The 25 Biblical Laws of Success
By William Douglas and Rubens Teixeira

1. INTRODUCTION

How would you react to knowing about an uncommon rabbi that used to tell stories about work, investments and money in the middle-eastern first century? It does sound impossible, but it is true! Jesus used to talk about parties, and build towers, dishonest managers, bill collectors that would not forgive debts, among other invaluable pearls of knowledge and hidden treasures.

Although business, work and career were not the main subjects Jesus talked about there were pretty discussed points on his journey. We believe that he talked about them to reach out to people, afterall, people were, and still are, interested by them. It’s part of everyday’s life as much as the soul-concerning topics. Jesus would talk about everything life related.

Following His example we brought the Bible into the career and professional success discussion quoting its verses over 200 times in The 25 Biblical Laws of Success.

2. CRITICISMS

Some people criticized us over the title of the book, for being “too commercial”, but we think it express the core of our message: biblical laws/values/principle to transform career and business. If the knowledge is in the Bible, the transformation ought to be for the better.

Although Jesus has never preached directly about business and success He truly gives a knowledge plethora on how one should interact with the other. And that is, undeniably, how to do business and manage your career. Real Christians have to follow these advises. One cannot shout its Christianity and not follow and abide by these rules on the work environment as well as in the church or at home.

The non-Christians can choose to follow or not these laws according to convenience, but it is our duty, as Christians, to not only follow but to make them known for everyone interested on them and that’s why is so important to make a secular book on the subject.

An important disclaimer: This book is not about the prosperity theology. This book will not show you an “easy” or “immediate” way to get rich, it will discuss behaviors patterns shown on the Bible that when applied will improve any business or career. Anyone can look analytically into the knowledge displayed on the pages and follow them based either on its secular use or its faith compliance. Despite the reasoning, following the Bible rules will make anyone behave differently on the work environment or towards it.

Can you imagine what would happen if bankers, public servants and other workers would follow Jesus’ advises on how to treat others? If they would treat others the same way they
would like to be treated? And what to say about absurd margins or profits, or the exploitation of the workforce? All of this would change if people from the corporate world followed Jesus’ advises. If everyone applied the “golden rule” on their business endeavors all the transactions would be a lot better for everyone involved. Christians or non Christians should abide by these rules to improve their work relationships and conquests.

Especially for Christians, following these rules, not only in the church, but also at home and on work means the salvation of the eternal soul. The products made by someone saved as well as the services given by someone saved have a differential which is one of the interesting subject discussed on the book.

3. THE BIBLE TALKS ABOUT WORK, CAREER AND BUSINESS

The justified resistance to the theology of prosperity cannot be a barrier for Christians to study and recommend the Bible knowledge on career and business. The good book have a number of directions that can be applied into developing a career. One of these passages is in Proverbs 28.20: “A faithful person will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.” It is undeniable the connection between this verse and businesses/career. Salomon wasn’t talking about salvation in this verse, but about the wisdom to manage our lives.

Other important quotes about business/work/profits are found in Proverbs 22.1 “A good name is more desirable than great riches;”; and 1 Timothy 6.10 “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

The Bible does not stimuli to get rich, but gives advises to the rich. Who is telling the wealthy, nowadays, what the Bible teaches? About this, we would recommend reading 1 Timothy 6.17-18. How many Christians (and non Christians) are doing less than they could or an insufficient job? They are missing the advices on Colossians 3.23. And what to say to those complaining about everything? Read Psalms 118.14 and 1 Thessalonians 5.16. These are just examples of the Bible views on work related subjects.

Everyone should follow the biblical recommendation to search for knowledge (Proverbs 3.13-14, 24.3), and follow Solomon’s advice about act upon knowledge, afterall “if the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success.”

Why not teach others to be skillful/diligent while developing your work? The bible recommends that in Proverbs 28.29. Those are not advices on salvation and regret, but about professional life. Advices that many want to keep only for themselves failing to share with thy neighbor, Christian or non-Christian.

