

Integrating Sunday with Monday through Friday: Consistencies Between Biblical Principles and Management Theory

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Abstract

Christianity often takes a back seat to secular pursuits rather than serving as the context from which these pursuits originate. In other words, we behave much differently Monday through Friday than we do on Sunday. Part of the problem is that we as Christians sometimes fail to see the interconnectedness of our work and our faith. We know what the Bible teaches about how we should conduct ourselves, and we know what management theorists have said about how we should conduct our business. Specific theoretical and conceptual models firmly rooted in biblical principles are needed to demonstrate how Christian principles are consistent with many existing management theories.

This paper takes the reader through Hind's (1989) "Commandments of Caring," which formed his basis for Servant Leadership, to show how these biblically derived principles can be found in existing secular management theories. Theories discussed include Taylor's Scientific Management, House's Path-Goal Theory, Hersey & Blanchard's Situational Leadership and several others.

1. INTRODUCTION

"There is an attitude common to professional people that church and business exist in two unrelated worlds. Christianity is not viewed as an integral part of the business culture" (Hind, 1989, p. 12). This statement too clearly describes the realm of business conduct and leadership in particular. Christianity often takes a back seat to secular pursuits rather than serving as the context from which these pursuits originate. In other words, we behave much differently Monday through Friday than we do on Sunday. As Christians we are not to disassociate ourselves from the world, but we are supposed to be (act) different than the world (Romans 2:12 New American Standard Bible). We are to be examples for the rest of the world to see (Matthew 5:13-16). Finally, we are to conduct ourselves as Christ would (I John 2:6). This can sometimes be difficult to implement in the business world.

Part of the problem is that we as Christians sometimes fail to see the interconnectedness of our work and our faith. We know what the Bible teaches about how we should conduct ourselves, and we know what management theorists have said about how we should conduct our business. We need to see more biblical examples of business principles. To be sure, these examples exist. For instance, Wren (1987) identifies Moses and Jethro (the division of labor, delegation, decision making) and Joseph (forecasting, planning), but most existing business texts utilizing these examples are thirty years or older. Another problem is that when more recent secular literature makes reference to "spirituality" in the workplace, authors tend to work from a broad definition that encompasses a variety of perspectives (Ashmos&Duchon, 2000). A final issue relates to the discrepancy between the mandates of Christ and those of business. Christ's

teachings can be abstract and intangible (e.g., love your neighbor, do justice), whereas those of business appear far more explicitly and concretely. With regard to our behavior, reinforcement comes most regularly from the workplace through employers, customers, suppliers, and competitors. In that arena “qualities of the head – tough-minded, realistic thought, are reinforced, while qualities of the heart – softness, feeling, and generosity are negated” (Maccoby, 1976, p. 12). What are needed are specific theoretical and conceptual models firmly rooted in biblical principles.

There are two approaches to generate these theoretical and conceptual models: 1) examine existing models/theories for elements consistent with Christian principles and highlight them; or 2) develop new models/theories from the ground up using scripture and biblical examples. The present paper utilizes the first approach while considering key elements of servant leadership examined under through the framework of the Commandments of Caring (Hind, 1989).

2. THE COMMANDMENTS OF CARING

In *The Heart & Soul of Effective Management*, Hind (1989) introduced the “Commandments of Caring” that serve as guidelines for implementing servant leadership. The idea behind this framework is that leaders would be able to more closely imitate the example provided by Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry (John 13:15; I Corinthians 11:1). Interestingly, nearly all of these commandments can be tied to classical management theory. A summary and explanation of these commandments appear below.

2.1 Judge First With Your Heart

“All people have an inherent value by virtue of being created in the image of God and thus an inherent right to develop to their fullest potential” (Hind, 1989, p. 62). This is not intended to defy the process of judging competency in the selection process; its true desire is to instead aid the development of the workers. Christ Himself utilized the selection process when choosing the twelve disciples. These twelve have been referred to as “the glorious company of apostles,” but their glory was not of this world (Bruce, 1988). They were “a band of poor illiterate Galilean provincials,

utterly devoid of social consequence, not likely to be chosen by one having supreme regard to prudential considerations” (Bruce, 1988, 38). Christ could have selected anyone and certainly, had He wanted to impress the world, he might have selected individuals with more education, money, or power. However, He chose these twelve, unqualified though they seemed to us, because He judged them first with His heart. “He preferred devoted men who had none of these advantages to undevoted men who had them all” (Bruce, 1988, p. 38).

