

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF SCRIPTURE-BASED ETHICAL
PRINCIPLES EMBEDDED WITHIN CORPORATE
LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Steven Trent Smith

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2022

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF SCRIPTURE-BASED ETHICAL PRINCIPLES
EMBEDDED WITHIN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

by Steven Trent Smith

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

March 2, 2022

APPROVED BY:

Gary J. Bredfeldt, Ph.D. Dissertation Supervisor

Steven L. Yates, Ph.D. Second Reader

ABSTRACT

The ethical treatment of others within the corporate working environment is essential for that corporation's success. Ethical treatment of others applies to business transactions with customers and clients and engages the policies designed to formulate the ethical treatment of company employees. Although most major corporation documentation includes corporate code of conduct policies, the ethical principles used to define those policies and enact leadership based upon those policies are not always consistent. Four research questions defined the structure of this qualitative phenomenological study. The study's purpose was to define the nature of Scripture-based ethics within the corporate environment. The theory guiding this study is Servant Leadership Theory as defined by Greenleaf (1977) and supported by Northouse (2019) as it identifies the critical nature of leaders acting as servants for their followers. The study utilized a purposeful sampling strategy to recruit 15 participants. The researcher collected data through recorded online video interviews and transcribed the data using the NVIVO software package. The research identified six main themes: (1) Corporate Foundations, (2) Beliefs, (3) Ethical Foundations, (4) Scriptural Foundations, (5) Life Experience, and (6) Doing the Right Thing. Theme analysis revealed that an ingrained sense of right and wrong resides within humanity, and that sense derives its nature from God's moral character written on the hearts of humanity. Data analysis also revealed a lack of formal professional ethics training at the leadership level. Future research should deploy a research design that expands this study to additional leadership levels, other industries, and internationally.

Keywords: Character, ethics, leadership, morals, Scripture, service, worldview.

Copyright © 2022. Steven Trent Smith. All rights reserved.

Liberty University has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the University, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

Dedication

The completion of this educational journey was encouraged and nourished by this researcher's wife and best friend, Dawn Renee' Smith. Her continuous positive influence through service inspires others to develop a kind soul and generous love for God.

Acknowledgments

The researcher acknowledges Dr. Gary Bredfeldt and the entire faculty at Liberty University who made the Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership program possible. Without their continuous support and leadership, the goal of this doctoral expedition would prove unsuccessful. Additionally, this researcher would like to acknowledge Dr. Todd Marrah, who planted the initial desire to pursue higher learning for serving others, and Dr. Ricky Christman for offering a challenge to continue this education journey into the doctorate program. The researcher also acknowledges Mr. Gary Owens for guiding this researcher's business education toward a voyage into Christian leadership based on faith, not simply business principles. A grateful thank-you is necessary for the fifteen participants who agreed to participate in the research and the researcher's employer, who offered financial and professional support for this endeavor. The researcher also acknowledges the beautiful God-loving family who offered continuous support and encouragement throughout this entire process. Mostly, the researcher gives all the glory to God and His son Jesus Christ who instills the love of others within humanity and continuously challenges humanity to live up to His expectations.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	3
Copyright	4
Dedication	5
Acknowledgments.....	6
List of Tables	13
List of Figures	14
List of Abbreviations	15
CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN	16
Introduction.....	16
Background to the Problem	17
Theological Literature.....	18
Theoretical Literature.....	19
Thematic Literature.....	21
Literature Gap	22
Statement of the Problem.....	23
Purpose Statement.....	24
Research Questions	24
Assumptions and Delimitations	24
Research Assumptions	24
Delimitations of the Research Design.....	25
Definition of Terms.....	26
Significance of the Study	27

Summary of the Design	28
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	31
Overview	31
Theological Framework for the Study	31
Theological Overview	32
Spirituality	33
Biblical Worldview	36
Theological Ethical Principles	40
Theological Summary	41
Theoretical Framework for the Study	42
Servant Leadership	43
Attribute Analysis	46
Ethical Education	51
Theoretical Summary	54
Related Literature	55
Responsible Leadership	56
Business Ethics	59
Leadership Development and Training	62
Communications	66
Related Literature Summary	68
Rationale for the Study and Gap in the Literature	68
Rationale for the Study	68
Gap in the Literature	70

Profile of the Current Study	71
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	75
Research Design Synopsis	76
The Problem.....	76
Purpose Statement.....	77
Research Questions	77
Research Design and Methodology	77
Setting	82
Participants.....	85
Role of the Researcher	87
Ethical Considerations	89
Data Collection Methods and Instruments.....	91
Collection Methods.....	91
Instruments and Protocols.....	92
Procedures	96
Data Analysis	98
Analysis Methods.....	100
Trustworthiness.....	102
Chapter Summary	106
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	108
Overview	108
Compilation Protocol and Measures	108
Permission Request.....	108

Research Participant Selection Process	109
Interview Protocol.....	109
Transcript Protocol.....	110
Manual Data Manipulation	112
Computer Data Manipulation	112
Demographic and Sample Data	113
Participant Demographics Data Set	113
Interview Transcript Data Set	114
Data Analysis and Findings	115
Horizontalization.....	115
Theme Generation.....	116
Themed Word Clusters	119
Codebook Development.....	120
RQ1 Theme Generation and Analysis	121
RQ2 Theme Generation and Analysis: Scriptural Foundations.....	126
RQ3 Theme Generation and Analysis: Corporate Foundations	128
RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 Joint Theme: Doing the Right Thing.....	131
RQ4 Theme Generation and Analysis: Life Experience.....	131
Evaluation of the Research Design	134
Video Interview Protocol.....	134
Cisco Webex Video Conference Software	135
NVIVO Software	136
Saturation	136

CHAPTER FIVE, CONCLUSIONS	138
Overview.....	138
Research Purpose	138
Research Questions	139
Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications.....	139
RQ1 Conclusions	139
RQ2 Conclusions	141
RQ3 Conclusions	142
RQ4 Conclusions	143
Empirical Literature Implications	144
Theoretical Literature Implications.....	145
Empirical Applications	147
Theoretical Applications	148
Practical Applications	149
Research Limitations	150
Research Population Gender.....	150
Research Timing	150
Participant Number	150
Code Generation	151
Ethical Training Definitions	151
Further Research	152
Additional Leadership Levels.....	152
Other Industries.....	152

International Applications.....	152
Ethical Training Guidelines	153
Future Research Designs.....	153
Summary	154
REFERENCES	157
APPENDIX A: PERMISSION REQUEST	164
APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT.....	166
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	167
APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT	169
APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS	172
APPENDIX F: THEME CODEBOOK	186
APPENDIX G: RQ1 CODES	189
APPENDIX H: RQ2 CODES	191
APPENDIX I: RQ3 CODES.....	193
APPENDIX J: RQ4 CODES	195

List of Tables

Table 1: Participant Demographic Data.....	113
Table 2: Interview Transcript Data Set.....	115
Table 3: Theme Codebook Template.....	120
Table 4: Beliefs	122
Table 5: Religious Beliefs.....	123
Table 6: Corporate Culture	129
Table 7: Guidelines	131

List of Figures

Figure 1: Transcript Theme Hierarchy	117
Figure 2: Transcript Theme Chart.....	118
Figure 3: NVIVIO Word Cloud.....	119

List of Abbreviations

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Information Technology (IT)

Instructional Review Board (IRB)

Multi-System Operator (MSO)

New International Version Study Bible (NIVSB)

Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX)

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

Servant Leadership Human Resource Management (SLHRM)

Single Sign On (SSO)

Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

Ethical leadership is essential for a business to thrive in the modern world. Ignoring ethical principles often misleads executives into a mode of self-elevation when serving others through ethical treatment should be the focus (Northouse, 2019). While not consistently recognized, Scripture-based ethical principles should play an essential role in developing corporate code of conduct policies meant to serve others (Nass & Kreuer, 2018). The established research indicates that modernistic and post-modernistic viewpoints have molded corporate ethics into a model that falls short of Scripture-based ethical principles while focusing on the advancement possibilities represented by the secular worldview. Returning to a business ethics model driven toward serving others ahead of oneself (Greenleaf, 1977) allows leaders the capacity to incorporate ethical behavior grounded in Scripture instead of the perceived neutrality or goodness of human nature as represented by a post-modernistic worldview (Nass & Kreuer, 2018).

