Spirit and Truth will always agree. So it is important to immerse ourselves in His written Truth so that we have a plumb-line with which to judge His spoken word.

It is written that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word will be established. Early in my walk with the Lord, when I heard something I believed was God, I would ask him to show me at least two scripture in support of it. He always did. Over time, we gain confidence in our hearing, yet it should always be tempered by this reverence and awe of knowing He is the creator of all things.

The story of Abraham is the unfolding of the mapping out of the destiny of not only Abraham, but of his descendants. It is foundational to our discussion of Jewish business secrets. It highlights certain milestone communications that God had with Abraham. In some of those interactions, Abraham reached hard, seeking "something more" from God. An example is the time preceding the covenant that God made with him. At that time, he was still known as Abram. Scripture describes how in this instance the Lord appeared to Abram in a vision saying: "Do not fear Abram, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." However, Abram responded with: "But Lord, what will you give me, seeing that I go childless."

God had already told Abram to leave his family and country and go to a land God would show him and that God would make him to be a great nation. The point is that what God spoke to Abram/ Abraham was progressive. It took place over time, as Abram/ Abraham responded in faith and obedience and took steps of action based on what God had said.



In doing so, Abraham was bridging the seen world with the unseen world. His response was in considering that which was not as though it were because God told him so. That is the basis in which faith must take the risk to bridge the seen and unseen worlds.

## **God as Senior Partner and Planner**

Planning is a systematic means of outlining goals and strategies. Such plans can be done for mapping out an individual's destiny, to determine a course of steps for a business, or to crystallize the focus and pathway unfolding for a community.

Inviting the Spirit of God to be our Senior Partner and participate in our planning will often uncover things we could not have seen or anticipated in the natural

My friend Eric Morey in Israel was the founder of a retail store called the Galilee Experience. Situated on the boardwalk of the Sea of Galilee, the Galilee Experience carries an array of quality Israeli products. It has been a favorite stop for tourists from all over the world for years.

Eric told me that one morning, during one particularly busy season that the Lord spoke to him: "Start a catalog business with your products." Eric was so busy that he couldn't even think of when he could find the time. He made a note to start looking into the mail-order business when he wasn't so busy. However, a couple of days later, he again heard the Lord to tell him: "Start a catalog business with your products, now!" Eric hesitated and began praying about this guidance more seriously. The next day, the Lord spoke to him again: "Do it now, Eric."

So Eric shifted his priorities and began the mail-order business. It quickly became successful and started growing.

One year later, an Intifada hit Israel. Because of the uncertainty of the increased terrorist threats, the tourism industry in Israel began rapidly declining. Eventually, tourism was down, by some estimates, 95 percent. Some excellent businesses closed. Eric's storefront business was almost vacant of customers. However, his



catalog business was thriving and paying the bills for his entire operation.

## **Steps to Hear Spiritually**

Another insight into hearing God accurately, especially in the process of planning, involves keeping a written record of what you discern in your "hearing" together with questions that arise from what you've heard. This process begins with the revelation of what you hear. A very natural tendency is to act too fast on what you hear. However, just as it is written that the naive believe everything, but the prudent takes his time and considers the steps and the alternatives. So, when you get a revelation from God, make a record of it. More importantly, keep praying and ask the Lord questions about what you've heard. In other words, pray about the revelation until you get the illumination on the revelation.

When you've considered the alternatives and gotten enough answers to the questions and you feel satisfied you've gotten sufficient illumination on the revelation, it is time to start asking the Lord about the instructions or steps required. Continue praying about the instructions. Keep in mind that we're talking about unfolding revelation for your planning. This is proactively making the Lord your Senior Partner. At the point you feel satisfied that you have obtained enough to map out your steps, you now can start praying about the timing.

Too often we get a preliminary revelation and try to jump immediately into the timing on things, when we need to be praying more and investigating and connecting the dots on a number of matters. If we take the time to get sufficient illumination and instruction on what is being planned, then the timing will be much more accurate.

