

The 25
Biblical Laws
of Partnership
with God

POWERFUL PRINCIPLES *for* SUCCESS
IN LIFE *and* WORK

WILLIAM DOUGLAS

AND RUBENS TEIXEIRA



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For Nayara, Luísa, Lucas, and Samuel

William Douglas

For my wife, Marta;
my children, Renan and Mateus;
my parents, Paulo and Darcy;
and my brother, Paulo Teixeira

Rubens Teixeira

You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

Matthew 22:29

Those who trust in the LORD will prosper.

Proverbs 28:25

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INTRODUCTION

What Is Partnership with God?

The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind.

Psalm 115:16

Who wouldn't want to have Warren Buffett, Bill Gates, or Jorge Paulo Lemann as a business partner? Who wouldn't want to own a stake, however small, in one of their spectacular companies? It is inspiring to be around innovative people and ventures. Sometimes the most important thing is not the size of the business but its vision and mission.

If you think these examples are enticing, how would you react to the opportunity to become a partner with God? Have you ever imagined what it would be like to be a part of his projects or to be able to count on him to develop your own?

If you think partnership with God would be amazing, then this book may change your life.

God as Your Business Partner

In the world of business, it isn't easy to form a partnership with a successful business executive. You must bring a lot to offer your potential partner, such as capital or talent. To be God's partner, you might assume that you would need to meet extremely high standards. Not so. God is willing to associate with those who don't seem to have anything to offer and even with those who have a disreputable background but wish to change. God values and invests in people. His projects are focused on people, not on real estate, products, or money. The most important thing to God is a person's commitment to God's vision, mission, and values.

The Bible affirms God's interest in walking alongside us and participating in our daily activities, whether they involve business matters or personal issues related to family or health. Some people, like the biblical character Jabez, simply ask God for help; they want God to support them without offering him anything in return (1 Chron. 4:9–10). Others show gratitude to God, like Jacob who promised to give back a tenth of all that God gave him (Gen. 28:20–22).

Then there are those who ask God for nothing and offer him 100 percent of all they have, such as the apostle Peter, a fisherman who “left everything” to follow Jesus (Mark 10:28). In short, we all have the opportunity to associate with God in all areas of our lives.

Handing over your decisions and your convictions to God—in full or in part—takes a lot of faith. Faith is the belief that God will act, at the appropriate time, moved by immense wisdom, goodness, and sovereignty. You must have faith to pray, to remain in an unpleasant place, and to believe that God will change your situation at the opportune time, according to his plans.

Whether your focus is your career, your finances, or a business you are starting or managing, when you are in partnership with God, each party has rights and responsibilities, burdens and rewards. God, in this respect, is similar to any partner: he will contribute with his “capital” and with his “work,” and he expects that you will do your part to make the project take off and pay dividends for both of you.

God as Your Adviser and Coach

God can be regarded not only as a partner or a powerful investor but also as a mentor, coach, and adviser in order to create a solid foundation for your life project.

Consider the example of Zacchaeus, a tax collector (Luke 19:1–10). After having lunch with Jesus, Zacchaeus decided to give up his corrupt ways, return the money he had cheated from taxpayers, and share his fortune with the poor. Jesus exercised a strong influence over his new partner, resulting in a change in the way Zacchaeus managed his career and finances.

You may be asking yourself, *As a flawed person, what do I have to offer God? What results can he expect from*

our partnership? First, God wants to see his partner—you—happy. Second, he wants to use your job, your career, and your business (whether you are the owner or an employee) for his divine purposes. God wishes to be your partner and to bless your plans, but he expects you to follow some guidelines, which we will discover in this book.

God's expectations are similar to what a board of directors or a real-life business partner would ask of you. We are talking about mission, vision, and values; about how to recruit, maintain, and reward your shareholders and coworkers; about incentive policies and distribution of dividends.

If you have already dedicated your life to God, then strengthening your partnership with him should be a natural next step. But even if you aren't religious or have distanced yourself from religion, this is not a reason to keep you from benefiting from God's advice for successful and ethical business practices.

The idea of a partnership with God might seem bold, pretentious, or even shocking, but what if the Bible is about a living God who wishes to have a relationship with us—a God who really does want to go to work with us? From what we read in the Scriptures, God wants to be a part of every aspect of our lives, not just the spiritual part. He wants to participate in our personal lives, our family lives, our careers, our workplaces, and in the ways we do business.