The following narrative introduces the background argument that Scripture-supported ethical principles reside within corporate code of conduct policies, even though the specific references are vague. In support of this concept, the research examined the theological, theoretical, and thematic literature to understand where gaps in the literature may aid the implementation of this study. The purpose statement builds upon the problem identified in the study and drives to formulate four research questions that aid the researcher in discovering solutions to the problem and how to implement those solutions into corporate ethical practices. The research revealed assumptions associated with the study and delimited the study to a specific population appropriate for the research. The study's significance examined the importance of

realizing God's place in the corporate world and focused the methodological design on determining the study's outcome.

Background to the Problem

Establishing corporate ethical principles and applying those principles has become a much-reviewed topic since the beginning of the new millennium. Ethical misguidance in the early 2000s led to a level of ethical scrutiny never before seen in the corporate arena (Hill, 2017). Improprieties by company Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), such as telecommunications company leaders Bernie Ebbers of Worldcom (Pandey & Verma, 2004), Joe Nacchio of Qwest Communications (Stanwick & Stanwick, 2009), and the Enron accounting scandal (Markham, 2015) led the United States Congress to contemplate how businesses should react to others' ethical treatment. Led by technology and telecom stocks, the fallout of the Worldcom and Enron scandals forced a severe decline of the United States stock markets. The subsequent backlash of the accounting scandals negatively impacted banks, pension funds, and other financial services markets, prompting the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to file civil fraud suits against Worldcom (Pandey & Verma, 2004) and eventually Qwest (Stanwick & Stanwick, 2009). These and similar financial scandals and corporate improprieties in the early 2000s led the U.S. Congress to pass the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (SOX). The SOX act enhanced Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rules established in the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. The new SOX rules established corporate responsibility reform, increased criminal punishment, defined accounting regulations, and added new protections against securities fraud (Sarbanes, 2002).

Research by Bay, McKeage, and McKeage (2010) uncovered that some business executives deferred ethical principles to ensure revenue protection through profit and loss

initiatives. While not all CEOs and executives were guilty of misguided ethics, a disturbing trend emerged, prompting research into the vitality of proper corporate ethics and incorporating higher ethical principles into corporate code-of-conduct policies. Led by the SOX act of 2002, corporate entities began to implement corporate code of conduct initiatives that defined ethical behavior in the workplace. Corporations implemented code of conduct policies to ensure corporations established and maintained compliance with the SOX 2002 directives (Sarbanes, 2002) and guided employees to act ethically towards each other and contacts outside of the company. This ethical movement among businesses, while certainly warranted, begs the question of where those ethical principles originated and what basis of ethical treatment established the ethical standards.

Theological Literature

Examining the role of ethics in business as it links to theological considerations is not an exact science. Bay et al. (2010) highlighted how the ethical influences of Scripture have affected business throughout history, but what does that history have to do with ethical business practices today? Some may argue that a sense of moral conscience resides in the human race for believers and non-believers alike. That sense of morality certainly drives the introduction of ethical behavior in business, but from where is that sense of morality derived? Is it from modernistic and post-modernistic views based upon perceived truths (Kim, Fisher, & McCalman, 2009), or is it based on natural moral law developed through years of business advancement (Bay et al., 2010)? Grudem (1994) supports the argument that all people have some inclination to God's moral law. If this fact were not so, the world would succumb to total evil where none would have a conscience, and evil deeds would reign. Grudem also deducts that since the world has a conscience, believers and non-believers can integrate corporate ethics based upon natural moral law, even if that law does not directly link to Scripture.

How is the business executive to decide between natural moral law and truths grounded within Scripture? The simple answer for believing executives is not to separate the two but embrace the existence of Scripture grounded within the moral code. However, issues arise when activities of the corporate world drive believers to live bifurcated lives where biblical faith becomes practice on the weekends, and general ethics and culture drive the standard workday (Chase, 2004). The integration of the two views may sound simplistic from a believer perspective, but the concept meets resistance from secular executives whose leadership principles reside in non-biblical leadership theory. That challenge often comes in believing leaders offering a Scripture-based worldview that conflicts with the secular worldview held by non-believing executives (Kim et al., 2009).

The study explored the question of which code of ethics enriches activity according to the betterment of humanity. Kessler & Kretzschmar (2015) indicated that Christian leaders who possess a Christian worldview are not automatically better, but the ethical principles that reside in them are more astute. While the Christian worldview does tend to hold Christian leaders to a higher moral standard, the underlying strength of theological grounding is biblical spirituality (Kapic, 2014). Since the true definition of a leader is one who other persons are willing to follow (Northouse, 2019), believers follow God through the development of their biblical spirituality (Grudem, 1994) and the expansion of their ethical dimensions (Kessler & Kretzschmar, 2015) that are grounded in the ethical principles taught by God.

Theoretical Literature

Greenleaf (1977) first offered a means to close the gap between modernistic morals and Scripture-based ethics by proposing the Servant Leadership Theory that places others' needs before the needs of oneself. While this concept has limitations due to the lack of universal core

attributes acceptance, the confliction with individual autonomy, and the paradigm shift toward serving the needs of others first (Northouse, 2019), the theory is also grounded in the highest of moral ethics necessary to prove the worth of others as the most critical aspect of the theory. Anderson (2013), Greenleaf (1977), and Northouse (2019) all highlighted the need for excellent listening skills, stewardship, and empathy as essential elements to servant leadership. The theory suggests that corporate executives should lean upon those attributes to bridge the gap between modernistic ethical principles and Scripture-based truths by placing others' needs first in an environment not conducive to such action.

Enderle (1997) cited the need for corporations to find common ground between corporate responsibilities and stewardship by highlighting an overlapping concept of good with a perceived concept of justice. Hill (2017) expanded the overlapping concept to include holiness and love with justice while pointing to Scripture as the ultimate rulebook for business. However, humanity's sinful nature makes the holy-just-loving concept challenging to achieve, especially in the business community, where a dual morality separates personal and professional ethics. As Chase (2004) defined the bifurcated lifestyle, Hill (2017) surmised that real Scripture-based business ethics cannot afford to fall into that bifurcated division, but must be the same for both situations, no matter the consequences.

Rossouw (1994) defined Scripture-based ethics as a concept where believers must approach an understanding of reality where humans are interdependent upon each other and must serve one another. Leaders should use this understanding of the world to shape the moral concepts used to develop character through interaction within a community of faith. Through the community of faith, pure servant leadership concepts gain an understanding and foothold within the business community. As believers gain strength from each other, that strength functions to

serve one another and elevate moral concepts to one worthy of developing biblical spirituality. Rossouw further expanded the Scripture-based ethics argument of serving others by expounded on the need for ethics to be personal, but not private. As leaders share Scripture-based ethics they grow, and as they grow, the concept of the believer reality expands to become the basis for moral judgments not grounded in science, but based upon the positive interactions between people created by God, living for God, and justified through God (Grudem, 2018).

Thematic Literature

From an economic perspective, does ethical behavior in business provide an avenue for success in the marketplace? Do ethical leaders driven by the need to serve others realize more profit for business than those not interested in serving others? Grassl and Habisch (2011) argued that there is a direct link between the ethical treatment of others and the profitability of the business. As ethical practices integrate into the economics of business, the people factor becomes the driving force behind realizing greater profits. Those who institute high ethical practices realize the human side of the business also drives profit by incorporating ethical principles into the business success model (Nass & Kreuer, 2018). Successful servant leaders migrate into a people-developing model from a profit-developing model and create an environment where employees want to make a difference by supporting the company objectives, but not allowing the work to consume them. Leaders then utilize ethical business practices to transform communities and foster individual growth and development (Wong & Rae, 2011) as they realize the responsibility to themselves, employees, the business, each other, and the community's economic success (Nass & Kreuer, 2018)

Linking the positive aspects of Scripture-based ethics to the corporate world may be a daunting task, but research shows the values inherent within Scripture-based ethics are already

present within the corporate world, if not specified as such. Voegtlin, Patzer, and Scherer (2012) identified eight propositions that are essential to responsible leadership. Scripture does not define these propositions, but they carry Scripture-based ethical undertones. Per Voegtlin et al., responsible leadership adds to the legitimacy of an organization, builds trust, enhances social capital, changes the ethical culture, encourages community involvement, increases performance, increases moral behavior, and develops positive attitudes and cognitions. Ruffner (2016) highlighted trust, community interaction, service to others, and the need to avoid ethical blindness as leaders embrace ethical knowledge and use it to help others. The trust, service, and moral behavior factors provide the most reliable link to Scripture-based ethics.