I'd like to illustrate this process with the story of a famous writer. James Michener wrote a book titled "Hawaii" that sold millions of copies around the world. It was translated into many other languages. When Michener was interviewed by a famous magazine he made an incredible statement about his writing abilities. He said he considered himself to be only an average writer.



Then he told his secret. Although just an average writer, he was a world-class re-writer. For any who are professional writers, they understand that it is not the first thing you write that gets the attention of the publishers. You edit your work. You go over it again and again and then again. You continually improve on what you intended to say with your first draft. You learn the art of re-writing.

This secret of good writing is also the secret of good planning. It is not the first plan you put together that aids the most in achieving your goals. You go back, and you look at the assumptions again. You refine your goals and you improve your strategies. Planning is a process. It is continuous. The secret to good planning is in re-planning.

This also is the secret to good praying. Praying like planning should be continuous. We should always be in communication with God, depending on Him, reaching for more of Him and asking for His wisdom. The secret of good praying is in re-praying.

## **God's Guidance for the Future**

Many years ago, I began walking the pathway of a pioneer in the marketplace. I left a military career in mid-stream to follow God's leading in my desire to be obedient and to serve Him. I was very surprised when the Lord told me He had called me into business. At that time, business people were not considered spiritual leaders, but those who made it possible for pastors, missionaries and para-church ministries to do the work of the ministry. Yet, I had learned to discern the voice of God and I was obedient to do what God had told me.

So I became a consultant, then a business owner. As I was traversing this pathway, I took some time alone with the Lord to pray. I had given up a career in the military and frankly didn't fully understand my role, as a Christian, in business. Then the Lord spoke to me: "I've called you into an interlinking of secular business enterprises with overriding Kingdom objectives."



## **God's Purposes for Business**

An example of this interlinking of business and ministry is the story of Jesus going to Peter and asking if he could use his fishing boat. Peter said of course. So Jesus sat in Peter's boat and taught the people. When he concluded his teaching, he told Peter to throw the fishing net over the right side of the boat. Peter hesitated, telling the Lord that he had been fishing there all night and had not caught anything. Then he went ahead and did what Jesus told him. The scripture says that the nets became so full of fish that they began to tear.

Peter let Jesus use his fishing boat for ministry. When Peter next did what he had been doing in the natural, the supernatural was released and Peter was abundantly blessed as a result.

We've talked in a previous session about stewardship and generosity. This foundation in learning God's heart and learning His ways will culminate with our purpose for our planning and our business: to become community builders. We'll talk more about community builders in a future session, but for now, business leaders are called to build the community around them, to build both the resources and the people who are a part of the community. This reflects the type of leadership that Jesus described as leadership by serving.

## **Proactive Spirit Planning**

Planning with the Spirit requires your best. Give the Lord your best and you can expect His best. Giving God your best will involve spending time with Him planning, when our presence of mind is maximized. If you are a morning person, if that is the time of day when your energy level is the highest, then that should be the time you plan with the Lord. If you are an evening person, then that should be the time you select to spend with God on planning issues. Some people's days don't become fully activated until the evening. These are evening people. Again, give God your best and you can expect the same in return.

In early 2007, we conducted one of our programs in a city 800 miles east of



Moscow. It was an amazing congregation. Over 300 Russian believers traveled over icy roads to attend. During one of the sessions we had everyone to pray a prayer of cleansing to help them hear from God more clearly. One of the men in the group had been planning and working on his new business for almost a year. It had been very frustrating for him because of the technology he used for his business. He just bumped along and couldn't seem to get everything to come together.

When I told the group about a prayer that would help them to hear God more clearly, he was frankly skeptical. After almost a year, he was discouraged at being unable to get the strategies needed for his business to come together. But then he concluded he had nothing to lose, so he went ahead and prayed the prayer. At 3:00 a.m. that morning, the Lord work him up and in one hour gave him the answers he had been seeking which allowed him to complete his plan and get on with the next steps in his business.

For a family-sized business, the plan should be practical. It should outline the goals and strategies and monthly budget requirements for the next twelve months. The business plan should include a statement that defines the market and future opportunity, as well as who the main customers are and the advantage that the company's product or service has over the competition.

