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Equipping, Enabling, and Encouraging Marketplace Leaders

Nine Keys to Living Productively

God's Wisdom and Life Principles

We live in a fast-paced, complicated world. It was less so for our parents, and will be more so for our children. Every generation has unique struggles that it must face. Our forefathers settled wild territories, and lived off the land. It was a physically demanding life. Our parents lived through world wars, and severe economic depressions. Ours is a world of amazing technological advancement and massive social change.

Throughout the ages certain men and women have risen to the challenge, they faced mountainous obstacles, and not only survived but flourished. How did they do it? What knowledge did these successful people possess that kept them from failing like so many others?

Author Stephen Covey wrote about the answer in his books, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, *First Things First*, and *Principle Centered Leadership*. Dr. John Trent wrote about it in his book, *Lifemapping*, as did Kent Hughes in his book, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*.

But as good as these authors and their books are, there is an older book that has even better answers. The way to gain satisfaction from the life God has given you is to live by His principles and with His wisdom.

Herewith are 50 of my favorite examples from His book.

Self Esteem

1. You are unique.

You have a special set of skills and attributes. You have a unique contribution to make to the world. Jeremiah 1:5, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart."*



2. You realize mistakes are a part of your growth process.

No one is perfect, and you know you're not, but you use mistakes you make as a way to improve. Proverbs 12:1, *"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid."*

3. You work every day on developing your skills.

You see every day as an opportunity to get a little bit better in some area of your life. Ecclesiastes 10:10, *"If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success."*

4. You focus on doing your best.

You put your best effort into the work you do. Proverbs 22:29, *"Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men."*

5. You help develop self-confidence in the people with whom you share your work and personal life.

You get a certain sense of satisfaction from helping others develop their self-confidence. You are an encourager! 1Thessalonians 5:14, *"And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone."*

6. You practice what you preach.

Your walk matches you talk. You are a great example for others. 1 Timothy 4:12, *"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example in speech in life, in love, in faith and purity."*

Courage

7. You display courage in the face of adversity.

You know that adversity brings out your strength of character. Acts 4:13, *"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."*

8. You view problems as opportunities.

You see problems as just another opportunity to find new solutions. 1 Chronicles 28:20, *"David also said to Solomon his son, 'Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the LORD is finished.'"*

9. You are not fearful of risk.

Risk does not frighten you because your strength comes from God. Psalms 27:1-3, *"The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of*



whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.”

Stress Management

10. You pace yourself.

You know that life is a marathon not a sprint. Galatians 6:9, *“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”*

11. You remove and avoid the unnecessary stress in your life.

You see stress as a great hindrance in life and you find ways to avoid it or minimize its impact. Hebrews 12:1, *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked for us.”*

12. You are forgiving and patient.

You are forgiving and patient with others who make mistakes. Psalm 78:38, *“Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath.”*

13. You learn from others.

You look for ways to learn from everyone around you. Proverbs 1:8, *“Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.”*

14. You plan for the future.

Knowing that life is uncertain you plan for the future. Proverbs 30: 25, *“Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer.”*

15. You live in the present.

You live in the here and now, focused on the work that lies before you. Philippians 3:13-14, *“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*

16. You don’t let molehills become mountains.

You have learned to not let discontentment become a major distraction to achieving your goals. Philippians 4:12-13, *“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

**17. You come to closure on issues by turning them over to God.**

You don't let yesterday's troubles continue to bother you and distract you from the work that needs to be done. Philippians 4: 6, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."*

18. You understand the difference between what you can change and what you cannot.

You know that you are not the commander of the universe and that there are some things that are beyond your control. 1Thesalonians 2:17-18, *"But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us."*

19. You balance work and family life.

You know that caring for your family is more important than your work. 1 Timothy 5:8, *"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."*

20. You seek advice when needed.

You seek the advice of wise counselors. Proverbs 15:22, *"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."*

21. You rest and take vacations.

You know that having a time off, away from work, will ultimately make you more productive. Exodus 34:21, *"Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest."*

22. You eat well and exercise regularly.

You know that your body performs best when it is well fed and kept in good condition. Proverbs 25:16, *"If you find honey, eat just enough--too much of it, and you will vomit."*

1 Corinthians 6:19, *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?"*

Motivation

23. You have initiative and can work well with little supervision.

You can take initiative and work diligently without being closely supervised. Colossians 3:22, *"Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence."*

24. You accept responsibility for your actions.

You take personal responsibility for your own actions. Ezekiel 18:20, *"The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt*



of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.”