If God wanted to be your partner, would you at least set up a meeting with him to discuss the proposal? Would you be interested in reading the prospectus or the brochure in which the eternal investor outlines his plans and his methodology?

What Are the Spiritual Laws?

If you want to know what a proposal for partnership with God would look like, rest assured that it is already on the table; it was written centuries ago. It is in the Bible and can be expressed in some spiritual laws that will be addressed in this book. Spiritual laws are a part of the laws of nature and, though immaterial, they are as unwavering and as powerful as laws of physics. There is no way to escape their consequences, just as there is no way to escape the law of gravity or the law of magnetism.

In our previous book, *The 25 Biblical Laws of Success*, we dealt with this cause-and-effect relationship and concentrated on twenty-five spiritual laws that apply to everyone, regardless of whether you are religious or believe in God. In this book, we will address twenty-five different spiritual laws that are directed at those who have faith in God and desire a higher standard of success and excellence. The laws of partnership with God, which are deeper and more comprehensive than the laws of success, are more effective with regard not only to business but also to quality of life and the search for a deeper meaning behind our existence.

In this book, we deal with leadership and teamwork, as well as personal ethics and service to others. Furthermore, we discuss the power of prayer and the miracles that can occur in a career, in business, and in finances. We wrote this book for those who believe that professional success can be achieved in harmony with God's plans for our lives. As we will see, the Bible offers us reliable guidelines and remarkable results.

In essence, we will analyze the deeper spiritual laws that apply to those who believe in God and desire to partner with him.

Was Jesus Interested in Business and Careers?

How would you react if you heard that in early first-century Israel, an unusual teacher told stories in which he spoke of workers, vineyards, and cash investments? Well, it's true. In his stories, Jesus of Nazareth talked about dishonest administrators, creditors who didn't forgive debts (and others who did), tax collectors, valuable pearls, and hidden treasure. Work, career, and business matters were topics that Jesus frequently addressed; in fact, he had quite a lot to say about them.

Jesus talked about these topics because people were interested in them. Aside from offering important lessons on these issues, he used everyday situations to describe the problems of the soul. The Bible seems to indicate that Jesus wanted to make changes not only in the way people practiced religion but also in how they conducted their careers and businesses. He had wise advice for administrators, managers, employees—even government officials!

Unfortunately, not everyone looks favorably on mixing faith and business. On the one hand, certain religious groups remove themselves so completely from the world that, in contrast to Jesus, they lose touch with the problems people face on a daily basis. On the other hand, some religious groups are comfortable in an unethical world because

ethical precepts make it more difficult for them to exploit people.

The successful businessperson understands that integrity and religious values can aid the development of any activity, especially those involving balanced, harmonious, and respectful relationships among people. Christianity tends to produce sensible, hardworking people.

What is missing from the corporate world is a little more religion—or at least the values that religion advocates: honesty instead of cheating, integrity and solidarity instead of exploitation, social and environmental responsibility instead of greed, sustainability instead of deterioration. All these values are found in the Bible and can be applied by anyone who deems them important—Christians, Jews, Muslims, agnostics, and atheists alike.

One of the problems of Western society is that even though a majority of people say they believe the Bible is a sacred book (or at least a book of wisdom), biblical values remain locked up in the church and are not applied to everyday life. While religion is indeed about an encounter of the soul with God, biblical values need to have an impact on our daily lives.

The application of the Golden Rule—“Do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matt. 7:12)—as well as other biblical behaviors, such as honesty and compassion, reveal that God’s influence is present in someone’s life. Of course, you do not need to be a follower of God to behave in an ethical and charitable way; indeed, there are many atheists and nonreligious people who have these qualities. What is

not acceptable is when people who claim to follow the Bible do not live according to its recommendations.

The Bible is a source of eternal wisdom that we can apply to our professional and corporate lives. The teachings of the Bible are not just about love, solidarity, and kindness. The Bible also deals with pragmatic subjects for those who wish to get ahead in life, get a good job, start a business, build successful teams, train effective leaders, plan well, and invest wisely. As demonstrated through the parables Jesus told, the Bible is not afraid to mix faith and business. This is why we can use its lessons as the basis for guiding our conduct in the world of business and finance.

Servant or Partner?

