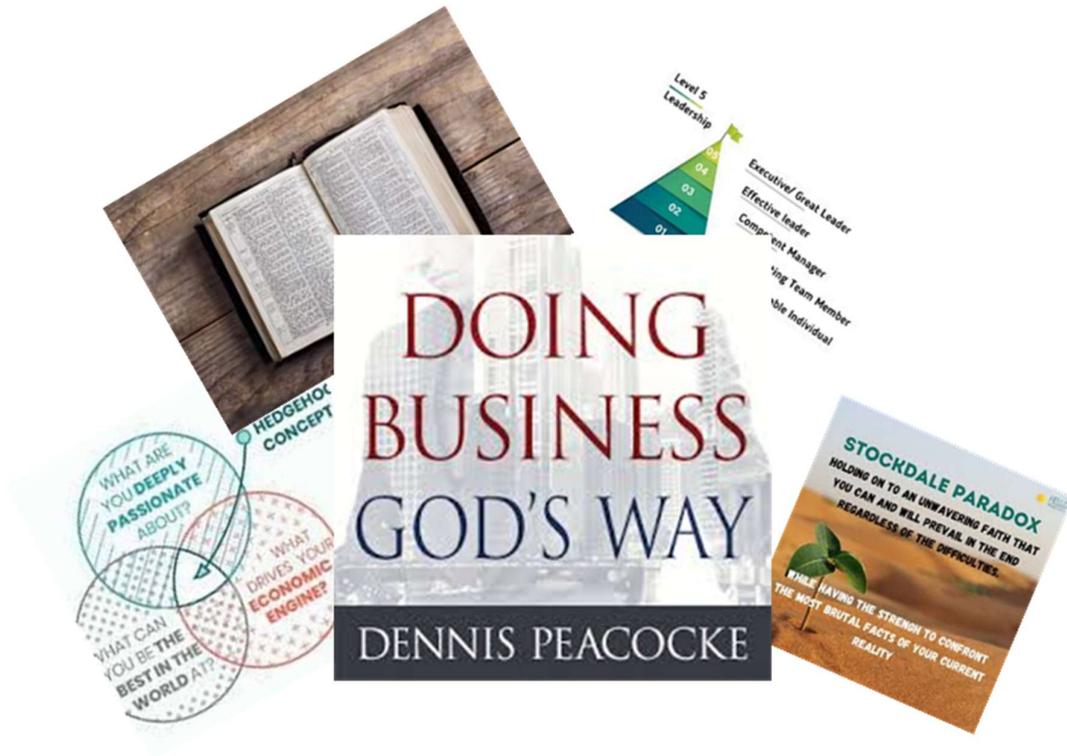


How Companies can Achieve Greatness

To Integrate Strategic Disciplines and Foundational Principles



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How Companies can Achieve Greatness:

To Integrate - Strategic Disciplines and Foundational Principles

The pursuit of enduring greatness is a defining characteristic of successful organisations, yet it remains an elusive goal for many. While numerous companies achieve temporary "good" status, a select few make the leap to sustained, superior performance. The critical inquiry into how these organisations transition from good to great has been explored through in depth research, notably by Jim Collins, in his book : "Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't." - and is also highlighted by spiritual and ethical frameworks for business, as articulated in the GoBusiness (GB) curriculums.

This essay argues that **enduring greatness in companies is not merely a result of strategic disciplines identified through in-depth research but is magnified and sustained by foundational biblical principles and relational integrity that guide an organisation's God-given design and purpose.**

This essay will Integrate these two perspectives, demonstrating how Collins's, in depth research shows the variables emerged from statistical analyses of real-world data and are then used to explain patterns or predict outcomes in his research of disciplined people, disciplined thought, and disciplined action, and are deepened and enriched by the GB curriculum's emphasis on biblical transformation, proprietorial development, and relational foundations. This essay will conclude that the most effective way to integrate these sources is to use the GoBusiness lessons as the foundational "**Why**" and *Good to Great* as the operational "**What**".

A cornerstone of achieving organisational greatness, as identified by Collins, lies in **disciplined people**, particularly through Level 5 Leadership, and the principle of "First Who... Then What". Level 5 leaders - contrast with many successful leaders who are extroverted and draw attention to themselves, instead prioritizing substance and the organization's long-term health. * ("Humility + Will = Level 5") ¹ (p-20-21,39)

They prioritise building a deep, talented executive team, understanding that the crucial first step is to get the "right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats," before even determining the strategic direction of the company. This approach fosters adaptability and cultivates an initiative-taking workforce, as "the right people don't need to be tightly managed or fired up; they will be initiative-taking by the inner drive to produce the best results".

Decisions about personnel must be thorough, not ruthless, focusing on character attributes and dedication over specific skills alone. Companies like Wells Fargo, for instance, first assembled superior management teams, often hiring outstanding people without a specific job in mind, before fully articulating their strategic direction, demonstrating that "great vision without great people is irrelevant". ¹ (p 42-44)

The GB curriculum truly transforms this concept by viewing people's decisions through a **biblical lens of proprietorial development and discerning God's choice**. Good leaders, within this framework, aim to produce "proprietors" by cultivating creativity, responsibility, and management skills rooted in a "kingly" ministry, rather than simply having "helpers".²

This aligns with Collins's idea of the "right people" being intrinsically motivated.