As Brazilians, we know how much damage the lack of planning can do and the bible advises on this “The plans of the diligent lead to profit” (Proverbs 21.5), and Jesus talks about the subject on Mathews 25.2-12 and Luke 14.28-32.
Another important biblical advice is the Shabbat, or the day to recharge batteries – physical and emotional. It is the time to turn to God, leisure, family, as seen on Exodus 23.12 and Ecclesiastes 3. This would help the family and personal lives of so many professionals.

Needless to say that the bible makes no exceptions on topics such as honesty (Exodus 20.15 and Deuteronomy 5.19), too much profit (Titus 2.10), fraud or abusive practices (Amos 8.4-6, Proverbs 11.26). The corporate world would be a lot better if the lessons on Jeremiah 22.13 were followed: “Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.” This would change the way banks, phone companies, and health insurances operate, would also help to prevent slavery, child labor, tax evasion and would insure that all labor laws and pensions were observed and respected. Jesus also talks to the public servants on Luke 3.14 by telling to not falsely testify, accept bribes or extort. But if you have already wronged, the Bible has a message to you on Proverbs 28.13.

If all of these passages weren’t enough to prove that the Bible talks about work related subjects we reunited a couple more examples such as: avoid bad company (1 Corinthians 15.33); exercise self-control (Proverbs 16.32); don’t do anything clandestinely (Mark 4.22); be an example of incorruption, seriousness and irreprehensible language (Romans 12.17); be committed and serious about your work (Ephesians 6.6-23); don’t be vindictive (Romans 12.17); appreciate everyone from the wealthiest to the humblest (1 Corinthians 12.12 24-26); avoid fights (Mathews 5.25), be kind (2 Timothy 2.24); don’t act with anger (Proverbs 15.1, 19.11, 20.3); do no harm (Proverbs 3.29-30).

Still need more? The bible talks about being useful and reward those who do good work (Proverbs 27.18), it also establishes how to serve our neighbors (Mark 9.37, James 4.17), tells that the generous move forward while the selfish dries out (Proverbs 11.24-25), about team work (Isaiah 41.6), about leadership (1 Timothy 5.17). The bible also teaches contentment (1 Timothy 6.8), not to love money (Ecclesiastes 5.10), and to plant good things (Ephesians 6.7, 2 Corinthians 9.6). As a baseline we always mention the law of love that goes about treat others like we would like to be treated. Who can deny the power of these attitudes? They can help the ones who practice them as well as the ones surrounding them.

4. THEOLOGY OF PROSPERITY X THEOLOGY OF MISERY

If you are Christian you might find yourself stuck between the theology of prosperity and the theology of misery, both equally limiting. Prosperity is a word spoken by God to Joshua (Joshua 1.8) so you should not fear chasing it. It is a biblical advise and we have much to gain in applying it to our day to day life, not only to the church, on Sunday, but at home, to work, towards our families.

For that reason is important to have advices like that listed in an organized manner. Those who wish to improve in their careers (even if not religious) will want to learn more about these biblical knowledge.
Success and career may not be the main subject of the Bible, but they are important because people need it to evolve. These subjects should not be hidden from anyone, nor disdained. Out of fear, scared of falling in any of the theologies previously discussed, few talk about the biblical knowledge about it. That was a challenge that we took and the result is a laic book about the Bible filled with biblical quotes as well as modern bibliographic references important for those with a critical spirit.

5. A BOOK MADE TO BEA LAIC STUDY OF THE BIBLE

This book is fundamentally laic. It talks about faith, but it’s not its main subject. While writing we were worried to deliver a book that would satisfy the need of both religious persons, and those who don’t follow and religious path, but are interested on what knowledge the Bible has to offer on subjects such as success, career and business. As Christians we truly believe that is wrong and unfair to restrict the knowledge of the bible to the temples and religious gatherings.

The most important subjects discussed on its lines refer to the human experience altogether: forgiveness, salvation, and sanctity. Topics that, as we have noticed, are far more needed where they are often forgotten, such as the work place.