The twenty-five biblical laws of partnership with God described in this book are compelling and will likely raise a series of questions in your mind: Will you feel comfortable knowing you are no longer the sole owner of your business or career because you now have a powerful partner? Will you be able to see that having a difficult or frustrating job could be a positive, maybe even an honorable, mission or God-given training? Will you consider praying to ask God for a miracle in your business or career? If you want to be in partnership with God, you should be prepared to work with dedication and efficiency, to seek God's wisdom and put it into practice, to treat others as you wish to be treated, and to work more than you are required to. By applying these biblical principles, you will be able to obtain

excellent results, as we explained in *The 25 Biblical Laws of Success*.

But anyone can follow the twenty-five biblical laws of success. In this book, the process of applying spiritual laws gets more serious. The twenty-five biblical laws of partnership with God are not simply for the purpose of getting rich or being successful. Their main purpose is to develop the virtues of love, faith, devotion, gratitude, and other sentiments that go beyond the simple (and honorable) desire to succeed in life. As you dive into this book, you need to decide whether you want to be someone who truly serves God or someone who is merely interested in knowing what it is like to have God as a partner. In either case, you will need to know how to put these spiritual laws into practice in order to reap the dividends of this partnership.

While this new set of laws can bring you practical results, credibility, and respect, ideally you will follow these biblical teachings out of love and obedience to God in order to walk more closely with him. More than being God's business partner, you should consider being his partner in life's great journey. A partnership with God goes beyond your immediate economic or professional interests. In order to sign this contract, you need to develop your faith, care about your neighbors, give up some things, and learn what requirements and conditions this all-powerful investor asks of you.

Anyone who wants to have a partnership with God needs to adopt biblical standards in the workplace, in business dealings, and at home. In other words, you need to use them in dealing with not only your partner in heaven but also your

partners on earth—bosses, employees, coworkers, and even your competitors, as well as family, neighbors, and friends.

A partnership with God involves a spiritual agenda with practical results. The supernatural is not inert. We should not work seeking only profit, credibility, or affection. The idea is to serve and do good works because Jesus served, did good works, and told us to imitate him (Eph. 5:1). In short, the bylaws of this partnership entail loving God and your neighbor as yourself.

How should a Christian act at work? If the owner of a company is a follower of the Bible, how should he treat his employees and clients? Should the products sold or the services rendered by a partner of God be special in any way? Jesus told us to be different from the world, to do things differently, and to make a difference in the world for God. Working well is definitely a religious duty.

The Clauses of a Partnership with God

When God comes into your life, career, or business, it leads to a real revolution, with extraordinary possibilities, as we will see. But, before that, you need to read the contract and decide if you want to join this partnership with God. Following is a summary of the main clauses that will be analyzed in depth in this book:

- *Acknowledge God's interest in the partnership.* God is interested in being your partner in all your ventures, commercial or otherwise. It's your choice.

- *Be willing to try.* This partnership can work to a greater or lesser extent. God could be just a reference for your actions—and that would be great. Or he could become a majority stakeholder of your life. It won't hurt you to try a partnership with God in your business. Then, if you are comfortable with this model, you can adopt it for good. If God is already part of your life, you can fearlessly allow him to take control and see the results. The good news is that God's plans are good: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11).
- *Decide to think and act in extraordinary ways.* Usually, we just take care of our own interests, and we think only about material and immediate things. But dare to engage the supernatural. We suggest that you be open to the spiritual dimension of your business and career.
- *Seek ways to help others.* We are not suggesting that you must turn yourself into a martyr, a Saint Francis of Assisi, or a Gandhi. But do what you can. And then you will become an instrument of the actions of God, working as his partner in the great investment in human life. This will produce amazing results for you and those who are close to you.

Being God's partner will be good for you, your business, and your career, as well as those with whom you come into

contact. As a result, you might start seeing God work directly in your life, as we have. God is looking for partners to execute his plans and dreams on earth. You can be one of them.

You, God's Partner

The first condition for becoming God's partner is to believe that he exists. Second, believe that he is interested in you. Finally, establish a relationship with him. You might have doubts about the way God acts, and you might not be sure that he truly is concerned about your professional and financial life, but, as we have said before, it can't hurt to try. Give it a real shot and see what happens.

Even if you don't have faith in God, you can still benefit from this book's teachings. But for those who do, faith is more than believing; it's taking on a suggested behavior.