Literature Gap

The literature supports the need to incorporate Scripture-based ethical principles into corporate ethics practices. The literature also defines high moral standards in business that do not tie explicitly to Scripture. Servant Leadership Theory literature illustrates the characteristics of ethical leadership necessary to serve others' needs first and supports the idea of high ethical standards that positively influence business success. The literature does not precisely address how servant leadership characteristics integrate into a secular corporate world where business advancement takes priority over the advancement of humanity. While much of the literature identifies the benefits of Servant Leadership Theory and recognizes high moral standings of other forms of leadership, the process definitions to bridge the gap between them are not apparent. This research intended to bridge the gap between perceived moral goodness and Scripture-based ethics. Incorporating a process to shift the paradigm from self-promotion to serving humanity supports both objectives to increase profit and serve humanity. Through the

definition of that process, the introduction of Scripture-based ethics into the corporate code of conduct documentation becomes more prominent.

Statement of the Problem

Business leaders must be aware of the need to introduce ethical principles into business leadership practices. Without ethical consideration of others, inappropriate behaviors guide the decision-making process with a focus driven toward corporate advancement at the cost of ethical treatment of others (Northouse, 2019). Nass and Kreuer (2018) described an environment where Scripture-based ethics play an essential role in developing corporate ethical principles designed to serve others. The research indicates that business leadership ethics developed through the perceived good of the modernistic and post-modernistic eras falls short of the Scripture-driven ethical principles necessary to treat others with respect and reverence (Kim et al., 2009). A return to ethical principles motivated by Scripture where leaders choose to serve others ahead of themselves (Greenleaf, 1977), is necessary to develop leaders who recognize the lack of Scripture-based ethics in the corporate business world. Leaders must be willing to recognize the disparity of practices grounded in perceived goodness and revert to ethical principles defined by Scripture and developed to serve God and others first (Nass & Kreuer, 2018).

Moral principles applied to corporate code of conduct policies used to treat other humans with respect reside in Scripture and provide the basis for serving others through ethical treatment defined by God's moral character (Grudem, 2018). The literature expressing the prominence of Scripture's influence within ethical principles in business is plentiful (Grudem, 2018; Kim, Fisher, & McCalman, 2009; Melé & Fontrodona, 2017; Nass & Kreuer, 2018). The literature also defines high moral standards with perceived goodness defined by humanity (Fischer, 2004; Voegtlin, Patzer, & Scherer, 2012). However, gaps in the literature exist on how Scripture

explicitly integrates into human behavior within the corporate arena. More specifically, the literature falls short in defining a transparent process to bridge the gap between perceived moral goodness and Scripture-based ethical principles that, when adequately recognized, serve both humanity and business profit objectives equally.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the business leader's perception of Scripture-based ethical principles within the secular corporate environment and determine how those ethical principles transform into the value of serving others through leadership practices that emulate God's moral character.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this qualitative study:

RQ1. What value do corporate leaders place on introducing ethical guidelines into the leadership model used within the organization?

RQ2. What value do corporate leaders place on Scripture-based beliefs and the practice of those beliefs to model leadership behavior?

RQ3. From the leaders' perspective, what positive impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices?

RQ4. From the leaders' perspective, what negative impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices?

Assumptions and Delimitations

Research Assumptions

This research assumed that human resources code of conduct models incorporate ethical leadership practices. Since the improprieties of some late 20th-century and early 21st-century corporation CEOs, a move to establish ethical guidelines within corporations became more apparent to ensure the ethical treatment of others within business relations. Further, this research

assumed that leaders believed that the code of conduct documents resided within corporate documentation guidelines, and that these documents incorporated ethical practices that helped to define the equal treatment of others. The research assumed that corporate human resources departments typically administered the ethical principles outlined in the corporate code of conduct policies. The research also assumed that all employees, regardless of title or position, followed the code of conduct policy's guidelines and that the human resources departments applied disciplinary actions for code of conduct violations consistently and fairly across the entire employee population.

The research did not assume that all corporate code of conduct policies derived from a standard set of ethical guidelines that support business transactions. The research assumed that corporations developed the code of conduct policies to benefit the corporation and established guidelines for the ethical treatment of others in business practices. How these specific guidelines were developed and what ethical principles provided the basis for the code of conduct policy was not implicit and was included within the focus of this study.

Delimitations of the Research Design

1. This research delimited to fifteen leading national telecommunications Enterprise organization leaders. The fifteen respondents dispersed geographically throughout various operation regions and Service of Excellence centers.
2. The study did not include leaders from the residential services or small business segments.
3. This research delimited to leaders within the Enterprise organization holding the title of Director, Senior Director, or Vice President.
4. The research did not include leaders with higher-level Vice President Titles such as Group Vice President, Senior Vice President, and Executive Vice President.
5. The research did not include lower-level managers below the Director title within any departments maintained in the company.

6. The research delimited to Enterprise leaders residing in regional operations offices, Service of Excellence Centers and the corporate headquarters to gain a geographically disperse perspective on the problem.
7. Due to the size and complexity of the telecommunications industry, the study did not extend to other telecommunications companies' leadership structures. Future studies may isolate additional areas within the telecommunications industry or other industries.

Definition of Terms

1. *Biblical spirituality*: The transformation of the human spirit from a sinful nature to nature more closely emulating the image of God, which is invisible to humanity, has no physical parts or dimensions in the material world, but guides humanity to a perfect existence (Grudem, 1994).
2. *Corporate Code of Conduct Policy*: A policy maintained by a corporation defining ethical practices followed by all company employees. Employees typically are required to acknowledge the acceptance and understanding of the policy annually (Adam & Rachman-Moore, 2004).
3. *Director*: The first level of the executive leadership team responsible for the leadership and management of lower-level managers and supervisors within the business organization (Northouse, 2019).
4. *Enterprise*: Highly functioning corporations, typically employing over 10,000 employees, who purchase multiple levels of telecommunications services from various service providers (Northouse, 2019).
5. *Ethics*: A system of moral principles concerned with the good for individuals and society based upon a specific moral philosophy (Fischer, 2004).
6. *Fiber Optic Service*: Telecommunications services such as voice, video, and internet service transmitted across buried and aerial fiber optic cables from company network facilities to customer venue locations (Dukart, 2000).
7. *Modernistic*: A philosophical movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries seeking to break from the religious teachings of the past and form new ideas of expression through art, music, science, and literature (Kim et al., 2009).
8. *Natural Moral Law*: A code of morality that influences humans' actions and the interaction with other humans dictated by a sense of right and wrong in the way humans treat each other (Fockler, 2016).

9. *Post-Modernistic*: A late 20th-century philosophical movement shifting away from modernism and into a concept that distrusts grand theories, ideologies, and religions while celebrating fragmentation and discontinuity in society (Mambrol, 2018).
10. *Scripture*: God's word delivered through the writings in both the Old and New Testament of the Holy Bible (Grudem, 1994).
11. *Scripture-based Ethics*: Ethical principles grounded in Scripture that influence humans' behavior in the relationship with others driven through spiritual growth and maturity (Proios & Proios, 2014).
12. *Secular*: A state of being separated from religion and grounding beliefs in the physical sciences that can be proven and do not rely upon faith to understand the world (Taylor, 2009).
13. *Senior Director*: The second level of the executive leadership team responsible for the leadership and management of lower-level managers and supervisors within the business organization (Northouse, 2019).
14. *Servant Leadership Theory*: A leadership theory grounded in the practice of serving others first and using that mindset to support the growth of others ahead of oneself (Greenleaf, 1977).
15. *Service Provider*: A company that offers and sells telecommunications products and services to all customer levels supporting voice, video, data, internet, fiber, and complex services products (Valdez-de-Leon, 2016).
16. *Vice President*: The third level of the executive leadership team responsible for the leadership and management of lower-level managers and supervisors within the business organization (Northouse, 2019).