25. You do not discourage easily.

You do not discourage easily because you know that you have God’s strength. Isaiah 41:10, “*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*”

26. You help others realize their dreams.

You are excited by the opportunity to help others improve their skills and reach their dreams. Proverbs 27:17, “*As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.*”

Communication

27. You can express your ideas clearly and precisely.

You express your ideas clearly and precisely, truthfully, and avoid deceitful wicked conversation. Proverbs 8:6-8, “*Listen, for I have worthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right. My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness. All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse.*”

28. You actively listen.

Proverbs 19:20 “*Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.*”

29. You ask questions to insure understanding.

You seek first to understand by asking questions. Proverbs 18:2, “*A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.*”

30. You control your tongue.

You can control your tongue—knowing when to speak and when to stay silent. Proverbs 15:2, “*The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.*”

Relationships

31. You submit to authority.

You accept the authority of your leaders. Hebrews 13:17, “*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*”



32. You respect people who are different than you.

You accept people for who they are, knowing that we are all created by the same God. 1 Peter 2:17, *“Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.”*

33. You mind your own business.

You know enough to stay away from things that are none of your business. Proverbs 11:13, *“A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.”*

1Thesalonians 4:11, *“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you.”*

34. You are forgiving and compassionate.

You know that God forgives you, and you are able to forgive and show compassion to others. Colossians 3:12-13, *“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”*

35. You accept correction from others.

You know that you are not always right, and that when you are wrong, you accept correction from others. Proverbs 13:18, *“He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.”*

36. You know when to compromise and when to hold fast.

You know when to hold to principle and when there is room for compromise. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, *“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.”*

Creativity

37. You maintain your sense of humor.

You know that life is tough enough and a sense of humor makes life just a little bit more pleasant for everyone. Proverbs 31:25, *“She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.”*



38. You know how to dream.

You know how to dream God-sized dreams. Proverbs 29:18, *“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” (KJV)*

39. You think with an open mind

You know that there are times when keeping an open mind and a closed mouth is the best approach to a situation. Proverbs 26:4, *“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.”*

40. You make work fun.

You know that life goes just a little bit easier if we are having some fun. Ecclesiastes 2:10, *“My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor.”*

Ecclesiastes 3:22, *“So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him”*

Effectiveness

41. You maintain a positive outlook.

You know that a positive attitude requires a daily commitment. Proverbs 23:7, *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”(KJV)*

42. You strive for excellence.

You know that whatever you lay your hand to you will strive to do your best. Colossians 3:23, *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.”*

43. You set priorities in your work.

You know that some things are more important than others, and you do the most important things first. Proverbs 24:27, *“Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.”*

44. You continually improve.

You know that we are not perfect, but we should always be looking to improve. The word translated “perfect” in this verse implies that it is a process, not an ending. Matthew 5:48, *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

45. You operate with total quality.

You do the right thing the right way, the first time. Proverbs 16:25, *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”*

Proverbs 21:3, *“To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”*



46. You work well with others.

You know that working with others makes for a better return on your time and efforts.

Ecclesiastes 4:9, *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work.”*

Spiritual

47. You develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

You know that a personal relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship in your life.