* **James 4:6 (KJV)** states, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisted the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble", - underscoring the humility central to Level 5 leadership

The GB curriculum further stresses that hiring based on skill level, rather than revelation (prayerfully discerning God's choice) aligns with worldly patterns, not Christ's.¹² Organisations should seek those who can be disciplined, understanding that "practice makes permanent, not perfect".¹¹ (Transformation Principle #26) This implies a commitment to ongoing development and character formation, recognising that "building character and skills must be at the centre of our business enterprise where - "Profit will be the 'fruit'.¹⁴ This approach to people, rooted in a divine calling, ensures that leaders identify individuals who are not only capable but also aligned with the organisation's deepest values and purpose, ready to "inherit their heart" and contribute generationally.¹⁵

Building upon the foundation of disciplined people, companies must cultivate **disciplined thought**. Collins identifies two key practices here: **confronting the brutal facts** and developing a clear **Hedgehog Concept**. Confronting the brutal facts means infusing the entire decision-making process with the absolute truth of the current reality, rather than relying on a dream or a leader's charisma. This involves practices such as leading with questions, engaging in vigorous dialogue and debate, conducting autopsies without blame, and establishing "red flag" mechanisms to ensure truth is heard. This unafraid honesty is coupled with the **Stockdale Paradox**: thru maintaining an unwavering faith that the company will prevail in the end, despite confronting the most brutal facts of its current reality. ¹ (p-85)

The **Hedgehog Concept** provides a simple, clear frame of reference for all decisions, flowing from a deep understanding of three intersecting circles:

- what the company can be the best in the world at,
- what drives its economic engine (profit per x),
- and what it is deeply enthusiastic about.

This concept is not merely a strategy but a guiding understanding that helps in pruning all activities not fitting within these circles.¹ (p 90-96)

From the GB curriculum perspective, disciplined thought is fundamentally guided by an understanding of **God-ordained design destiny**.^{5,6} This parallels the Hedgehog Concept's focus on "what you can be the best in the world at," but elevates it to a godlike blueprint.

The primary business goal should be "staying within our design while constantly working to upgrade all components of the organization". This goal can be achieved by staying in the "scripture," and then also to embrace a "cause-symptom analysis" to address root issues, rather than just focusing on the symptoms.

A strong **ethical basis**, rooted in God's Word is critical, extending beyond mere moral compliance to discerning God's particular will for each situation. This ethical reflection ensures decisions are "relationally right" and consistent with God's ways, rather than merely "technically right".⁴

The GB curriculum also reinforces the idea that **people are more important than profit**, a principle that shapes how economic decisions are made and how the organisation's purpose is defined. Humility is a prerequisite for God's involvement in transformation, urging leaders to seek out models and coaches.⁴ **

** **James 4:6-10 (NKJV)** states, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble," and goes on to urge readers to "humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up"

A holistic perspective ensures strategic decisions are inspired by higher ideals and sound ethics, not just market trends, leading to greater clarity and focused direction. ***

The pinnacle of disciplined people and disciplined thought is **disciplined action**, manifested through a **culture of discipline** and the strategic application of **technology accelerators**. A culture of discipline thrives on freedom and responsibility within a consistent framework, where self-disciplined individuals drive performance. This involves people who are consistent in fulfilling their responsibilities, a concept Collins compares to a world-class athlete "rinsing their cottage cheese" (Every small detail is important) for a marginal edge. An essential aspect of **disciplined action** is creating a **"stop doing list"** ^{1 (p-139)} to systematically eliminate activities that do not align with the Hedgehog Concept.

Technology, while important, is never the primary cause of greatness. Instead, good-to-great companies become pioneers in applying carefully selected technologies that directly fit and accelerate their Hedgehog Concept, avoiding crazes in the markets and approach change with thoughtfulness. The overall process is similar to relentlessly pushing a giant, heavy **flywheel** in one consistent direction, building momentum through a series of good decisions and diligent execution, rather than a single dramatic action or "miracle moment".^{1 (p 164-165)}

The GB curriculum further grounds disciplined action in **relational integrity and God's building patterns**.^{7,8,12} It puts forward, that God's building pattern is fundamentally relational, mirroring the Trinity model. This means product excellence reflects the values and character of the people who produce it, and relationally based companies are more enduring and effective than those built on pragmatic economics.