There should be a goal that suggests the financial growth of the company based on how many products are sold each month. There should be a goal that targets a secondary customer base. There should also be a goal that reflects what the profit ratio of overall sales will be, along with the amount of sales expected. There should be a goal that describes the primary means of advertising or marketing. Finally, there should be a goal that outlines the distribution of the product or service and how growth is expected to take place. Each of these goals should have at least two strategies that describe steps on how they will be accomplished.

Planning anticipates the alternatives. Planning prepares for future eventualities. I've



often commented that an important aspect of business is managing change. Change is best managed when you have prepared for it. When God is your Senior Partner, God will not only provide insight into the change, he'll provide the strategy for the change.

The story of Joseph is one that many feel is pertinent to this hour. We live in a time when turbulence and crisis is everywhere. Joseph was prepared by God for a time of great crisis. His placement in Egypt was strategic from God's purposes. God gave him the plan and the strategy for the time of crisis. So today, there will be men and women of God, prepared like Joseph, who hear God's voice who have been or will soon be positioned in safe-places, places God will use to advance His purposes for His people globally and for Israel. In a study outlined in *Global, Inc.*, 53 of the largest 100 economies in the world are corporations (Gabel, Bruner, *Global Inc.* 2003, New York). It should be no surprise that God is raising up modern-day Josephs with the spiritual capital to serve His purposes in both corporate and nation-state refuges.

Approaching God as your Senior Partner must be done with a right heart. In doing so, it is important to prepare your heart, just as I had the Russian Christians to do. The following is the prayer of cleansing that helps in this process. It is a prayer that I pray on a regular basis. As a writer, it releases me from "writer's block." It is the means by which I prepare both to write and to pray. When you've prayed this prayer, wait quietly before the Lord. Keep your notebook handy. As the revelation begins, then start capturing it in writing. Ask the Lord questions, but most importantly listen, as you enter this process.

*Lord God, in the Name of Your Son Jesus, I come boldly before your throne. Cleanse my heart O God. Thank You that I am cleansed by the blood of Jesus and I have invited the Holy Spirit to live within me. I bring every thought of my mind and every impression in my heart into captivity to the obedience of Jesus. Lord, I want to hear what You have to say. I trust You to communicate to me. And in the Name of Jesus, I take authority over every stronghold along with every demonic and interfering spirit. I forbid any enemy activity to operate in my mind or soul. I open my heart to the Holy Spirit -- to inspire, to guide, to illuminate and reveal to me truth, insights and perspectives that will anoint my efforts in planning for my business. I take authority over fear, anxiety, doubt and unbelief in the*



*name of Jesus. I bind any negative, critical or condemning spirits in the Name of Jesus and forbid you to interfere with or in any way to imitate God's voice to me. Lord, I thank you for being in charge of every aspect of my being and for all that will unfold in this process. I look forward to growing in this new dimension with you and for what You have planned for me through it. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.*

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## Initiative Five: Set Biblical Goals

### Should a Biblically-Oriented Business Set Annual Goals?

Before you respond by lecturing me on the wisdom of setting goals, you should know that I am committed to the process of goal setting as a best practice for a number of different business expressions. Goal-setting, for example, is at the heart of our [Kahle Way® Sales Management System](#). It is one of the ‘secrets’ in my book, [Eleven Secrets of Time Management for Sales People](#). It is a part of almost every presentation I make to sales people and business leaders. So, I understand and advocate for setting goals in most business situations.

Having acknowledged that, I am still asking the question on behalf of a very small segment of the business community – those entrepreneurs and business leaders who strive to run a business on Biblical principles and practices. (See [The Good Book on Business](#).)

This question presented itself to me several years ago. I was phone interviewing business owners for a consulting project. My questions covered several best practices. When I asked one business owner about setting goals, she replied, *“We are a Christian organization. We don’t believe in setting goals, but instead, we react to the opportunities that God brings to us.”* I had never heard that before. I was too stunned to collect my thoughts and dig deeper. But, that conversation has stuck with me for years, as it reveals a fundamentally different view on how to run an organization.