Significance of the Study

The evolution of business throughout the modernistic and post-modernistic eras led to a move away from Scripture-based ethics to secular founded ideas. These secular ideas shifted the leadership focus from serving God to serving the shareholder by developing business to increase profit margins at all costs (Melé & Fontrodona, 2017). Bay et al. (2010) portrayed a modernistic society where business evolved from serving God to amassing large amounts of wealth used to serve humanity's needs alone. It is through this shift to serve money instead of God that business

leaders, driven by secular education focused on profit and loss, chose to use leadership as a forum for self-advancement instead of a way to develop others through followership (Kessler & Kretzschmar, 2015).

The significance of this study highlighted the need to return leadership behavior grounded in Scripture-based ethics to the business community. Specifically, the introduction of Scripture-based ethics that exist in private life should emphasize and integrate into the corporate lives of believers to ensure there is no separation of individual and corporate behavior (Hill, 2017). The study explored modernistic and post-modernistic movements to discount the relationship between corporate ethics and unfounded personal truth (Daniels, Franz, & Wong, 2000). Scripture-based ethics centered upon love for others like Paul describes in detail in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (New International Version Study Bible, 1985) provides timeless examples of leadership attributes defined through the ethical treatment of others where biblical spirituality grows to emulate the image of God (Hoekema, 1994).

Summary of the Design

The methodological design consisted of a phenomenological study based upon servant leadership research first conducted by Greenleaf (1977) and supported by Northouse (2019), Russell and Stone (2002), Spears (2010), and Wallace (2007). The researcher conducted video conference interviews with each of the fifteen respondents and captured field notes to establish behaviors observed while conducting the interviews. This qualitative observation technique (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) equipped the researcher to ask open-ended questions within the interview process to reveal the respondents' behaviors while providing answers within their natural scope of leadership. Prompting questions enhanced the interview flow and allowed the respondents to provide additional insight into the interview process. The design avoided phone

interviews to facilitate body language and facial expression observations only available through face-to-face interaction and only mildly restricted in video conference scenarios.

The purpose of phenomenology research, in general, is to gain an understanding of a particular phenomenon through the study of human experiences that focus on the wholeness of those experiences, not just specific parts (Moustakas, 1994). The need to study human experiences arises from a problem or concern needing exploration through the existing literature. When that void exists because little or no research captures the essence of the phenomenon in question, a qualitative approach strives to solve the problem. Qualitative research becomes useful when researchers do not understand enough about a specific topic to assign quantitative research variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Within the qualitative phenomenology design, researchers study individuals, the settings in which they reside and examine their cultural experiences to determine how life experiences influences the thought process related to the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1994). Through the personal interview process, researchers gain a real-life understanding of society's humanistic impacts upon the respondents and understand how those life experiences affects specific worldviews of residents within the social landscape (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological study allows the researcher to relate to the respondents' experiences and use those experiences to fill gaps within the existing research.

The researcher established a consistent observation protocol before each interview, and the protocol remained constant for subsequent respondents. During the pre-interview stage, the researcher noted the respondent name, title, time of the interview, date, place, and descriptive representation of the interview setting. The interview protocol was established and followed

consistently for all fifteen respondents to ensure the study's integrity. Only the researcher knows the respondents' private data to ensure confidentiality throughout the study.

The data analysis began when the study began, as the researcher took field notes throughout the study to apply codes and identify themes as the interviews progressed. The researcher reviewed the video files multiple times to ensure the accuracy of the field notes regarding the interview timetable. The researcher compared the field notes to the NVIVO transcripts extrapolated from the video files. The NVIVO transcripts provided clarity and analysis for proper code generation and theme consolidation. The researcher interpreted and published the study's findings based upon the theme generation process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

An essential aspect of understanding ethical behavior in leadership requires leaning upon the literature to recognize how one's actions influences others. In Romans 12:2 (NIVSB, 1985), Paul teaches believers to "...not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." The theological literature challenged leaders to implement ethical principles into leadership beyond the confines of human-interpreted ethical principles. God's ethical principles in the very being of humanity ground firmly in the aspect of serving others ahead of oneself. The theoretical literature related to serving others provided additional ethical foundations through Servant Leadership Theory first interpreted by Greenleaf (1977) and later supported by Northouse (2019), Roberts (2013), and Spears (2010). The need to serve others becomes the driving force behind treating others ethically, not for the favor of oneself, but for the advancement and support of others. The related literature aided in developing foundational moral codes that led to responsible leadership through leadership theory (Bennis, 2009; Bryman et al., 2011) and also explored the positive advantages of developing leadership through business education programs (Melé and Fontrodona, 2017). Considering all aspects of the literature revealed a recognizable gap existed between the theories defining Scripture within ethical practices and the process to implement those theories into everyday ethics conversations with leaders.

Theological Framework for the Study

Corporations challenge leaders in today's business world with meeting customer and shareholder expectations, often at the expense of ethical behavior. Since the focus on driving company profit is paramount, the treatment of employees and even customers in some cases

becomes secondary to many corporate executives as they use any means necessary to improve company profits and advance their financial standings. Even with the improprieties of the turn of the century corporate scandals and subsequent financial systems failures, corporate executives continue to worship the power of money instead of using their skills to better others' lives.

Society may ask why corporate executives continue to make decisions suiting their ambitions and not serving their employees' interests. Many executives serve themselves because they lack the training necessary to serve others (Finzel, 2013). Those who fail to understand the importance of placing others' needs first fail to realize the implications of not following Scripture-based ethical principles that focus leadership principles on becoming the servant first and the leader second.

This literature review maintained a firm grounding in a theological framework as that framework is essential to understanding how God's guidance in ethical leadership is necessary to serve others continuously. The theological review captured the essence of building one's spirituality to become closer to God's image and represent Him through leadership principles. The theological review examined scriptural exegesis to determine the ethical guidance maintained within Scripture that leaders might capture to incorporate into business code of conduct practices. Finally, the review dissected ethical principles to determine how those principles developed, what drove the foundational views present within those principles, and how those ethical principles served others' needs ahead of oneself.

Theological Overview

Business leaders must recognize the need to introduce ethical principles into business leadership practices. Without ethical consideration of others, inappropriate behaviors guide the decision-making process, focusing on corporate advancement at the expense of others' ethical

treatment (Northouse, 2019). Nass and Kreuer (2018) described an environment where Scripture-based ethics (NIVSB, 1985, Romans 12:2) play an essential role in developing corporate ethical principles designed to serve others. The research indicated that business leadership ethics developed through the perceived good of the modernistic and post-modernistic eras falls short of the Scripture-driven ethical principles necessary to treat others with respect (Kim et al., 2009). A return to ethical principles motivated by Scripture (NIVSB, 1985, Luke 6:31), where leaders choose to serve others ahead of themselves (Greenleaf, 1977), is necessary to develop leaders who recognize the lack of Scripture-based ethics in the corporate world. Leaders must be willing to recognize the disparity of practices grounded in perceived goodness and revert to ethical principles defined by Scripture and developed to serve God and others (Nass & Kreuer, 2018).

Expanding biblical spirituality is a relatively recent development within the business community. Examining biblical spirituality grounded in high moral fortitude has led businesses to seek principles to advance humanity's good through those higher moral principles (Melé & Fontrodona, 2017). The swing from a business that serves the business's needs to a business that serves the needs of humanity through Scripture (NIVSB, 1985, Matthew 6:24) may require a paradigm shift from executives with little interest in serving others. Since a distinct recognition of Scripture-based ethics is missing in corporate ethics documentation due to political reasons (Melé & Fontrodona, 2017), a gap in the literature was explored to open the dialogue between high morals grounded in biblical spirituality (Grudem, 1994) and perceived high morals grounded in modernist and post-modernist ideas (Kim et al., 2009).