Consider the case of the apostle Peter. The Bible says that Jesus looked for Peter (then known as Simon) while he was working as a fisherman. Peter knew that on that day the sea wasn't good for fishing, but when Jesus said to throw out his nets again, he did what he was told to do: "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets" (Luke 5:5 NRSV). When he chose to obey Jesus's command regarding his work, Peter caught so many fish that the nets began to tear. Though he did not believe he would catch fish, Peter did what he was told to do. That too is faith.

If you already dedicate a bit of your time to God and offer him a part of your assets (through tithes or other contribu-

tions), if you read the Bible or claim to be a Christian, we hope you will take a bold step of faith and climb one step further in your spiritual life: try giving God more “shares” in your company.

The term *shares* is well suited because in addition to referring to the parts that divide the capital of a corporation, it’s also a reminder that faith is, above all, sharing your life with God through your actions. Act in accordance with what the Bible recommends, and you will see results. More than believers, we are witnesses of God’s actions when we allow him to be a part of our lives and to become a partner in our projects.

If you go into partnership with God, you will experience his intervention in your professional and financial life, not only through objective principles and spiritual laws but also through his direct participation in the issues that concern you. You will notice that God intervenes in a general and constant way through the laws of nature that he created. At times, he acts in specific ways, focusing on people who need a certain action, who ask for his help, or who somehow deserve it. We will seek to show that God appears to act more often in specific situations and to help you see which ones they usually are.

Theology is very useful in the sense that it explains how God intervenes in our lives by *providence* and by *concurrency*. In the first sense, God provides what we need, such as the breath of life, health, and ideal conditions for a habitable planet. In the second sense, we are invited to participate with God—and that is where the idea of a partnership with God begins.

God provides, but he also proposes that we do our part. In this partnership, each partner has their own duties and tasks, without taking responsibility for the other's area. Though we might like God to take care of everything, he will not honor a laid-back attitude. We shouldn't sit around waiting for what we want to fall from the sky. Nor should we assume that God doesn't care or won't act in our favor. We need to develop a balanced view.

In this book, we will discuss building a partnership with God, changes you can make in yourself, the laws that you should follow to reap the benefits of this partnership, and what you can do to improve your relationship with other partners of God. We will talk about God's typical miracles and how you can help to bring them about by your actions and attitudes.

Miracles in general depend on a partnership with God, on a combination of his will and human action. Our research and experiences confirm that God reveals himself to those who seek him. He intervenes in a special way in the lives of those who pray and who work for what they wish.

Sometimes God does something supernatural, and at other times he gives you the strength to fight for what you want, as we see in this passage of the Old Testament: "You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today" (Deut. 8:17–18).

The Bible, which is available to everyone, is an ordinary, general channel for divine intervention. Some people will

follow its principles; others will not. One thing is certain: we reap the attitudes and behaviors that we have adopted. (This is the Law of Sowing, described in *The 25 Biblical Laws of Success*.)

Awhile ago, we received a video that had circulated on the internet showing a barber arguing with his customer, who read the Bible, about the existence of God. The barber said he didn't believe in God because, if he existed, there wouldn't be so much pain and suffering in the world. The customer left the shop in deep thought and bumped into a long-haired street musician with an unkempt beard. He took the musician into the barbershop and said, "See? Barbers don't exist." The barber was outraged: "What do you mean? The problem is that he didn't come to see me." Then the man said: "God exists. People just aren't going to him. That is why there is so much misery in the world."¹

If you want God to help you in your professional and financial life, then go to him. Start with the simplest thing: read the Bible. Then apply biblical values to your work relationships. By doing so, you will become a miracle (someone who truly cares about others), and you will produce miracles (the changes that your new attitude will generate). Take note: so-called divine intervention does not always mean that God opens up the heavens and pours blessings and rewards down on you; sometimes divine intervention involves God using you to produce blessings in the lives of others. Your partner, God, wants you to help others, whether it is your boss, your employees, your work colleagues, or your clients.

The twenty-five biblical laws of success described in our previous book are principles from Scripture that can bring positive results for anyone, regardless of whether you are religious or a practicing Christian. However, if you want to go a step further and become a partner with God, then read this book and apply the twenty-five biblical laws of partnership with God—which require a greater commitment to biblical values and to your neighbors—to your life. Try, for example, working not out of pride but instead to make the world a better place. This will result in a leap when it comes to quality and excellence in your life. The most daring can go even further, granting God full equity control of the most important company of all—you.