Goal-setters assume the responsibility for guiding the organization and begin that process by identifying the most important priorities and initiatives of the organization, turning them into goals, communicating them to the organization, and then measuring and managing progress toward those goals. The key issue here is



responsibility. By virtue of their ownership or executive position the small group of goal-setters in any organization accept the responsibility to sort out the priorities and mandate the initiatives. For want of any higher authority, the goal setters assume that they know what is best for the organization.

Typically, these goals are a means to an end. For example, we may want the organization to 'be the best in our industry', So, we create some annual goals that represent our best thinking on what actions move the organization closer to its vision.

So, goal-setting in a business context rests on the goal-setters having a vision (or at least a higher purpose) for the organization, and then assuming the responsibility to make the decisions as to which initiatives or goals will move the organization toward that vision. Someone must lead, and that's their job. By virtue of their position, they know better than the rest of the folks.

Now, imagine a business organization in which the owners and executives do not have a vision to be accomplished, nor a belief that it is their responsibility to make the fundamental decisions for the organization. Imagine that organization holding that it is God's responsibility, not theirs, to guide the organization. God is their senior partner. The principals in this organization would take seriously and literally the Biblical passages that indicate that God is the source of prosperity. They would have attained an uncommon level of spiritual maturity and relationship with God.

In such an organization, in place of the traditional strategic planning exercises, the principals would more highly value prayer, listening for God's prompting, and reading circumstances that indicated God's leading. In such an organization, annual goals might be seen as usurping God's authority and indicating a degree of arrogance.

The question that naturally follows is this: Does one format necessarily exclude the other? In other words, can a business organization be both God-directed and goal- focused at the same time?



Yes. There is room for both formats in a Biblically-oriented business. If the principals begin with the “God as senior partner” premise, diligently seek to learn God’s leading in their business, then this year’s goals could be God-directed instead of man- created. Having first diligently prayed for his leading, the goal-setting process could be a process of identifying the priorities and initiatives given to them by God. The goal-setting process, which follows, could be a way to bridge the gap between God-given initiatives and the daily behavior of the organization.

With this approach, the vision comes from God, and the responsibility to direct the organization is also God’s. The principals see themselves as conduits for that leading and use goals as a management device to help harness the troops in that direction.

## **A Fresh, Nuanced Approach to Goal Setting Introducing “FOFS”**

Goal-setting is one of those hallowed practices that belong in every leader’s arsenal. We’ve all heard that people who set goals are far more successful than those who don’t. And every well-run business has a policy and a practice of setting annual goals for its various operational departments. It is a well-established, almost universally- applied practice.

And yet...

There are times and situations where it may be appropriate to do something else.

Let’s unpack this. The practice of goal-setting involves a couple of separate, yet related, processes. First is the selection of the categories of the goals. And second is the creation of the actual number to be achieved.

Let me illustrate from the world of sales management. In our management system, we recommend that sales managers create no more than five categories of goals for the sales team. So, “*increasing sales*”, “*selling more of X product*,” “*gaining new customers*,” etc. would all be categories. They identify the type of performance that is important to the company. Once the categories are determined,



the next step is to assign a number to each. So, “*Increase sales by \$100,000,*” or “*Sell 20% more of X product,*” or “*Gain 10 new customers,*” are all steps toward the final, specifically delineated, measurable goal for the year.

Of those two separate and distinct steps, the first has more power to transform and focus the company than the second. In the first step, the executive is challenged to identify the five most important things the company can accomplish in the coming year. This is often difficult, tortuous work that forces the executive to confront several critically important elements.

For example, a company mission or vision statement can light the path ahead and put borders around the possibilities. If your mission statement that you are going to be the largest supplier to gas stations, for example, that would preclude use for creating a category that said, “increase sales to restaurants.” It just doesn’t fit the mission statement.

Determining these five key categories also requires a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the company, the opportunities in the market and the intricacies and challenges of the market and economic situation in which the organization finds itself.

This annual, real-time SWOT analysis, coupled with an overriding vision and mission statement to guide the way forward, are the essentials that combine to pop up to the surface those most important categories.

It’s tortuous, critical work because it forces the executive to sift through all the possible ‘good’ things to do, and instead, to determine the five ‘best’ things. In other words, to identify, and then to legislate, “what to focus on first.”