Spirituality

Kapic (2014) explored the distinction between spiritual growth and ethics by examining love and faith. Kapic determined ethics must be included in the sanctification process since

proper sanctification is impossible without a godly code of ethics as a guiding principle toward loving others, an essential ethical behavior element. Kapic's research provided insight into definitions of love through motion and rest, stating that love provides the movement for one's soul while faith provides rest. Through this movement, Christians incorporate God's teachings, relishing His glory through increased spirituality while developing higher ethical behavior levels (NIVSB, 1985, John 13:34-35). Through this higher level of ethical behavior, leaders develop an ability to show love for others as their love for God grows through increased spirituality.

Near the end of his first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul teaches Christians to "Do everything in love" (NIVSB, 1985, 1 Corinthians 16:14). This statement is a precursor to the Apostle John, who goes to great lengths to describe God's love toward humans and the similar love humans should share (NIVSB, 1985, 1 John 4:7-12). When applying love to leadership, Kouzes and Posner (2017, p. 311) quoted U.S. Army Major General John H. Stanford as stating, "I don't know any other fire, any other thing in life that is more exhilarating and is more positive a feeling than love is." The biblical references to love are plentiful (NIVSB, 1985, 1 Peter 4:8, Colossians 3:14, John 15:13), yet feelings of love do not often parallel with military leadership. However, God is the most outstanding leader of all, and His love knows no boundaries (NIVSB, 1985, Romans 8:37-39).

The opposite of showing love for others in the leadership arena exhibits evil intentions with a total disregard for others' well-being. Wray-Bliss (2012) researched the impact of evil influences upon business executives and portrayed how even biblically focused executives can follow the road of temptation and pull further from the final goal of sanctification. Wray-Bliss detailed how the capitalist system's lack of a Godly view elevates profit, material gain, and corporate advancement above the need for values (NIVSB, 1985, Acts 20:35), passion (NIVSB,

1985, Romans 12:10-11), and ethics (NIVSB, 1985, Psalm 25:21). Even though senior executives are faithful, dedication to faith is not enough in many cases to deter the impacts of evil toward the love of money to create and maintain corrupt environments in the business world. Citing Enron executive Kenneth Lay specifically as a Baptist believer, Wray-Bliss (2012) portrayed how the evil of an over-inflated ego and the need to produce more profit for shareholders and the executive team can negatively influence even the most faithful without the constant vigilance of God as guidance. Through God's guidance and the increased development of spirituality, others' advanced ethical treatment development increases the leader's Scripture-based worldview.

Hanna (2006) argued that spiritual leadership is becoming more popular in the business world, evidenced by its leadership literature recognition. Hanna used this basis to describe Christian leadership's attributes as a partnership process leading to a servant leadership style implemented through the interaction with the Holy Spirit. The interaction of the Holy Spirit develops one's skills for serving others and fosters collaboration, trust, and foresight to enhance the entire spiritual growth process eventually. As Paul illustrated in Romans 12:1 (NIVSB, 1985), Christians should offer their bodies as a living sacrifice to bring strength to the servant leadership paradigm, thus allowing leaders to serve and servers to lead.

Hege (2017) drew comparison of Servant Leadership Theory defined by Greenleaf (1977) to Jesus Christ and the way He taught leadership through serving others first. Hege (2017) surmised that servant leadership is not just about serving people but serving God through the interaction with people. Much of Hege's research was devoted to understanding the difference between translations of the word servant in Scripture and showed how one may become lost in the comparison between servant and slave in the biblical text. In Romans, 6:22

(NIVSB, 1985) Paul leads followers toward a realization that being set free from sin alters the human dimension to become slaves of God. The need to follow God and become a slave to Him is not a negative connotation to humanity, but a positive association with God. As humanity realizes the ultimate goal is to bring glory to God, humanity must also recognize the need to serve others brings glory to God. Hege (2017) explained this by leaning heavily on interpreting the words slave and servant and how the two concepts become intertwined when one chooses to serve God as well as humanity.

Kessler and Kretzschmar (2015) examined the need for Christian leadership to enhance ministry further and increase ethical principles within secular organizations. The authors portrayed a cross-functional learning paradigm where Christian principles intersect with secular environments to develop followership. Kessler and Kretzschmar surmised that successful leadership's only requirement is that someone follows. The authors expanded this concept to Christian leadership, citing the leader's need to follow Christ, so one's followers will essentially follow Christ (NIVSB, 1985, John 8:12). To explain Christian leadership's impact upon secular ethical dilemmas, Kessler and Kretzschmar (2015) identified how the Holy Spirit's intervention is essential for leaders to develop a moral foundation. Through this development, leaders advance an understanding of the Holy Spirit's definition of right and wrong instead of secular influences from the corporate world (NIVSB, 1985, John 14:26).

Biblical Worldview

The development of a Scripture-based worldview requires changing one's perception of the world through faith in God (Pearcey, 2005). The high level of faith necessary to resist the temptations of the secular world and grow within Christ is grounded in Scripture (Pettit, 2008) and must be used to resist the temptation of intellectual enlightenment at the expense of faith in

God (Pearcey, 2005). Without faith in God, the path to spiritual formation is an impossible achievement since only through the Holy Spirit's guidance is true sanctification reached, when the journey to join God is accomplished (Pettit, 2008). While the pursuit of spiritual formation is dependent upon God's will to sanctify, it is also dependent upon the Christian's desire to obey God through faith in His teachings actively, maturing to grow further from sin and closer to God (Grudem, 1994). Romans 8:17 (NIVSB, 1985) explains how sanctification begins with sharing in Christ's sufferings. Galatians 2:20 (NIVSB, 1985) takes that concept another step further when the Apostle Paul states, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." Pearcey (2005) links both Scriptures to the need to separate from the secular world before Christians can genuinely experience Christ's resurrection. This concept provides the basis for developing a Scripture-based worldview (NIVSB, 1985, Romans 6:1-23, John 3:16, Matthew 5:29).

Pearcey (2005) cautioned against falling prey to the traps of other worldviews, used as a path to intellectual enlightenment or a means to impress others. Instead, the physical aspects of treating others ethically become a means to not only tell the world but also show the world how a Scripture-based worldview leads to salvation. Pearcey's argument detailed the need to reach beyond the abstract and provide concrete evidence through actions of love, friendship, and genuine goodness witnessed by others in the actions of the Christian's life. If Christians are unwilling to forgo unethical actions within their public lives, their private life and the ability to grow closer to God will suffer.

Chase (2004) suggested that one's personal life Christian worldview does not need to separate from its existence within the secular business realm. Exploring the relationship between Christian ethics grounded in solid biblical values (NIVSB, 1985, Proverbs 19:1) and corporate

ethical principles of human relations based upon an alternate view of the world and oneself, Chase (2004) argued that Christian teaching demands Christians to practice justice and show mercy to all people regardless of their beliefs or religious affiliations. The dynamic becomes complex when secular business practices for ethical guidelines reject Christian ethics without proof. The tendency for corporate businesses to lean toward profitability and less toward human morality is a disturbing trend worthy of exploration. Chase surmised that Christian business leaders should seek corporate-level change to align business ethics practices with Christian principles thoroughly grounded in Scripture (NIVSB, 1985, Matthew 7:12; Colossians 3:23).

Burns, Shoup, Simmons, and Anacker (2014) provided a detailed view of the difference between traditional worldviews and a Christian worldview. The authors presented the argument for Christian leadership and the associated worldview's requirement for a way of life, not just a theological summary. Burns et al. further clarified a Christian worldview into special revelation, God's acts revealing Himself, and general revelation, including general information available to intelligent creatures. Leaning upon Proverbs 21:1 (NIVSB, 1985), Burns et al. (2014) defined the flow of ethical leadership principles as a divine influence upon the leader's heart, predisposed by God. God's influence becomes relevant as Christians communicate with God to grow closer to Him and develop the skills necessary to convey ethical ideas to other humans. While communication with other humans can become complicated, Burns et al. explained its importance in remaining contextual and collaborative to show support and ethical guidance for others while living within the purity specified by a Scripture-based worldview.