Scientific management comes to the forefront here. Taylor (1947) would have us select workers that possess the qualities deemed necessary by the scientific study of the job tasks. Christ obviously knew what it would take to be a disciple – the rigors of traveling from city to city, being able to acquire food, and managing the logistics and finances of a small group – and knew that these rugged men would be able to handle the demands. However, He also looked beyond these abilities and could see their intangibles – heart, willingness, persistence, availability – and selected based on these traits as well. It is not always the obvious surface qualifications that distinguish a great employee from a good one.

Jim Collins stresses this point in *Good to Great* (2001). Collins suggests the first step in taking a company from good to great is to “get the right people on the bus” rather than deciding where the “bus” is going. “First the people, then the direction.” Beginning with the right people on the bus allows the “team” to help determine the direction of the organization. It will also allow the company to adapt more easily during times of turbulence (Collins, 2001).

While the selection process is important, so is the notion of developing employees. If we are to allow employees to “develop to their fullest potential” (Hind, 1989), then servant leadership has to be about providing the avenue to reach that potential. This is consistent with the ideas espoused in Path-Goal Theory (House, 1974), but was originally recognized as important as far back as the 19th century. Welsh social reformer Robert Owen chastised factory owners for spending money on the care and upkeep

of their machines while treating their employees with no respect. He encouraged owners to invest in the human capital to return many times that which they earned from investing in the machines (Wren, 1987). Henry Gant also suggested a revolutionary method to encourage this. He proposed a bonus system that would reward foremen for bringing inferior workers up to standard, thereby shifting the role of foreman from driver to teacher and an aid to the employees (Wren, 1987). Noting that organizational structures often keep employees from reaching their full potential, Argyris (1957) prescribed employee-centered, participative work environments to remove the encumbrances that inhibit the worker from maturing.

2.2 Excite With Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm comes from the Greek root “entheos” which means “God within” or “God inspired” (Merriam-Webster Online, 2013), so this principle implies that managers are to excite people with God in us. This is not the “rah-rah” motivational speaker excitement; this is the spring in your step, firm handshake, smile-on-your-face enthusiasm. Enthusiasm excites and motivates and offers others the chance to be a part of a vision. This commandment makes ordinary people do extraordinary things (Hind, 1989).

Christ inspired his followers to perform tasks they had never dreamed of attempting. Word of His presence brought multitudes of people seeking a glimpse or wanting to hear His wisdom. Crowds of 4,000 or more would gather in anticipation of His coming (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 8:1-9). While some motivational speakers today can attract crowds of this size, the difference is the crowds that experienced Christ left changed from within their hearts. They then shared that excitement with others they encountered.

Conger & Kanungo (1987, 1988) have written extensively on charismatic leadership. They describe charismatic leaders as those who lead by virtue of their ability to inspire devotion and extraordinary effort from their followers. Of the ten characteristics of charismatic leaders identified, three are worth noting here: providing an idealized vision that is highly different from the status quo; offering a shared perspective and idealized vision

that makes the leader worthy of identification and imitation; and displaying personal power.

The description of the charismatic leader is a portrait of Christ. He provided a vision of the Kingdom of Heaven that is different from the status quo and is attractive to followers. He performed miracles that are frequently described as glimpses of His power to help the disciples understand what He was about. The Greek root for charisma is “charis” which means grace (Merriam-Webster Online, 2013) and implies that charisma is a gift from God.

2.3 Socialize, Don't Ostracize

Managers should interact with their employees in a casual, relaxed manner in order to break down barriers. This allows the employees to get to know the manager and lets the manager know his employees. It creates a commonality of interests that produces closer bonds between individuals (Hind, 1989).

