

March 5, 2018

By Rick Boxx

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

While I was partnering with a friend, Jerry, on a consulting job, he shared a profound insight with Tom, who was one of our clients. Jerry's observation was simple, but profound: "Success is the greatest impediment to greatness."

Once success settles in, Jerry explained, it is not uncommon for leaders to believe achievements are due to their own professional brilliance. As a result they start to assume their success is perpetual. They think that whatever decisions they make will always prove to yield more success. As markets and conditions change, however, successful people can easily be left behind if they are not constantly looking to understand the times, recognizing when important changes occur and adapting accordingly.

Sometimes in today's world, it seems the only thing that is unchanging is the reality that things can – and often do – change, sometimes at incredible speed. Embracing the status quo is an excellent strategy if you intend to be left behind while your competitors surge ahead.

Change, of course, is hardly a new concept, although technology and communications have certainly played a role in accelerating the rate and scope of change. The Bible offers some wise observations about change, and the importance of our willingness to respond to it effectively.

For instance, in the book of 1 Chronicles we find an interesting recounting of the great men who joined David in his battle against Saul. We learn about the, *"men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do"* (1

Article from CBMC International

Distributed to and For Use by Members of **CBMC Hong Kong Ltd:**

Room 905, Nathan Center, 580G-K, Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

TEL.: (852) 2805 1923 Fax (852)3747 6218 ▪ E-MAIL: enquiry@CBMC.org.hk

To support CBMC HK Vision, please download Offering Form <http://www.cbmc.org.hk/images/download/online-offer.pdf>

Chronicles 12:32). They were astute observers of what was occurring around them, seeking to discern how best to respond to changing circumstances.

The ancient book of wisdom, Ecclesiastes, also addresses the inevitability of change. The first verse of the third chapter begins with, “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” It addresses changing demands of work in several ways:

“A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.... A time to break down, and a time to build up.... A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones.... A time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew...” (Ecclesiastes 3:2-7).

As we approach our work – formulating plans, developing strategies, undertaking projects, and evaluating results – it would be extremely beneficial to take a cue from the biblical men of Issachar, constantly seeking to understand the times so we will know what we should do not only to succeed, but also to pursue greatness.

At the same time, excellent leaders know that understanding the times and being willing to change their approach do not require changing or compromising their values. Those remain constant, serving as a lighthouse amid the ever-shifting seas of change.

Copyright 2018, Unconventional Business Network (formerly Integrity Resource Center, Inc. Adapted with permission from "Integrity Moments with Rick Boxx," a commentary on issues of integrity in the workplace from a Christian perspective. To learn more about their ministry or to sign up for Rick's daily Integrity Moments, visit www.unconventionalbusiness.org. His latest book and inspiration for their new ministry name, Unconventional Business, provides "Five Keys to Growing a Business God's Way."

Article from CBMC International

Distributed to and For Use by Members of **CBMC Hong Kong Ltd:**

Room 905, Nathan Center, 580G-K, Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

TEL.: (852) 2805 1923 Fax (852)3747 6218 ▪ E-MAIL: enquiry@CBMC.org.hk

To support CBMC HK Vision, please download Offering Form <http://www.cbmc.org.hk/images/download/online-offer.pdf>

Reflection/Discussion Question

1. When you read, "Success is the greatest impediment to greatness," what does that say to you?
2. How can we overcome the temptation to become caught up in our successes and fail to recognize and respond to important changes when they occur?
3. Have you ever heard of the "men of Issachar" before, who understood their times and knew what they should do? How can we try to be like them?
4. The book of Ecclesiastes lists a series of things stating when it is "a time for this, and a time for that." How does having this kind of awareness – knowing when it is time for pursuing one thing or another – affect how you approach your work, or responsibilities you hold within your organization?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 23:13-15, 11:14, 15:22, 14:8, 16:1,3,9, 19:20, 20:24; Luke 14:28-31

Article from CBMC International

Distributed to and For Use by Members of **CBMC Hong Kong Ltd:**

Room 905, Nathan Center, 580G-K, Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

TEL.: (852) 2805 1923 Fax (852)3747 6218 ▪ E-MAIL: enquiry@CBMC.org.hk

To support CBMC HK Vision, please download Offering Form <http://www.cbmc.org.hk/images/download/online-offer.pdf>