Kim et al., (2009) examined the need to identify with a Christian worldview to develop ethical behaviors within secular businesses properly. The authors surmised there is no consensus about ethical behavior within the business community and point to modernistic and post-

modernistic worldviews as guiding principles for business leaders. While these worldviews have historically discounted Christianity, they have inadvertently discounted the ethics that Christianity teaches (NIVSB, 1985, Luke 6:31), thus leaving business leaders a disparate view of the actual truth (NIVSB, 1985, John 14:6). Kim et al. (2009) deducted that the lack of Christian ethics has led to a lack of morals through modernistic worldviews that were void of references to God. The authors surmised that attempts to resolve ethical dilemmas without God result in moral relativism where ethical considerations take a back seat to corporate advancement and individual elevation. Kim et al. (2009) concluded that only through Christian ethics based on Scripture could proper morals develop.

Taking the opposite approach, Kim, McCalman, and Fisher (2012) provided insight into how Christians working within the secular world tend to separate themselves from their beliefs to flourish within the business community. The authors described situations where Christians who wish to develop authentic bonding relationships within the business community often neglect the Christian worldview in favor of a secular worldview, essentially coexisting within two different worlds with two different worldviews. The authors utilized a two-story home analogy to represent Christian views as sacred, remaining on the upper floor, while secular views on science and reason remain on the ground floor. Further examination exemplified upper floor values based on morals and ethics instead of lower floor facts based on knowledge through scientific reason. Kim et al. (2012) argued that the Christian worldview breaks this stereotype by incorporating ethical principles into an otherwise non-ethical worldview environment.

Bay et al. (2010) provided ethical guidance for business by surmising that businesses must introduce ethical guidelines developed over time and not implemented expediently to match business changes. The authors applied a Christian worldview to the development of corporate

ethics and offered the reader the ability to recognize the correlation between the two dynamics. Bay et al. examined changes in five constructs that influence the ethical world of business. Those constructs are the acquisition of wealth, charging of interest, ownership of land, acceptability of trade, and attitude toward work. The authors examined the constructs from a Christian worldview based upon biblical principles and compared the same behaviors to business practices based upon secularism. The research concluded that ethical principles suffer in large businesses when their bottom line is impacted.

Theological Ethical Principles

Proios and Proios (2014) defined Scripture-based ethics as principles grounded in Scripture that influence humans' behavior in relationships with others driven through spiritual growth and maturity. Romans 12:2 (NIVSB, 1985) teaches Christian leaders not to conform to the world's secular teachings but to transform through God. This guiding principle applies to others' ethical treatment, as defined by Luke 6:31 (NIVSB, 1985). How does one apply a Christian worldview to a secular institutional world where modernism and post-modernism drive the ethical applications? Bay et al. (2010) suggested that applying the ethical foundation of a Christian worldview to corporate ethics principles provides a path toward others' ethical treatment. Andersen (2012) suggested that others' ethical treatment begins with character and that institutions judge character as trustworthy, passionate, farsighted, courageous, generous, and wise. Bennis (2009) elaborated on trust as an essential aspect of driving leadership success and surmised that leadership fails without it.

Throughout the modern and postmodern ages, the importance of business has driven the evolution of secular business practices with the ultimate goal of increasing profits (Kim et al., 2009). Ethical problems often arise when the business' needs to meet profit expectations collide

with the very ethical principles that allow the business to exist (Bay et al., 2010). Chase (2004) explored the relationship between the two, applying a biblical perspective to business that is not present within the secularist worldview. Chase surmised that the secular worldview has driven businesses to focus more upon profitability and less upon human morality. This concept is contrary to teachings from Scripture about the love of profit (NIVSB, 1985, Hebrews 13:5, Matthew 6:24, 1 Timothy 6:10) and drives leaders further away from ethical principles (NIVSB, 1985, 1 Corinthians 15:33) and closer to corruption (NIVSB, 1985, Galatians 6:8).

Expanding upon the theory presented by Chase (2004) to incorporate Christian ethics into corporate ethics practices, Hill (2017) uncovered those businesses having strict ethical codes violate those codes more often than those without strict ethical codes do. This analysis lends credence to the concept that one may write the rules based upon Scripture exegesis (NIVSB, 1985, Matthew 7:14), but if leaders are unwilling to implement the measures to enact those rules (NIVSB, 1985, Matthew 5:39), they will fail. Nass and Kreuer (2018) expanded the argument by introducing the idea that the Christian worldview holds a higher standard of ethical guidelines that other worldviews do not possess (NIVSB, 1985, 1 Timothy 4:6). Nass and Kreuer (2018) pointed to the need for humans to live up to the expectation of the perfection of God's image (NIVSB, 1985, Matthew 5:48) and suggested that corporate ethical practices should reflect that principle.

Theological Summary

The theological literature examination explored how God guides leaders to follow what represents a proper way to treat others. The literature review sought to understand the guiding principles necessary to build a higher level of spirituality to incorporate ethical practices grounded in Scripture into the corporate workplace. To serve others, ethical principles grounded

in Scripture explore pursuing a servant leadership mindset that will allow business executives to place others' needs first. The theoretical literature review section further supported that foundational view.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Servant Leadership Theory is a popular concept among recent leadership theorists that places the follower's needs ahead of the leader's needs. This concept creates a paradox as it runs counter to previously developed theories and even defies common sense (Northouse, 2019). It is a concept focused upon the leader's behaviors and more specifically focused on how those behaviors influence the followers by providing followers with a sense of empowerment to become leaders themselves. The supporting literature defines essential characteristics of the theory, although there is some conjecture among scholars which characteristics to include and which characteristics to omit. While the theory contains undeniable bonds with Scripture (NIVSB, 1985, Mark 9:35), Robert Greenleaf (1977), the original author of the concept, developed the theory not through a Christian worldview but as a model to provide service to others through institutions forged in business, education, and religion.

The theoretical literature review focused on Servant Leadership Theory as the leadership philosophy most conducive to introducing ethical principles into the business. The literature review's focus was to define servant leadership characteristics associated with the theory to correlate those characteristics with the foundational aspect of serving others ethically. Additionally, the theoretical literature review examined the impact of a Christian worldview upon leadership behavior within the corporate environment. The review linked several characteristics of a Christian worldview with servant leadership to drive proper business ethics in a secular environment. The theoretical literature also examined the impact of Christian education

upon secular society and evaluated how education influences ethical business practices as leaders learn to support others' development and advancement.

Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf (1977), a former corporate executive, took a risk by introducing the servant leadership model to the corporate world. The author recognized the idea of becoming a servant first, and using those skills to serve others through leadership would not be a popular one initially. By defining servant leadership as taking the care to place others' needs first, Greenleaf brought about a paradigm shift from leadership models built on the ability to develop a leadership philosophy focused on the desire to serve. Greenleaf started with the skill to listen and understand. The author concluded that most leaders possess these skills but fail to use them within established leadership practices. While too many leaders emphasize the need to expand success, neglect of the follower is usually the cost of that advancement. In this groundbreaking concept, Greenleaf leaned upon several years at the executive level to highlight the shortcomings of the status quo and branch out the differential aspects of serving others through leadership.

Greenleaf (1977) presented a foundational study on servant leadership that led to multiple authors' reinterpretation of the theory. The literature challenges leaders in business, education, and ministry with putting others' needs first and relaying that concept to other team members. Greenleaf drew from a long career in the telecommunications industry, where he developed management and leadership training for executives. A large portion of that training instructed leaders on building teams, not for the leader's benefit but for the team's benefit. Greenleaf did not relate servant leadership to Christianity specifically because he believed the concept transmits across multiple religious and non-religious organizations and did not want the theory to sectionalize to a specific worldview. Consequently, servant leadership defines the Christian

worldview based upon serving others (NIVSB, 1985, Philippians 1:5-7, Luke 22:26, Galatians 5:13), and the basis of ethical business practices resides within the parameters of the theory.

One weakness of Servant Leadership Theory defined by Greenleaf (1977) is that the theory does not have an agreed-upon set of ethical attributes associated with the theory (Northouse, 2019). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) examined the work of Greenleaf (1977) and Spears (1998) to categorize the theory into five relational factors: wisdom, altruism, persuasion, stewardship, and healing. Van Dierendonck (2011) identified a six characteristic model of elements essential for servant leadership. In addition to stewardship defined by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) and Spears (1998), Van Dierendonck (2011) added authenticity, people development, humility, acceptance, and direction. Northouse (2019) argued that servant leadership requires altruism as the central component of the theoretical structure. Northouse also argued that the use of influence or power is an essential aspect of the theory but in the inverse of using it in other leadership forms. Servant leaders diminish power and delegate that power to followers for follower advancement, not the leaders' advancement.