Disciplined action is fostered by a culture built on **clear agreements and their consistent maintenance**,⁷ which form the foundation of a relationally healthy organisation. ****

Rules and structures, initially serving as "tree stakes" to guide behaviour, ideally give way to genuine inner transformation.^{2,11} Meaning that it is managements approach, to keep these individuals under rules and procedures, as a necessary external control, because they have not undergone personal transformation.⁸

Strategic thinking involves setting measurable and motivational goals, understanding that "God pays for what He orders" ^{5 (Master Principle #6)} and that He "meets us at the point of obedience to Him"³ Problems are viewed not merely as obstacles but as "incredible opportunities for Christians as evangelists" to demonstrate a distinct approach and success, and for the organisation to learn and grow.⁹

However, this growth must be carefully managed, as "speed kills"; unmanaged, rapid growth can harm or even destroy an organisation. True change, therefore, comes from the bottom up, through people who seize control over their problems and destiny, rather than relying solely on top-down initiatives.¹³

"My own experience provides a stark illustration of this essay. The company I co-founded achieved immense initial success by instinctively applying the principles that Jim Collins would later codify in "Good to Great".

*** **Proverbs 14:15** says, "The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps"

**** **In Numbers 30:2 (KJV)** reads, "If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceeded out of his mouth" – Clear agreements and their consistent maintenance.

We began with the discipline of "First Who...", getting the right people on the bus. This core of disciplined people engaged in disciplined thought, allowing us to confront the brutal facts of our market and develop a clear, simple strategy. The resulting disciplined action created a powerful flywheel effect, propelling the company forward with tremendous speed and success.

However, this momentum became unsustainable when the foundational principles that guided our early success were abandoned. Our focus shifted from stewardship to status; we became what the GoBusiness curriculum calls "fulfilment-oriented" rather than "obedience-oriented".^{14 (Transformation Principle #2)} We allowed our egos to grow, violating the fundamental principles of Level 5 Leadership by losing our personal humility.^{1 (p-28,29)}

Our leadership failed to align our actions with our stated beliefs, as our egos grew larger than our calling to serve the very people entrusted to us. This created a direct contradiction with the biblical ethic that **people are more important than profit** and undermined the integrity of our organisation.

In losing the faith and ethical integrity we started with, we fostered a culture of arrogance, not a culture of discipline. We did not just fail as leaders; we failed the company by proving that strategic disciplines, without a foundation of relational integrity and servant leadership, inevitably steer our organisation into the "**doom loop**"^{1 (p-180)} (acquisitions in particular – new cultures)"

In Conclusion, to achieve enduring greatness is a profound journey that benefits from a joint application of strategic disciplines and foundational principles. Jim Collins's in-depth research highlights the necessity of **disciplined people** (Level 5 Leadership, First Who... Then What), **disciplined thought** (Confront the Brutal Facts, Hedgehog Concept), and **disciplined action** (Culture of Discipline, Technology Accelerators), all contributing to the momentum of the **flywheel** that propels a company from good to great.

In conjunction with the above, the GB curriculum provides a robust spiritual and ethical bedrock, highlighting the critical role of **biblical transformation**, **proprietary development**, adherence to **God's design destiny**, **relational integrity**, and **strategic prayer** in shaping organisations that not only achieve market success but also embody divine purpose.

The Integration of these perspectives reveals that enduring greatness is not accidental but a result of intentional, integrated effort, focusing on the right people and their character, grounded in clear, God-inspired understanding, and driven by a higher purpose that transcends mere profit.

Ultimately, pursuing greatness in this comprehensive manner leads to not only a more successful business but also a more meaningful and impactful existence for all involved, aligning with the strong belief that it is "**no harder to build something great than to build something good**".

This essay concludes that the foundational "**WHY**" in the GoBusiness lessons and the operational "**WHAT**" in the "Good to Great", is imperative for a business to "**ACHIEVE GREATNESS**."

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SOURCES

The CURRICULAM - "GB100 by Dennis Peacocke" - This GB100 curriculum is a leadership or organizational development program grounded in biblical principles, focusing on strategic thinking, divine calling, competence, and character to achieve goals aligned with God's will. Key concepts include strategic foresight and planning with commitment to God's direction, utilizing an organization's God-given gifts, practicing servant leadership and stewardship, and maintaining biblical values like love, humility, and self-sacrifice to guide actions and outcomes. **GoStrategic 100 is a foundation to equip leaders and organizations to be effective, transformative forces for good, aligning with God's overarching plan for creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.**

The CURRICULAM - "GB200 by Dennis Peacocke" - This GB200 curriculum is designed to increase your leadership and management skills and the reach of your ministry through the application of God's truths and a defined Christian worldview that distinguishes the differences between secular and biblical economics and business practices. It also involves applying core biblical principles like God's Sovereignty, Prayer and Discernment, Stewardship, Wise Counsel, and Community to strategic planning for individuals or organizations, drawing on wisdom from books like Proverbs and Jeremiah to foster alignment with God's will, responsible resource management, and faithful, flexible execution of plans. **GoStrategic 200 guides participants to create strategies that are not only effective but also deeply rooted in faith, ensuring they are aligned with biblical principles and God's overarching plan.**

The BOOK - "GOOD TO GREAT" by Jim Collins - The main thesis of the book is that many companies, despite their performance, never reach greatness because they grow complacent with it. Instead of aiming for greatness, they compromise for mediocrity. From Good to Great: Collins presents the key premise that many businesses fail to become great because they become complacent. **The goal of the "Good to Great" study is to determine what sets "Good and Great" apart.**

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