In our economic environment, potential opportunities and ‘things to do’ continually confront us like a swarm of gnats in the middle of a field. Any half-way effective executive or sales professional is over whelmed with too much to do and not enough time in which to do it. The issue isn’t identifying new opportunities, the issue is determining which of the opportunities that present themselves are worthy of the investment of our time.



Mindlessly chasing after every opportunity that presents itself and of tackling every task on our 'to do' list is a recipe for exhaustion, burn out and ineffectiveness. The effective executive and sales professional in today's world understands the need for a set of guidelines to keep him and the company on the path to effectiveness and success. Ultimately, one of the purposes of a goal is not to meet the goal, but to focus behavior on the result. We all need a set of things to 'Focus on First (FOFs).'

These 'FOFs' are produced by an annual exercise, and can vary by the level, geography and function of the group. The 'FOFs' for the sales department, for example, may be significantly different from those guiding Accounts Receivable. The 'FOFs' for one branch may differ from that of another branch.

Regardless, the function of the FOF is to provide guidance to everyone in the organization in making daily, maybe even hourly, decisions on how to invest his/her time. Given the choice of several possible things to do, the FOF-guided individual asks, "Which of these fits into one of FOFs," and pursues that.

'FOFs', then, arise out of an annual SWOT analysis, are illuminated by the company's vision and mission, and function to guide everyone in the most effective use of his/her time. FOFs guide the individual in determining the **quality** of his/her investment of time. There are times, places and situations where that may be enough. New organizations, for example, will find it beneficial to create FOF's to guide the investment of time and assets, as will organizations in high unstable environments.

The goal-setting process becomes more difficult when we layer the second step – articulating a number onto the FOF. So, when we proceed from "*acquire new customers*" to "*Acquire 10 new customers*" we turn the FOF into a goal. Now, we add an element that speaks to the **quantity** of performance.

There are times and places when the achieving of those numbers is essential. For example, with a new sales person in a new territory, acquiring just one new customer is probably not going to guarantee continued employment.



He/she needs a greater quantity of performance. When there are loan payments to be made, commitments to vendors to keep, and gross profit that must be achieved to keep the business viable, for example, the attainment of certain minimum numbers is essential.

The difficulty is that, while FOFs arise out of strategic planning and time management planning on the part of the company, the numeric element of goal-setting rarely does. Rather, it often proceeds from a whole set of other variables that are far more subjective, aren't nearly as well-founded as the FOF, and are just as likely to de-motivate a person as it is to motivate him.

While there are many situations where a numeric goal is called for, consider the possibility that, in your situation, the purpose of the goal is not to meet the goal. The purpose of the goal is to shape and influence behavior by determining what to focus on first.



## Initiative Six: Build an Intentional Christian Culture

Leadership in the Bible, at least business leadership, often involved creating an intense culture within the business. We can see evidence of this in the story of the businessperson, Lydia, from the book of Acts.

You may recall the story. Paul and Timothy were traveling, spreading the news about Jesus where ever they went. They found themselves in Macedonia and there met Lydia, whom the Bible tells us was “*A seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God.*” Lydia listened to Paul, “*and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.*” (Acts 16:14)

Look at what happens next: “*And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.’*” (Acts 16:15)

Lydia, who had been a ‘worshiper of God’ heard the Gospel and responded. Her whole household followed her lead and was baptized along with her. This is one example of a phenomenon we see multiple times in the Bible – the head of the business decided to follow Christ, and the entire household – all the family, slaves, servants and employees, follow that lead. (A Biblical household is an economic unit – for want of a better term, a [business](#).)

Let’s stop a minute and think about what that says about the relationship between the head of the household (the CEO in our times) and the folks who worked in the business?

There must have been an intense relationship between the head of the business and the employees, characterized by a great deal of respect for the leadership of the head. You can almost see them thinking, “If he or she decides to do something as important as committing to follow Christ, then we’ll do it too. Business leadership in the Bible was about, among other things, creating such a culture.