Northouse (2019) illustrated servant leadership as one of the fastest-growing leadership theories in the business community and expounded on the view of followership as it relates to servant leadership. Parris and Peachey (2013) agreed to the accelerated implementation of the theory but cautioned against the ability to measure the theory's outcome precisely. Northouse (2019) explained how leadership is nonexistent without followers and that the best followers typically make some of the best leaders. As followership relates to servant leadership, the servant leader realizes what following entails and molds those thoughts and actions into a paradigm that supports individual development, not just directing achievement. Northouse surmised that

impactful leadership is dependent upon progressive followership, leading to successful servant leadership.

Spears (1998) listed ten essential attributes of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to people's growth, and the building of community. Spears (2010) later admitted that the list is "...by no means exhaustive..." (p.29), but that the essential characteristics of the theory "...communicate the power and promise that this concept offers to those who are open to its invitation and challenge" (p. 29). Russell and Stone (2002) surmised that the overall supporting servant leadership literature reveals no less than 20 attributes. To the original Spears (1998) attribute list, Russell and Stone (2002) added another eleven and reclassified all 20 attributes as either functional attributes or accompanying attributes. Parris and Peachey (2013) surmised that while Russell and Stone (2002) developed a servant leadership model for practical application, the model lacks a firm methodology.

What attributes are essential for leaders and followers to possess to equip themselves with the ability to serve others successfully? Greenleaf (1977) began with listening and understanding. The ability to listen to others builds confidence in the leader and brings forth strength from other people. Anderson (2013) likened this listening ability to a teacher in a classroom. The teacher cannot possibly understand the students' needs unless they prove they possess the ability to listen. As leaders grow the ability to listen, they also perfect the ability to understand their followers' needs. Greenleaf (1977) believed this happens through welcoming silence. While some may find silence awkward, Greenleaf taught that silence should be welcomed and provides a calming impact for the followers to recognize, similar to a shepherd and a flock of sheep (NIVSB, 1985, Psalm 23: 1-6).

Greenleaf (1977) further detailed the use of language and imagination within Servant Leadership Theory by surmising new experiences become meaningful for the follower when those experiences relate to former experiences. Roberts (2013) deducted that leaders can share those experiences through Servant Leadership Workplace Spiritual Intelligence (SLWSI). Through the SLWSI concept, leaders emphasize key character elements such as forgiveness, faith, integrity, empowerment, patience, and humility. Greenleaf (1977) argued that these same vital attributes are included in the language and imagination element, steering the leader toward acceptance and empathy. Greenleaf argued that through acceptance and empathy, leaders realize no humans are perfect; therefore, to achieve greatness, the servant leader must serve others' needs ahead of oneself. That level of service leads to a greater understanding of ethical principles and allows the leader the flexibility to apply those principles into practice (Parris and Peachey 2013).

Attribute Analysis

Examining servant leadership through the lenses of a scriptural perspective revealed that the 20 attributes from Russel and Stone (2002) tied to Scripture in various ways (NIVSB, 1985, Proverbs 3:5, James 1:9, 2 Corinthians 8:21). However, examining Wallace (2007) and applying the original ten attributes and how they link into a specific worldview was prudent for this study. Wallace compared the original ten attributes with eight components of a worldview. The components: stewardship, power, justice, compassion, personal responsibility, human dignity, character, and community highlighted the challenges of attaching these principles to the ethical values present within a specific worldview.

Stewardship

From the eight components, community and stewardship reside within both the eight components of a biblical worldview and servant leadership's ten attributes. Wallace (2007) states that humans are challenged to care for God's creation. Through personal skill development, management of the environment, serving the less fortunate, and managing social systems to improve the world in which God has entrusted humanity, humans can provide for each other, not just from a monetary sense but through a sense of service to others (Spears 2010). Enderle (1997) expanded on stewardship by linking humanity's responsibility to care for God's creation and implied that humans are ethically responsible to ensure stewardship. Enderle argued that stewardship flows beyond the environment and includes economic implications that tie back to ethical challenges. Enderle challenged leaders to serve the environment in addition to serving others by proactively managing environmental and ethical policy.

Power

The power component from Wallace's (2007) defined biblical worldview is unique in comparison to servant leadership attributes in that all ten attributes are compatible with the power component. Wallace highlighted that Scripture's recurring power theme is to share power and use power for good, not amassing power for misleading or manipulation. The power theme aligns with Greenleaf (1977) and Northouse (2019) and the notion that power should relinquish to the followers, not serve as an avenue for self-elevation. Wallace (2007) further argued that power should be available to all followers to use as a means for dream realization, but only if those dreams interact with ethical guidelines enabled for others' betterment. An examination of Raven (1993) and the five forms of power: legitimate, reward, expert, referent, and coercive, is relevant to the study of power related to servant leadership. Within the servant leadership

paradigm, referent power bridges the gap between Wallace (2007) and Raven (1993) as referent power provides the most logical similarity to servant leadership.

Justice

Wallace (2007) viewed the justice component as necessary for the disregarded, alienated, and oppressed people within the Scriptures. God holds all humans to the same standard and does not discriminate against any (NIVSB, 1985, Galatians 3:28, Romans 2:11), but humanity is not as forgiving as God is. Humans do not always serve the better good nor treat others with the respect they deserve. Wallace (2007) defined this concept as procedural justice. As one identifies commutative justice in Scripture (NIVSB, 1985, Exodus 22:3, Luke 19:8), Wallace (2007, p.122) defined it as "...the fair exchange of goods and the conducting of business." This concept holds a special meaning for servant leadership, as Greenleaf (1977) first developed the concept after a thirty-eight-year career in one of the largest companies in the world at the time. If service through justice applies successfully in that situation, it may also apply to most leadership challenges (Roberts, 2013). Conversely, a community's concept of justice may expose the strengths and weaknesses of the community and its leaders through distributive justice, or sharing of society's wealth (Wallace, 2007).

Human Dignity

Wallace (2007) surmised that although none is worthy (NIVSB, 1985, Romans 3:23), all people have worth, and that worth is valued beyond all levels of damage or hopelessness residing within the individual's psyche. Wallace surmised that an individual's level of dignity is directly proportionate to the amount of respect shown to that person by one's leaders. Without the positive interaction from leader to follower, people lose the right to shape their destiny, often at the expense of their integrity. God views humans as having worth because God created humans

in His image (NIVSB, 1985, Genesis 1:27), an image perfect and unchanged by sin (Hoekema, 1994). Sin, however, does present a negative component to the existence of humanity within God's image. Without the renouncement of sin and humanity's willingness to step away from a sinful life to follow God, sanctification is not possible (Grudem, 1994). While God makes all things possible (NIVSB, 1985, Matthew 19:26), the sinful nature of humans, (NIVSB, 1985, Jeremiah 17:9) damages human dignity and drives humanity toward destruction. That level of destruction sometimes embraces the secular teachings of a corporate world embroiled in ethical teachings based on socially constructed law and determined outside of Scripture (Wallace, 2007).

Compassion and Personal Responsibility

Wallace (2007, p.121) stated, "Dignity produces a sense of personal responsibility." Through this personal responsibility, humans own the challenge to take responsibility for their actions. When an individual's dignity suffers damage or is challenged by unethical practices or teachings, that individual may deny responsibility for their actions, seek to blame others for the challenges they face, and refuse to show compassion to those in need. Wallace (2007) highlighted how God is committed to others' well-being and wants His leaders to show compassion for others by highlighting how God holds even kings accountable in Jeremiah 22:15-19 (NIVSB, 1985). If compassion is a pre-requisite for becoming a king in the biblical narrative, it is essential for becoming a leader within the secular world. Through the use of compassion, leaders are held accountable for restoring community fellowship, removing oppression, and ensuring community members are not "...excluded, devalued, or merely forgotten" (Wallace, 2007, p.122).

