

Lessons in Effective Management from I Chronicles 22-29

DAVID SHANKLE
LeTourneau University

ABSTRACT: Biblical concepts can be applied to the primary management functions to improve organizational effectiveness. This article considers I Chronicles 22-29 within the framework of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling to highlight effective faith-based management practices. The contemporary management framework combined with a biblical perspective places godly wisdom at the center of the management process. Management practitioners in ministry, higher education, business, and industry should find practical, faith-informed management applications.

KEYWORDS: management, biblical worldview, management framework, managerial effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

While the Bible provides many lessons on effective management (Okantey, 2023), much management research is devoid of the biblical narrative (Perman, 2011). Shearer (2017) lists 28 parables spoken by Jesus that are directly related to the field of management. Dyck et al., (2006) uses the parable of the shrewd manager from Luke 16 to link management theory and morality. According to II Timothy 3:16-17, “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* claims that “the field of biblical integration in business is relatively young and much creative work remains” (p. 104). Scripture can be utilized to help followers of Jesus Christ understand management and apply it to their good work in education, research, business, ministry, etc. I Chronicles 22-29 will be examined, along with supporting scriptures, to help readers understand effective management from a biblical perspective.

Management is a field of study, a set of techniques to achieve goals, a decision-making process, and everything in between, according to Oberholster (1993). Fortunately, some researchers have provided less complex definitions for management. Corum (2015) defines management as the “process of efficiently and effectively accomplishing things through and with other people” (p. 4). Corum emphasizes the people aspect of management, which coincides with biblical teachings. I Thessalonians

5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” Hebrews 10:24 admonishes Christians to “consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.” Daft (2022) defines management as attaining organizational goals through four major processes—planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Daft draws his four processes, or functions, of management from Fayol’s (2013/1916) original work, which was published in French in the early 20th century. Fayol recognized five functions of management, but the commanding function has since been removed by contemporary research (McNamara, 2009). For this article, a definition derived from Corum’s (2015) and Daft’s (2022) work will be utilized for conceptualizing management as accomplishing organizational goals through and with people. Effective management happens within the framework of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Armed with an understanding of management and its primary functions, attention now turns to select biblical texts to gain wisdom in effective management practices.

CONTEXT

Corrado (2023) posits that context is necessary to find and apply proper solutions to problems. Specifically, the context surrounding biblical data is vitally important for contemporary application. I Chronicles 22-29 describes David’s management of the temple-building process that

his son Solomon would complete. Before I Chronicles 22-29 can be considered for effective management principles, an argument about Solomon's temple should be considered. Some suggest that the temple was never in the will of God to be built (Basden, 2021; Nelson, 2013). While the purpose of this paper is not to defend God's will on the construction of the temple, this argument deserves some consideration. The first argument comes from II Samuel 7:5-7, where God tells Nathan to let David know that He did not need a house to dwell in nor had He ever requested a permanent house be built for Him. These scriptures seem to state that God's will was not for a temple, so it is reasonable to understand why some might argue this point. Reading further though, God does not chastise David for wanting to build Him a temple. In fact, God promises blessings to David in verses 9-17. Even if the temple was not God's idea, He allowed the planning and construction.

Acts 7:48 states, "[T]he Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands...." This verse might lead some to think that the building of the temple was not in God's will. There are some potential problems with these lines of argumentation. Stephen's point in Acts 7 was that God does not permanently reside in a physical building on earth. He can fill the temple, Heaven, and all of earth (Gill, 1746). In other words, He cannot be confined or contained. This does not mean that it was not in His will for a temple to be built by Solomon.

Finally, there are some reasons to believe that the temple was, at a minimum, within God's permissible will. According to II Chronicles 5:13, II Chronicles 7:1-2, and I Kings 8:10-11, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. One more thing to consider is that God guided David's plans as he prepared for the temple to be built. I Chronicles 28:19 says, "All this he made clear to me in writing from the hand of the Lord, all the work to be done according to the plan." Why would the glory of God appear in a place He rejected, and why would God prepare plans for David for a place He rejected? A simple answer is that it was at least in God's permissible will for the building of the temple to take place. This might be further amplified by the prophecy in Amos 9:11-15 that is reiterated in Acts 15:16-17: "In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins." Dunne (2011) posits that, based on the textual evidence, Amos is referring to the physical temple of God in Jerusalem. With these arguments taken into account, the following scriptures can be considered as a tool for effective management.