That culture fits perfectly with the Biblical mandate to “Love one another”

*I give you a new commandment: **love one another**. As I have **loved** you, so you also should **love one another**. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have **love** for **one another**.” (John 13:34-35)*

As leaders in the business community, we have a responsibility to be mindful of the well-being of our employees and stakeholders. “Love one another” begins with loving family and those employees, consultants and contractors to such an extent that they would gladly follow your lead on important decisions.

What would your business be like if you could build such a culture into your organization?

## **Imagine the implications.**

Your people would feel included and valued. They would grow to respect you and love you back. Productivity would sky-rocket, conflict within the business would ebb, and harmony would take over. Individuals would feel like there was freedom to take risks and grow. Folks would be dedicated to the mission and vision of your business. Your customers and vendors would pick up on the vibe and respond positively.

A Christian business culture, characterized by love and manifesting itself in an exceptional degree of respect for you, would be one of your greatest tools to enlarge your business and multiply its impact.

But, instilling a culture like this doesn’t happen by itself or overnight.

## **Some thoughts about how to do it.**

1. Make it an intentional discipline.

You are the leader. The responsibility to create the culture is yours. That means that you must think about it relentlessly and then decide, willfully and intentionally to act in such a way that builds the culture toward the idea. It is not going to happen by accident. Whatever it takes for you to give it daily thought and daily activity, elevate it to that level. Building a culture is a discipline. Like winning a



marathon takes dedication, discipline and consistent effort, so, too does creating a Christian business culture.

2. Don't discourage.

Understand that you will probably never achieve the ideal expressed in these Biblical models. That should not dissuade you from trying. Vince Lombardi put it this way:

*“We will relentlessly strive for perfection, knowing full well that we will never attain it, because no one is perfect. But, we will strive for perfection because in the process we'll catch excellence”*

Excellence in a Christian business culture is worth the effort.

3. Start with God.

Creating a culture characterized by Christian love begins with developing a loving relationship with God. It wasn't by accident when, asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus replied,

*“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:22-40)*

First comes loving God, then comes loving others. You'll need to work on a loving relationship with God yourself, before you can extend that outward to your employees. As your relationship with God grows, so too will your ability to manifest that love to others.

4. Take the first step now.

Culture is expressed in what people do. It is a way to characterize the general tone of the actions taken and the words expressed consistently within your business. Changing that will be a life-long challenge. You'll never be completely ready. Start now. Take some positive step today.

Creating a loving culture in your organization may be the single most impactful initiative you can undertake. The implications can reach into extended



families and stretch across generations. Start now.



## Initiative Seven: Include the Family in the Business

There are certain ideas bantered about so frequently and repeated with such sincerity that no one questions their accuracy. One such idea is the issue of work/home balance.

The idea is that there is a conflict between one's work and one's home life. Particularly for entrepreneurs and business people, the issue is poignant and fraught with negative consequences. For an entrepreneur, not a week goes by when he/she doesn't feel guilty for choosing one side or the other. You can easily spend more time in the business, and just as easily spend more time with the family. Going home often means leaving something undone at the business. So, you are guilty and anxious about that. Attending to the task at the business often means leaving something undone at home, or someone unattended to, and you feel guilty about that. For most entrepreneurs, then, most weeks are a lose/lose proposition. No matter what you do, it causes negative consequences.

Books have been written on the subject, and consultants have developed careers built around giving advice to those in the throes of the issue. Clearly the issue has a lot of currency in our culture.

It is in these kinds of issues that some Biblical guidance is helpful. What does the Bible say about work/home balance?

Nothing.

It is a non-issue in the Bible. I know this will upset lots of people, but when you look at the two sides in the equation -- family and business -- you discover almost nothing about family, and quite a few examples and instructions about business.

For example, we almost never see young children in the Bible. I am aware of only two appearances of a young child: The first occurs in the story of the adolescent Jesus, being lost for three days on his parent's trip home from



Jerusalem. He was more likely an adolescent in this story than a young child. Then, there is the incident of Jesus explaining to the disciples that one needed to be like a young child in order to enter the kingdom of God. There were young children present at that event.