Christ portrayed this vividly. In His coming to the earth as a man, He “dwelt among us” (John 1:14). God sent His Son as a man so that we might know Him. Christ was the example sent for us so that the sinful dwellers of Earth could know the power of God in our own world. Without the incarnation of Christ there would be no bridge by which we could understand the Father's will.

This is similar to the emphasis placed on Management by Wandering/Walking Around (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Managers are encouraged to spend time in the midst of the working environment with their employees to build rapport and establish good working relationships. Ironically, Peters and Waterman (1982) suggest that the most effective leaders are “persistent” and “highly visible” (p. 288). However, it is important to note that the point is not simply to be visible, but being informal to foster communication throughout the organization (Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Other efforts (e.g., Deming, 1986) have been attempted that seek to eliminate the artificial impediments that limit the interaction between employees and managers. Simple ideas such as using the term “associates” rather than “employees” to avoid

the reinforcement of the hierarchy of authority's different levels; eliminating upper management perquisites to encourage more interaction between managers and employees; and company outings aimed at creating an atmosphere of relaxed, friendly camaraderie. These mutually shared experiences tend to create closer bonds and common interests.

2.4 Understand That People Differ From You

It is human nature to be attracted to people that have similar interests and tastes as us. Many times this is carried to the extremes of prejudice; "if the boss doesn't reject someone who doesn't fit in initially, they usually squeeze them to conform" (Hind, 1989, p. 76). In recognizing the differences, we must overcome the tendency to judge people based on externals and incidentals and look at their true worth (Hind, 1989).

Christ was well aware of the benefits that are provided by selecting team members with diverse backgrounds. He grouped the disciples in pairs to perform some of their early tasks; it seemed that He paired each disciple with a partner as opposite as possible. He paired Peter, a man of action, impulsiveness, boldness, and initiative, with John who was quiet, reflective, and meditative. Bartholomew, the accepting and trusting one, was paired with Thomas, who believed nothing until he could see it. Perhaps the most explosive duo was Matthew, the Roman tax collector, and Simon, a radical revolutionary whose party wanted to overthrow Rome. This might be similar to pairing a Ku Klux Klan member with a Black Panther. Christ taught these diverse personalities how to work together and understand the differences of others.

In forming a team, careful consideration must be given to its makeup. Homogeneous members and personality characteristics increase cohesiveness, but also increases conformity and may reduce the effectiveness of the team by narrowing vision and reducing the creative capacity (Shaw, 1971). Teams are formed to solve problems beyond an individual's capacity; as such, they require multiple skills and abilities in order for the team to function effectively. Thus, teams must be structured to avoid homogeneous members or personality characteristics.

2.5 Support Your People

It has been common for managers to use the "carrot and the stick" method of motivating employees, giving a small reward for superior performance and using the stick for anything less. Hind (1989) describes four times when employees need support during their career: when they are first hired, to help them know what is expected and what they should do; during the middle management phase, when they are seeking to make it big; during mid-life crisis, to help them through the struggles of their identity; and at the end of their career, for comfort and support.

The supporting manager is evidenced through Christ's careful handling of Peter. Christ nurtured Peter from the time that He selected him to be the first disciple. We see that the way Christ handled Peter changed as he progressed. Upon seeing Christ walking on the water, Peter wanted to try as well. Knowing he was not ready, Christ invited him to try. When Peter became fearful and sank, Christ gently rebuked him saying "You of little faith, why did you doubt" (Matthew 14:22-33). This could be considered Peter's "early career phase." Later, Christ tested Peter again to see if he really believed in Him. When Peter acknowledged Christ as "the Son of the living God," he was affirmed and received a new name (Matthew 16:13-20). This incident was synonymous with the "middle management phase." Peter's "mid-life crisis" may have been after Christ's crucifixion when Peter denied that he knew Jesus as had been foretold (Mark 14:53-72). Despite the shortcomings of Peter, Christ appeared to him on the road to Emmaus and comforted him (Luke 24:13-35). Then finally Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit at the time of Pentecost that provided him with the comfort and strength he needed to finish his career (Acts 2:1-47).