The selected scriptures that provide insights into effective management primarily come from I Chronicles 22-29. Some context is needed before management applications can be discussed. In II Samuel 7, King David had it in his heart to build a temple for God. I Chronicles 22:8-10 mentions that David shed too much blood for the Lord to allow him to build the temple, but God promised David that his son would build the temple. David had a desire to build the temple, but God's plans were for David's son, Solomon, to build the temple. David had the management task of preparing Solomon for the construction of the temple of the Lord. A goal of building the temple was set, but the specific details for the temple preparation were where effective management skills were displayed. I Samuel 18:14 says, "And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him." Readers should note how David's godly wisdom helped shape the goal of making preparations for the building of the temple so that Solomon would ultimately be successful.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT IN I CHRONICLES CHAPTERS 22-29

A very general overview of I Chronicles 22-29 might look something like this:

- I Chronicles 22—David begins preparations for building the temple and charges Solomon to lead the actual building process.
- I Chronicles 23—David develops his human resource plan for the temple building.
- I Chronicles 24—David organizes the priests.
- I Chronicles 25—David organizes the musical worship in the temple.
- I Chronicles 26—David organizes the gatekeepers, treasurers, and other officials in the temple.
- I Chronicles 27—David organizes the military and civil leadership of the temple.
- I Chronicles 28—David provides a public address outlining the true worship of God in the temple and Solomon's leadership over the construction.
- I Chronicles 29—David institutes freewill offerings, including his own, to the temple construction and offers his final blessing of the temple as leadership transfers from David to his son Solomon.

Management, as previously defined, is accomplishing organizational goals through and with people (Corum,

2015; Daft, 2022). Daft (2022) provides the four-step management process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. The four-step process will be the framework used in this article to analyze David's managerial effectiveness as he made the necessary preparations for Solomon to ultimately complete the temple in Jerusalem.

Planning

The American Planning Association (n.d.) describes planning as a roadmap that leaders use to make informed decisions about what communities and the local economy need to thrive. An interesting point about David's planning process is that it started with a right relationship with God. I Chronicles 22:11-13 shares David's charge to Solomon, his son, about the building of the temple. David specifically tells Solomon to keep the law of the Lord and to observe the statutes and rules that God commanded through Moses. A biblical understanding and a right relationship with God were the keys to the successful completion of the temple. Only after this declaration did David lay out the roadmap, or plan, for the temple. David reiterates the importance of keeping God first as the central component of the temple-building plan in the following verses:

- I Chronicles 22:19—David challenges Israel to seek God.
- I Chronicles 28:7-8—God tells David, and all Israel, to keep His commandments.
- I Chronicles 28:20—David challenges Solomon to be courageous in God.
- I Chronicles 29:19—David prays that Solomon will keep God's commandments.

Only after a right relationship with God was established were the additional planning steps taken. God spoke the roadmap through David while David remained constantly focused on the will of God. Babyak (2018) refers to the God-given purpose that Christian leaders employ so that their work is done for the glory of God. The plan was from the Lord and for the Lord, as documented in II Samuel 7:12-13. It was David who longed to build the temple, but God's plan was for Solomon to be the builder, not David. As David submitted to God, the Lord's will became David's will. David's plans changed in obedience to God. David ultimately provided Solomon with his written plans, which came directly from God, for the building of the temple as seen in I Chronicles 28:11-19.

Planning and organizing are often used interchangeably (Schmitz, 2015), but definitionally,

there is a difference between the two. David planned the building of the temple before actually doing anything. The activity of building the temple was future-focused during the planning stage, but the future became the current reality during the organizing stage. Planning is future-focused, while organizing deals with the current resources and people.

Organizing

While planning is the process of deciding how to do something before the project actually starts, organizing is the coordination of people, resources, and events (Habas, 2020). Another way of viewing this is that planning happens before organizing. Planning might be the creation of the map, while organizing is deciding on the best path from point A to point B after the map is created. Step one is the planning process, which leads to step two, the organizing process.