Jesus says that evil comes to kill, steal and undo His work, and we believe that the Bible teaches how to prevent these things from happening. That’s why is so important to spread its words. The Biblical lessons applied to the workplace help to build, help others to grow and improve and prevent lost, for Christians, this is the work of a good servant and help the Kingdom, for everyone else is developing good practices that will make the workplace better.

That being said, it is worth to analyze the Bible when it says: “seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper”. They were slaves, as you might have noticed. Even though, The Bible is clear on about how to behave. The King James Version (KJV), for instance, is even more direct: “seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” (Jeremiah 29.7), and the International Standard Version (ISV) says: “Seek the welfare of the city to which I’ve exiled you and pray to the LORD for it, for your welfare depends on its welfare”.

There is a spiritual dimension to resignation and service, and in doing good to others, but this is far from being just a spiritual lesson. As the common Brazilian business jargon goes: “when the tide is high all the boats rise”. Just a fool would cheer against their bosses or company, because the worse the company gets, worse is going to be for its employees.

On that note, it’s worth to read Mathews 5.44,48: “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”.

If we are suppose to do so much for our enemies, for those who do us harm, we should do no less for those we envy – because of their riches or something else – or for those with no religion just because they can’t understand the biblical message the same way we do.
We should keep working and praying and cheer for the authority, for business people, for politicians, judges, the powerful and the influential because they work for the society and, as the Bible says, we have to work for “the sake of the city” God sent us. When the city/boss/authorities/powerful/influential is at peace so are we.

To summarize, we hope that people stop cursing and cheering against, stop being so judgmental and begin to cheer for the richness and power without letting them do whatever they want regardless of law. They have to be held responsible, but, on the same hand, cheered for. For the Christians, that all their prayer is for the good and that they don’t mind, or bother, with what God has in hand for others, might that be Muslims, or atheists (Mathew 20.1-15).

Many whom read this book discovered that the Bible is book made for the present days as well, many changed their minds about the Bible being just a religious book, some discovered that in order to be Saint, they should also spread the good words on the work/business environment. Others read the good Book for the first time after reading this book, what might have made Jesus rejoice.

As Christian authors, we don’t need secular bibliography, quotes or notes to believe in the Bible, since it is already the moral code we follow. But we perceive as selfishness and individualism, and doing the opposite of Jesus’ lessons, to not let others enjoy the biblical wisdom without imposing its religious aspects.

Talking about career and business management we have to be prepared for people wanting more than what's written in the good Book. “It is from the Bible” may works for us, and most Christians, but it doesn’t cut for atheists, skeptics, agnostics, and some other religious groups.

We have to show to these people that the Bible is an up-to-date book prepared to give answers to 21st century questions.

The Bible has answers to many work/career/business-related questions, as we have tried to show on the book, and even more if you are willing to learn more. That’s entirely up to you. Our job is to show the relevance of its wisdom and hope that after reading you share our thoughts. Hopefully, you will also use the knowledge in other areas of your life to prevent lost and frustration, and, if you are a Christian, like us, feel challenged to apply the biblical knowledge in your professional life.

6. CONCLUSION

Comments and criticism are useful and welcome, as well as compliments. Some theologians have reached us in order to express their admiration for the work presented on this book, alongside some readers that shared enthusiastic compliments and testimonies.

If you haven’t read the book yet, don’t rush to criticize it. We ask you to give us a chance first, and we offer that by letting you read some pages in advance [PART OF THE BOOK AVAILABLE HERE]. If you still have a criticism, we welcome it! But, please, don’t be disrespectful. Constructive criticism is what make us evolve, while disrespectful ones just cause harm and all we want is to make a better world using the Scriptures in a responsible and considerate way.
7. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

William Douglas is a federal judge in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a university professor, a popular speaker, and the author of thirty-five books, including the Brazilian edition of *The 25 Biblical Laws of Success*, with over 250,000 copies sold. He is part of Educafro, a Brazilian organization working to prevent racial prejudice and promote equal opportunities, and is the entrepreneurship coordinator for social projects for United Missions, part of the Brazilian Baptist Convention. He is also part of the Brazilian Evangelical Academy of Writers.

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