There are no paths, but feet in the grass will create them.

FERREIRA GULLAR

PART I

Laws
concerning
Faith

ONE

The Law of Faith

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1 NASB

The first step for establishing a partnership with God is to believe that God exists and that he is willing to develop common projects with us. This is faith. As the Bible says, “Anyone who comes to [God] must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

Many people say, “I would like to have faith.” Others agonize over their doubts, feel divided about the existence and the acts of God, or are troubled by the way the Bible handles certain issues.

It is part of the nature of faith to deal with doubts. Furthermore, in any relationship or partnership, there are issues that need to be straightened out. If you reflect on spiritual

matters, read about the subject (as you are doing now), and are willing to apply biblical principles, then you already have enough faith to start—or continue—the lifetime journey of knowing God.

Faith is, first of all, action. All the examples we will consider in this book have a common point: the people involved acted out of trust and, by doing so, reaped good results. What we propose in this book is for you to do the same: behave as the twenty-five biblical laws of partnership with God suggest, and watch for the results.

In the Old Testament book of Exodus, we read that Moses and the people of Israel stood facing the Red Sea when Pharaoh's army overtook them. At that moment, some wanted to surrender and return to slavery; others considered killing themselves. But Moses confidently prayed for God's help. God's answer, a mixture of reprimand and instruction about how to act, couldn't have been stronger: "Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground" (Exod. 14:15–16 NRSV).

Praying and just standing there, waiting for God's providence, was the solution the confident Moses envisioned—but it was not the divine solution. God wanted the people to walk. More than that, he wanted them to walk toward the sea. Faith that walks sometimes achieves that which seems impossible. When Moses obeyed, he discovered the fact that the sea couldn't resist those who marched in its direction. And the Hebrews boldly walked through the middle of the sea.

In the introduction, we quoted the biblical passage in which the apostle Peter, after a night of unsuccessful fishing, followed Jesus's advice and tried again. As in Moses's case, this episode combined faith and action. The fishermen had spent the entire night fishing without catching any fish; therefore, going back to cast their nets again was an act of faith, against Peter's common sense and professional proficiency. It is important to observe that the advice Jesus gave Peter made all the difference when it came to action. Jesus said, "Go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish" (Luke 5:4 NLT). In other words, trying again shouldn't just be a mere repetition of the same act; it should be about going deeper and doing it better the next time.

In another episode recorded in the Bible, Jesus entered a village, and from a distance ten lepers cried out to him: "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!' When he saw them, he said, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, 'Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?'" (Luke 17:12–17). As in this healing, success is usually achieved while we are walking the path. The learning, the experience, and the creation of a network take place while we are moving forward. This story also reveals that the Law of Gratitude (described in *The 25 Biblical Laws of Success*) is rarely practiced. Only one of the ten men returned to thank Jesus for the divine gift they received.

You don't need to be a saint to apply the Law of Faith. You just need to listen to God's instruction and be willing to walk toward the sea, to go deeper toward something you want. Faith is hearing God's command and moving forward in obedience. It doesn't matter if your objective is to change the world, to please God, or to improve your quality of life; having faith is essential for taking the first step and for experiencing the spiritual laws described in this book.

One of the cornerstones of neurolinguistics is that we need to believe in order to see. In other words, we need to have faith—to put something into practice—to get answers and results. Maybe this is what Jesus calls faith the size of a mustard seed: “Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matt. 17:20). Faith, no matter how small, moves mountains.

Manifestations of the Law of Faith

The Law of Faith refers not only to faith in God's existence but also to faith in what God says and what he has planned for us. Belief in God has many ramifications, among them:

- *Faith in the future*—the result of the trust that you put in God and the plans that he has for your life: “Commit to the LORD everything you do. Then he will make your plans succeed” (Prov. 16:3 NIV).
- *Faith in ourselves*—a product of the understanding that we are born just the way God himself chose: “It

was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well" (Ps. 139:13–14 NRSV).

- *Faith in prayer*—the result of experiencing answered prayer: "You will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you" (Jer. 29:12).

Faith is not the belief that God will do what you want. It is the belief that God will do what is right.

MAX LUCADO