Busuttill and Van Weelden (2018) emphasize the importance of God-given human resource practices that align the right people with the right job at the right time to achieve organizational goals. David aligned the right people in the right positions for the temple building to be successful. This all started with his son, Solomon. I Chronicles 22:11 states, "Now, my son, the Lord be with you, so that you may succeed in building the house of the Lord your God, as he has spoken concerning you." The first person David selected to carry out the building of the temple was the future king. I Chronicles 23-27 describes in detail how David organized the Levites, priests, musicians, gatekeepers, treasurers and other officials, and the military for the successful administration of the temple. In I Chronicles 22:14-16, David describes the monetary provisions he set aside for another important group of people – the workers who would build the temple.

David provided the necessary tangible resources for the temple building to begin under Solomon's rule. As mentioned in I Chronicles 22:14, David provided 100,000 talents of gold, 1,000,000 talents of silver, and untold amounts of bronze, iron, stone, and timber for the actual construction of the temple. Further, David provided 3,000 talents of gold and 7,000 talents of silver from his own treasury as an initial offering in the temple (I Chronicles 29:4). As David completed the organizing process, he led by the example he set with his generous giving.

Leading

David led by example through his Godly leadership. Leadership can be defined in different ways by different

people and organizations. For example, Prentice (2004) defined leadership as the accomplishment of goals through the direction of human assistants. This slightly impersonal definition lacks the true depth of leadership. Yukl (2020) and Kruse (2013) seem to capture the essence of leadership by stating that it influences others to maximize their efforts toward the achievement of a shared goal. When Israel witnessed David leading by example, they were influenced to achieve a shared goal of building the temple. This is evident in I Chronicles 29:6-9 as the leaders in Israel gave freely of precious metals and precious stones to the temple treasury and left rejoicing, for they had given to the Lord. David gave first, then the leaders of the tribes of Israel followed, and great rejoicing occurred as they achieved a shared goal. David's leadership moved the people of Israel to accomplish the goal of building the temple, including the future king, Solomon. Psalm 78:72 (NIV, 1978/2011) says, "And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them."

David's relationship with God influenced his strong leadership. I Chronicles 21:10-15 is an example of David's God-centered mindset. David foolishly demanded that a census be taken in Israel. The impulsive action angered God, and a prophet came to David with God's possible punishments: three years of famine, three months of conflict from enemy nations, or three days of God's judgment on the people and land. David placed himself under God's judgment for three days of wrath, knowing that God was merciful and it was better to fall into the hand of God than the hand of man. Even in judgment, David chose God, and this reliance upon God shaped David's leadership. Acts 13:22 reminds readers that God saw David as, "a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do." Central to David's leadership was complete reliance on God in everything. David might be linked with servant leadership as he is referred to as God's servant—see Psalm 89:3, Psalm 89:20, II Kings 20:6, Isaiah 37:35, and Ezekiel 37:24. The allusion to David's servant leadership points to many New Testament scriptures that support servant leadership such as Mark 9:33-37, Mark 10:42-25, and Philippians 2:3-5. While not the focus of this paper, Bergen (2024) makes a strong argument for David as a servant leader by highlighting six characteristics that David embodied in his leadership. The six characteristics are voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationships, responsible morality, transcendental spirituality, and transforming influence. Matthews (2024) correlates strong

leadership with effectively measuring goals that lead to organizational vision and strategy. Measuring goals and progress is the connection between leading and controlling.

Controlling

Daft (2022) links organizational control with measurable information about expected versus actual performance. This includes the actions taken to correct any deviation from standards. The University of Minnesota Library (n.d.) postulates that measures for controlling might take forms other than monetary terms, such as units produced, number of defects, and quality of customer service. Malsam (2023) mentions the dual purpose of controlling—delivering quality, on-budget, projects while effectively monitoring the people behind the processes. Siebert (2023) highlights the absolute necessity for open and transparent communication across all layers of management. This is the only way that accountability can occur during the controlling process. While controlling tends to lean heavily on quantitative measures, more contemporary controlling methods like the triple bottom line include qualitative measures such as organizational commitment and positive societal impact (Miller, 2020).