On a similar theme, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) developed a situational leadership model that describes how the most effective leadership style changes according to the "readiness of the followers." Workers demonstrate their readiness by their desire for achievement, willingness to accept responsibility, and experience. The manager then utilizes a leadership style suitable for the level of readiness, by varying

degrees of task- and relationship-oriented behaviors.

2.6 Compliment, Don't Criticize

Criticism can be one of the greatest demotivators and sources of division that managers have in their arsenal. Sincere praise, on the other hand, is perhaps the greatest motivator of all (Hind, 1989).

Perhaps the most familiar verse in the Bible is John 3:16, but the very next verse exemplifies this concept. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him" (John 3:17, NIV). God's message was not one of criticism and condemnation but one of salvation.

Christ spoke against and demonstrated the destructiveness of criticism and judgment. When Christ defended the woman caught in adultery He said, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Then as no one condemned her, he added, "Neither do I condemn you, go your way and from now on sin no more" (John 8:1-11). Christ was not in the world to condemn and criticize but to show the way for man to become better.

One of the more recognizable management principles today is "one minute praising" made popular by Blanchard and Johnson's *The One-Minute Manager* (1982). This book popularized the concept of giving employees short, frequent "praising" to boost morale rather than resort to the natural tendency of telling employees what they did wrong.

2.7 Humility, Practice and Promote It

The Apostle Paul captures the essence of humility when he urges not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought (Romans 12:3). Looking down on others, taking credit when others deserve it, and calling attention to one's self are all examples of a lack of humility. "Humility is managing without an inflated ego or selfish authority" (Hind, 1989, p. 93).

Christ's examples of humility are found throughout His ministry; it is the backbone of the servant leadership He exemplified. This is demonstrated by his "triumphant entry" into Jerusalem on the back of a borrowed donkey (Mark 11:1-11). Christ taught,

"many who are first will be last; and the last, first" (Matthew 19:30). Prior to observing the Feast of Passover, Christ humbled Himself by washing the feet of the disciples. When asked why he did this, Jesus declared that "a slave is not greater than his master, neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him" (John 13:15).

One of the reasons participative management is so difficult to implement is that some managers are reluctant to relinquish their power and continue to reign over their employees. This contradicts the Japanese management practice of removing yourself from the picture to get a better view (Hind, 1989). Humility can manifest itself in acts as simple as a manager sitting at the side of the conference table rather than the head. This concept is also consistent with Argyris' (1957) notion of an employee-centered, participative work environment and can be seen in House's (1974) Path-Goal theory (the leader must be employee-centered in order to know the best "path" for the employee to reach his/her goals).

2.8 Recognize and Respect the Accomplishments of Your Peers

Managers should be competing against a standard of excellence rather than with their peers. This process does not lessen the competition; it merely realigns the focus and manner of the competition. This act promotes harmony and cooperation between groups within an organization (Hind, 1989).

Christ had no peers with which to compete, but He was still sensitive to the dangers of competition as He began His earthly ministry. Christ publicly affirmed the teachings of John the Baptist by allowing John to baptize Him. Likewise, John recognized and respected the leadership of Christ when he protested "I have need to be baptized by You" (Matthew 3:13-17).

Christ did not permit competition to exist within the ranks of the disciples, "He responded clearly and firmly to the competitive discussions" (Erwin, 1983, p. 4). In debating their respective positions in the expected earthly kingdom of Christ, they were admonished that "whoever wishes to become great

among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all” (Mark 10:43-44).

Conflicts often arise in organizations when competing goals exist. Rather than denying that a conflict exists, it is better to seek a resolution (Filley, 1975). Left to their own devices, employees may adopt a competitive posture, seeking to get what they want while denying the other party’s interests. This win-lose struggle among members or teams is a bad proposition for the organization. The servant leader’s job is to find a solution that allows all conflicting parties to “win” (Filley, 1975). In addition, interest should be in designing and rewarding teams to reduce unhealthy competition and increase cooperation in order to better compete as organizations.