John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

48. You read and study the Bible daily.

You know that reading and studying the Bible daily is important to keeping yourself aligned and attuned to God’s will. Acts 17:11, *“Now the Bereans were of more noble Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”*

49. You pray regularly.

You are able to bring all matter of things to God in prayer. Proverbs 15:8, *“The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.”*

50. You associate with other believers.

You love being with other believers. It strengthens you and feeds your soul. Hebrews 10:25, *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much more, as ye see the day approaching.” (KJV)*

One Final Thought

The Bible is our “owner’s manual.” It tells us everything we need to know about managing our lives and it is just as relevant for us today as the day it was first written.

Contained in this wonderful book are thousands of God’s promises. They are building blocks of reason, understanding, and wisdom.

There is no situation that we face today that God has not provided an answer for in His word. He knows about the difficulties of running a business in today’s world because he has faced every temptation common to man. Do you struggle with your personal life? There is help for you in His word.



In this letter we have looked at 50 of God's building blocks. There are thousands more. Why struggle with man's wisdom when you have access to the wisdom of God? Go exploring in the Bible, you'll discover God's building blocks for *your* life!

Words to Ponder

In all things it is better to hope than despair. *Goethe*

When faith is lost, when honor dies, the man is dead. *John Whittier*

The secret of success is constancy of purpose. *Benjamin Disraeli*

No man really becomes a fool until he stops asking questions. *Charles Steinmetz*

The good and the wise lead quiet lives. *Euripides*

He that will not reason is a bigot; he that can not reason is a fool, and he that dares not reason is a slave. *William Drummond*

Always do right; this will gratify some people and astonish the rest. *Mark Twain*

Don't be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated; you can't cross a chasm in two small jumps. *William George*

Who bravely dares must sometimes risk a fall. *Tobias Smollett*

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the grey twilight that knows not victory. *Theodore Roosevelt*



Meeting Notes

This month's Meeting Notes are designed for a meeting with one or maybe two people. Get some time by yourself where you will not be interrupted, and where you can not distract yourself. If you are married you may want to take your spouse along to the "meeting."

1. Review each of the core areas discussed here in light of your business and personal life.

- a) Self Esteem
- b) Courage
- c) Stress Management
- d) Communication
- e) Relationships
- f) Creativity
- g) Effectiveness
- h) Spiritual

2. For each of these areas get a sheet of paper and write down how you see yourself dealing with the subject. For example, "How's your self-esteem right now?", "How are you doing with the stress in your life?", "Are the lines of communication open between you and the people you work and live with?", "Are your relationships with friends, family, and co-workers building you up or tearing you down?", "Are your creative juices flowing at work?", "Are you doing your best, most effective work, or are you dreading the trip to the office every day?", "Is your relationship with God about the same as last year, worse than last year, or better than last year?"

3. For each of these areas prayerfully consider if it is an area where you can improve. If so, how can you improve? Don't try to "fix" everything at once. Pick one or two things on your list and focus on those for thirty days. When you feel like you have made some progress, move to the next item on your list. For areas where you are strong consider how you might leverage that strength in your own life or the lives of others.

4. Read your Bible looking for God's building blocks of wisdom and understanding that can be applied in your life.



Key Points:

You've no doubt heard the phrase, "*The hurrieder I go the behinder I get!*" Life is like that. It's easy to get so busy that we take our eye off of what is really important.

The key to living productively is to understand God's principles for our lives.

Self-Esteem

Know that you are a unique creation, and that God has gifted you with special gifts and talents.

Courage

Know that God always stands beside you to help you in times of trouble.

Stress Management

Know that God intends for you to balance your life between work, family, community, and your church.

Motivation

Know that you must take initiative, accept responsibility for your own actions, and help others realize their dreams.

Communication

Know that learning is a process not an end. Ask questions to insure understanding, and listen to the wisdom of others.

Relationships

Know that it is important to submit to authority, to mind your own business, and to respect people different than you.

Creativity

Know that a sense of humor is important, learn how to dream, and think with an open mind.

Effectiveness

Know that you are responsible for your attitude, strive to do quality work as you continually improve. Be a team player.

Spiritual

Develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, read and study the Bible, pray regularly, and associate with other believers.