David knew that he would not be alive for the building of the temple (see II Samuel 7:12-13); therefore, he made provision for the people to make freewill offerings for the temple. According to I Chronicles 29:4, he went as far as to start the freewill offering process by donating 3,000 talents of gold and 7,000 talents of silver from his own treasury. Rose (2022) links productivity with following through on commitments. David's commitments through his freewill offerings became part of the control process when it came to resourcing the building of the temple. David's giving produced additional giving that ultimately led to the successful completion of the temple building project by Solomon (II Chronicles 5:1). The initial offerings of David led to an abundance of resources and great joy among to people, according to I Chronicles 29:9 and I Chronicles 29:16. David's success in controlling the quantitative (physical resources) and qualitative (individual and societal wellbeing) aspects of the temple building process aligned with Elkington's (2018) triple bottom line.

Notice the specific measurements, or numbers, of people and resources described in I Chronicles 22-29. Here are just a few examples:

- I Chronicles 22:3-4—innumerable quantities of iron, bronze, and wood.

- I Chronicles 22:14—100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver.
- I Chronicles 23:3—38,000 Levites were given temple duties.
- I Chronicles 24:4—The priests were divided into 24 divisions.
- I Chronicles 25:9-31—The musicians were divided into 24 divisions.
- I Chronicles 27:1-15—Numbers for the military divisions are provided.
- I Chronicles 29:4-7—Quantities of the freewill offerings are provided.

Non-quantitative measures of control are given in the following passages:

- I Chronicles 22:12-13—Fully keeping God’s laws, rules, and commandments.
- I Chronicles 22:19—Seeking the Lord with mind and heart.
- I Chronicles 28:8—All of Israel is to seek God and follow His commands.
- I Chronicles 28:9—Solomon to seek God and serve God only.
- I Chronicles 28:20—Solomon is to work diligently on the temple until it is finished.

While planning, organizing, leading, and controlling to accomplish the temple-building process with the people of Israel can be witnessed in I Chronicles 22-29, the contemporary applications have yet to be delineated.

CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION

Christian managers should start the managerial process by seeking godly wisdom and continue seeking godly wisdom as they plan, organize, lead, and control. This godly wisdom will inform all aspects of the management process (planning, organizing, leading, and controlling). A definition of management that seeks to accomplish organizational goals through and with people can usher in unity of purpose through godly vision and wisdom. Ephesians 4:13 and Romans 12:4-5 describe the unity and oneness in faith that comes from Christian living. Effective managers, like David in I Chronicles 22-29, cast a compelling vision that involves achieving shared goals. Godly wisdom lies at the center of the management process.

Contemporary examples of firms that employ managers and leaders who place godly wisdom as the focal point of their management philosophy include

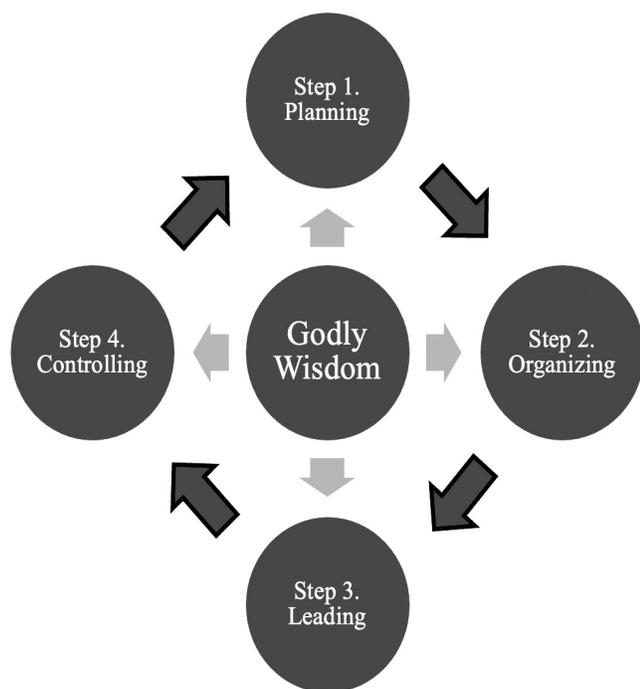
Tyson Foods, Kimray, Inc., and In-N-Out Burger. In 2021, Tyson Foods announced a new corporate position, director of chaplain services, to direct their over 100 chaplains who provide pastoral care to employees (Cato, 2021). Kimray, Inc., an oilfield supply company, has four core values adopted by upper management that are shared on their website with their scriptural foundations (The Kimray Way, n.d.). In-N-Out Burger President and CEO Lysi Snyder openly shares her faith in Jesus Christ (Pringle, 2025) while printing Bible verses on food packaging and boxes for customers (Slater, 2019). Christian managers can, and do, employ Godly wisdom as the central idea of their management process.