There are no examples of family meals together, or parents spending ‘quality time’ with young children. In the Bible, there wasn’t a dichotomy between work and family: Folks didn’t bring their work home to the family, they brought the family into the business.

When we see children, they are almost always teenagers or young adults, and almost always within the context of the family business. For example,...

- Joseph, along with his brothers, was tending to a portion of his father’s massive livestock holdings when he was sold as a slave.
- Saul was attending to a project for his father’s business when he was called to be Israel’s first king.
- David was tending to his father’s assets (sheep) when he was called to be King of Israel.

While there is little guidance in the form of specific directions on this issue, we do see a pattern modeled in the Bible. The pattern is that the family joins the head of the household in the family business.

Now, before we go off on all the reasons why the Biblical model won’t work today, let’s just play a bit with the idea.

What could it look like, if we were to try to bring our families into the business, rather than separate the two?

A starting point would be the ‘Bring your child to work’ day. But that is a relatively innocuous event relative to what you could do.

For example, evening meals could be a time to discuss the day’s events at work -  
- the problems, challenges and successes – just as much or more than the kid’s



school day.

There may be some business tasks that might be delegated to the family. For example, at one point in my life I was a salesperson for a hospital supply distributor. My company provided weekly sales reports, showing every item ordered, shipped and invoiced to every customer. That was nice, but I wanted to see patterns over time. In other words, I wanted to know what they bought this week, last week, the week before that, etc. So, I had my kids cut up the computer reports, sort them by customer, staple them to scrap paper, and file alphabetically in my account folders. They earned their allowance, got an insight into Dad's job, and provided a valuable service.

Business picnics and outings could bring people together and provide a topic of conversation in the family.

Business can undertake service projects – painting a widow's home, tidying up a roadway, etc., and turn them into family events.

The possibilities for involving families in the business are virtually unlimited. It just takes a change in mind-set and some creative thinking. You could ask yourself this question: "What changes can I make in the business that will allow us to more regularly bring families into the business?" If you have an executive team, brainstorm the same question.

Just the fact that you are asking that question alone separates you from the clear majority of businesses in the world. It's the first step in providing a Biblical solution to the work/family conflict.

We are living in an age when many parents revolve their lives around their children. As a result, the children naturally gain the idea that the world revolves around them, and that they are entitled to whatever they want. Christian business can provide a real-life opportunity for the kids to be involved in something bigger than themselves. Within the business context they learn work ethic, responsibility, getting along with others, and taking direction from authority figures.



Christian businesses are uniquely positioned to provide a focal point for the family, to help in the development of the stakeholder's families, and to alleviate the work/home conflict. Biblical businesses build better families.

If you have an example of some ways families are involved in your business or job, please comment and share it. Let's learn from each other.



## Where to now?

Sooner or later you must do it. There is only so much you can learn, intellectually.

You know that if you implemented these practices you'd eventually have a radically different business. You know, in your heart, that this is the ministry for which God created you.

Now is the time to do it.

You may need some help. Let me suggest you subscribe to [The Biblical Business Course](#), which consists of a number of multi-media modules teaching basically the same thing we articulated in the book, plus a number of other principles and practices. It will take you step-by-step through the process of building a Biblical business by implementing the practices we've discussed.

If you'd like to dig deeper into the ideas expressed here, I'd recommend you purchase a copy of [The Good Book on Business](#). Not only will you see the scriptural underpinning for much of what we've come to understand, but you'll also see profiles of several Biblical businesses. Your views on business will never be the same.

Finally, if you think you'd gain from an association of like-minded Christian business people, consider my [Christian Business Impact Groups](#), noted in the section on "Gather a group of advisers." I have two groups which I personally facilitate. Check It out [here](#), and then fill in the form and I'll reach out to you.



## About the Author



Dave Kahle has been a Bible teacher, elder, house church leader, short-term missionary and Christian executive roundtable leader. For 30 years, he has been an authority on sales and sales systems, having spoken in 47 states and eleven countries. He has authored 13 books, including [The Good Book on Business](#). Sign up for his weekly messages [here](http://www.davekahle.com). [www.davekahle.com](http://www.davekahle.com).