2.9 Interest Others in What They Can Be

Employees often fail to achieve their maximum potential because they do not believe they can achieve things. Managers must realize that all employees have talents and something they can contribute to the organization. The manager’s job is then to aid in bringing out those abilities (Hind, 1989).

Christ saw the potential in Peter as the “rock” on which the foundations of the church were laid (Matthew 16:18). Peter was too demanding of recognition and too self-reliant to be of much use to Christ’s ministry. However, after Christ worked with him, Peter learned that he could accomplish little on his own and he could do much by relying on Christ for strength. It was after this discovery that Peter was able to reach his full potential.

Taylor (1947) recognized that “the problem before management, then, may be briefly said to be that of obtaining the best initiative of every worker” (p. 33). Years later, Livingston (1967) proposed the Pygmalion effect that involved a manager’s expectations of employees and the employees’ subsequent performance. The manager’s expectations determine how the manager acts toward an employee (consciously or subconsciously). This message conveys either high or low performance expectations that the employee normally fulfills. If a manager expects

an employee to perform well, the employee usually will.

2.10 Display Self-control, Have Patience

Self-control involves maintaining control of your emotions; knowing when to show anger, yet not overreacting. It is setting aside your self-importance and diffusing conflict through sensitivity to the needs of others and avoiding superfluous confrontations (Hind, 1989).

Christ demonstrated complete control of His emotions (we are reminded here that Christ never sinned), and yet, used them to achieve His purposes. He demonstrated great patience as in the paying of the temple tax; He had no money with which to pay, and He felt indignant toward a tax to enter “His Father’s house.” Rather than confront the tax collectors, Christ instructed Peter to catch a fish in the sea so there would be enough money (in its mouth) to pay the tax (Matthew 17:24-27).

Christ did get irritated at the disciples’ intermittent immaturity and displayed this emotion to them. When Peter vowed that he would never allow Christ to be taken and killed, his actions revealed that he still did not understand Christ’s mission on earth. Christ rebuked him by saying “get behind Me, Satan” (Matthew 16:21-28). Following the feeding of the 5000 and the 4000, the disciples were complaining that they had no bread. Christ’s frustration was evident, “Do you not yet see or understand? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears do you not hear?” (Mark 8:16-21). Jesus expressed his disappointment with Peter, James & John, could not stay awake when they accompanied Him to the garden at Gethsemane to pray. Christ also displayed irritation when He encountered the moneychangers in the temple upon His return to Jerusalem. He overturned tables and ran the offenders out. Even in this outburst, He never directed His anger at the individuals; He always focused his anger against attitudes, conditions, ideas, and actions (Hind, 1989).

In their book, *The Art of Japanese Management*, Pascale and Athos (1981) describe the American tendency to bluntly speak the truth. They

call it a “High Noon,” “macho confrontation” that is self-serving. There are times when the truth is better off unvoiced since some confrontations serve only to complicate relations in the future.

3. CONCLUSION

The similarities between elements of classical management theories and the example of servant leadership provided by Christ’s actions are strong. J. F. Hind (1989) provided a description of Christ as an effective leader in the jargon of managers:

“Christ was the most effective executive in the history of the human race. In only three years, he defined a mission and formed strategies and plans to carry it out. With a staff of twelve unlikely men, He organized Christianity, which has grown to have 1.5 billion proponents today, is international in scope, and has branches in all of the world’s 223 countries;

Christianity has a 32.4 percent share of the world’s population. . . . He recruited, trained, and motivated twelve ordinary men to become extraordinary. He is the greatest manager and developer of people ever.” (pp. 13-14)

The Commandments of Caring listed above provide a framework for servant leadership consistent with classical management theory. These guidelines have been achieved completely by only one man, Jesus Christ, but we suggest that Christian managers make conscious efforts to implement this model in their endeavors. While it may not be realistic to expect that any one manager could embody these principles in total, we believe that achieving what is possible will help improve working conditions for all employees. The key is to focus on the One we want to imitate and allow Him to guide our actions.



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