Christian managers move sequentially from planning to organizing to leading, then finally to controlling, while wholly relying on God each step of the way. Based on feedback from the controlling step, managers might make adjustments and start the managerial process over again by revising their initial plans and implementation. David had to make adjustments as his original plan was to build the temple himself, but God had a different vision for Solomon to complete the temple-building process (I Chronicles 22:7-10).

A framework for effective biblical management emerges when I Chronicles 22-29 is considered with respect to Daft’s (2022) four-step management process as displayed below in Figure 1.

Organizational goals through and with people are accomplished by exercising Godly wisdom through planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. According to McWilliams (2021), effective management leads to employee productivity, higher earnings per share for corporations, and greater job satisfaction. Slater, Holbrook, & Xu’s (2022) research contended that Christian CEOs who embraced biblical stewardship had a positive impact on firm financials. Applying biblical concepts to management models can improve institutional results. Rahul (2024) makes a strong case that Christian values positively impact business effectiveness, specifically in that realm of project management. Proverbs 16:3 says, “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” Beyond the financials and organizational goals is the spiritual growth of others that can happen through effective biblical management. McMahone (2019) postulates that Christian managers should have an active role in their employees’ discipleship process. By observing concepts from David’s successful management of the temple-building process in I Chronicles 22-29, readers can make contemporary applications to organizations

Figure 1: The Managerial Process from a Biblical Perspective



Note: Godly wisdom feeds into all four steps of the management process.

in the modern context. The Jewish Virtual Library (n.d.) describes the completed temple as the crowning achievement of Solomon’s reign, where the holy God selected the holiest place in the holiest city where only the holiest people on the holiest day would utter the holiest name. Much can be learned and applied by studying the management lessons from biblical accounts, such as the temple-building project.

Creighton et al. (1995) suggest that God might not commission all modern managers, but the Lord still provides the ability for the management task. While this article highlights the central idea of the management process being Godly wisdom, it must be noted that much management research is devoid of biblical principles. The application of the biblical narrative to the management process brings a bigger picture to mind that transcends best practices in management. Loritts (2009) states that “good, wonderful things can distract you from the one ‘God thing’ you have been called to do” (p.200). That is why the central idea of the managerial process from a biblical perspective is Godly wisdom. Bartholomew and Goheen (2014) posit that “business itself becomes a potent witness to the living reality of God within His faithful people” (p. 220). Planning, organizing, leading, and controlling are all

steps in effective management, but effective management by itself cannot draw others into God’s redemptive work here on earth. Bucci and Lewis (2016) suggest that redemption, as in the redemptive work of Christ, is a managerial skill. The biblical application of godly wisdom in the management process, as displayed in I Chronicles 22-29, connects God’s people to God’s purposes. King David’s effective management of the temple-building process centered on godly wisdom not only led to the completion of the temple but also drew God’s people closer to God’s redemptive plan. Immediately following the dedication of the temple, God revealed II Chronicles 7:14 through Solomon, promising forgiveness of sin and healing of the land for those who truly seek the Lord and repent of sin. The effective management of the temple-building process led to spiritual restoration and blessing. Cafferky (2017) stresses the importance of connecting contemporary business theories to the biblical narrative for a holistic approach to learning. In the same way, readers can see how the application of the managerial process in I Chronicles 22-29 can be useful in modern management and in furthering God’s redemptive plan.

CONCLUSION

The Bible can provide managers with practical applications in a contemporary context. Reviewing David’s management of the temple building process from I Chronicles 22-29 in light of Daft’s (2020) four-step management process offers readers insights into effective management practices. David worked through and with people to accomplish a completed temple. Planning, organizing, leading, and controlling are carried out with special attention to seeking and following godly wisdom. The managerial process viewed from a biblical perspective has the dual purpose of leading to greater organizational productivity while creating greater kingdom impact.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. David Shankle serves as professor and chair of online business at LeTourneau University. He teaches business and economics courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. His research interests include the application of a biblical worldview to management and economic issues.