Character

Wallace (2007, p. 121) stated, “Character focuses on the necessity to not only do good but to be good.” So how is the sinful nature of humanity capable of performing good deeds? Through the love endowed upon humanity by the Holy Spirit, positive character attributes such as kindness, joy, patience, and trust are possible (Wallace, 2007). As those and many other character attributes are applied through learning to serve others (Spears, 2010), humanity builds character through forgiveness, trustworthiness, truthfulness, and courage to become capable of living a life worthy of being created in the image of God (Finch, 2007). These attributes contribute to a leader’s ability to recognize character flaws requiring correction in how leaders conduct business in the community. Lencioni (2016) wrote that character is built upon an individual's hunger to do more for others, the humility to place others' needs first, and the people smarts to understand how one's actions impact the lives of others. Applying these aspects of character building to the servant leadership concept drives personal relationship improvements between leaders, followers, and peer interactions.

Community

All of the ten attributes of servant leadership defined by Spears (1998) and refined by Russell and Stone (2002) lead humanity to become a community where the needs of the many are satisfied through individual relationships with each other (Wallace, 2007). Through service to others, communities become stronger (Greenleaf, 1977), as individual leaders recognize the community’s power and seek to build robust bonds between individuals through the institutions that they serve (Spears, 2010). The true definition of a community is where individuals strive to bear the burdens of another and offer encouragement to those unable to lift themselves to higher levels (Greenleaf, 1977). Leaders must strive to emphasize individuals' needs to represent

continuity within the community, but not at the community's expense as a whole (Wallace, 2007). Wallace surmised that as communities develop ethically together to support one another that level of support and mutual concern bleeds over into the business world where companies form communities, and communities thrive through the business's support. Linking the two together as a support mechanism is essential to maintain a form of unity. This form of unity is where the concept of community thrives.

Ethical Education

Anderson (2013) exemplified teachers' importance to become stewards both inwardly by developing themselves and outwardly by developing their students. Through stewardship, teachers challenge students to emulate the servant by introducing servant leadership principles into their teaching methodology. Anderson performed a comprehensive study on servant leadership's impacts through a Christian worldview and its influence upon educational leaders. Anderson highlighted the ten essential properties of servant leadership previously detailed by Spears (2010), but Anderson (2013) took the concept further by developing the conceptual framework for servant leadership in education. Leaning upon Spears' (2010) ten essential properties, Anderson (2013) defined five principles consistent with a Christian worldview that highlight servant leadership. The five principles are the institution of a Christian worldview, becoming a reflective practitioner, developing subject matter expertise, facilitating student learning through understanding and practical teaching, and using the ten fundamental properties to establish collaborative relationships.

The first of Anderson's (2013) five principles characterize a Christian worldview based upon integrity and compassion to provide a robust moral framework for education. Anderson highlighted a curriculum of care needed to combat the decreasing morality in a society that is

damaging education in character. Anderson highlighted Scripture to build student character through the Great Commandment (NIVSB, 1985, Matthew 22:37-40) and teaching students to live up to the image of God (Hoekema, 1994) by demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit (NIVSB, 1985, Galatians 5:22-23). As integrity and compassion grow, the educator's character also grows through a willingness to serve others (Anderson, 2013).

Anderson's (2013) second principle is that educational servant-leaders are reflective practitioners. This education aspect asks educators to reflect upon how they teach and interact with students and how that interaction reflects in the students' actions. Anderson surmised that as students become more aware of learning through service, they naturally provide service for others as servant-leaders themselves. Critical reflection also enables the servant-leader educator to advance their knowledge level as they continue to compare servant leadership education to a Christian worldview.

Anderson's (2013) third principle challenges servant-leader educators to become knowledgeable and competent in the subject matter, to the point of becoming a subject matter expert. With the expertise in a particular subject, the instructor's level of knowledge minimizes the instructional challenges and the ability to transfer that knowledge to students while serving their needs. As Paul became many things to many people to help educate them (NIVSB, 1985, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23), servant leaders must master the content to provide the understanding and help students "...assimilate new ideas" (Anderson, 2013, p. 6).

Principle number four challenges servant leader teachers to understand how students learn and develop skills to facilitate effective teaching (Anderson, 2013). Servant leaders should view themselves not just as dispensers of knowledge but also as facilitators of the learning process. Teachers must adapt to each student's learning progression and abilities and elevate

their service level to ensure students grasp the material's concepts as a learning experience, not merely memorizing data points. According to Anderson, facilitating effective learning creates a positive learning environment that provides a physical sense of security necessary to foster community love through the classroom.

The final principle delivered by Anderson (2013) is the importance of establishing a collaborative relationship through servant leader education. The concepts of love and community building require servant leader educators to understand students' family and community challenges to work cooperatively with families to advance student growth through those communities (Anderson, 2013). Anderson surmised that team teaching is a critical aspect of student development and that parent and community leaders must incorporate the team-teaching approach. Learning at home and in the community becomes equally essential to developing a servant-leader attitude to help others in society.

While Anderson's (2013) five principles explored servant leadership education from a Christian worldview perspective, Hull (2003) wrote to explain the difference between Christian education based upon biblical principles and secular education based upon truths perceived by humanity through scientific analysis. Hull drew an understanding between the two camps; realizing political forces drive much of the conversation and develop a correlation between the two that offer a workable solution. Hull surmised in a world driven by secular interaction between student and teacher; state mandates prohibit the direct teaching of religious principles in public schools. However, Hull offered the solution of teaching through direct transfer of knowledge and teaching through positive interaction between teacher and learner. Hull believes the moral foundation derived from biblical principles may be enough to initiate Christian-like behavior in a secular taught environment. Hull further examined the aspect of making subtle

changes to curriculum and curriculum delivery, instead of radical disruption, which leads to dissension. These simple changes drive learners to incorporate ethical practices into leadership that may not be present in secular business education focused more on profit and loss than others' ethical treatment.

Baker (2019) presented a compelling argument that education and religion, while historically aligned in a combative paradox due to the secularization of the educational system, complement each other. The secular move of education to base higher learning solely upon science and social science has left the educational system pondering the why of reality as much as the how of reality. Within this paradox, while striving to separate itself from God, the educational system finds God's meaning more imperative than before, even though the apparent move is toward further secularization. Baker examined the affinity argument to establish that the educational system's secularization and further development of the foundational religious system can and do coexist. Baker found that the higher educated congregation in today's heavily churchd society drives for further education and drives for education through a Christian worldview at the same time. The development of that Christian worldview drives ethical education to elevate the well-being of others. As leaders continue to embrace the positive aspects of ethical education housed within all forms of education, the business world will evolve into an environment focused upon serving others first through sound ethical practices and applying those practices to develop positive leadership (Spears, 2010).

Theoretical Summary

A large portion of the review was devoted to implementing the concepts of Servant Leadership Theory, first introduced by Greenleaf (1977), expanded by Spears (1998) and Russel and Stone (2002), and dissected by Northouse (2019), Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), and Van

Dierendonck (2011). Further examination of servant leadership led to an analysis of the theory's critical attributes as they apply to a Christian worldview and others' ethical treatment (Wallace, 2007). Finally, the theoretical review explored the implications of leadership education from a secular and Christian worldview, evaluating the impacts of education upon the ethical thought process, and comparing the results between secular focused education and a Christian worldview.

Related Literature

The literature availability for corporate business models, responsible leadership, profit and loss management, code of conduct, and ethical practices within the business world is plentiful. Northouse (2019) explicitly conducted an exhaustive search of various leadership practices and theory, detailing each application's strengths and weaknesses while specifying the applications where each applies. Kim et al. (2009) established comparisons to modernism and post-modernism in the corporate world and guided leaders to avoid non-believing generations' pitfalls in business. De Pree (2011), Bennis (2009), and Bryman et al. (2011) provided leadership models based upon serving others and serving the needs of the business. Voegtlin, Patzer, and Scherer (2012) explored leadership in a global environment where cultural differences reflect the ethical impacts of those cultures.

This study's challenge was to dissect the competing secular business model views and evaluate the precedent literature for developing the code of conduct documentation in the corporate world. The question arose of what moral code these foundational views are based on and how that moral code stacks against one established within a Christian worldview. Grudem (1994) stated that all humans are born with some inclination of God's moral law. While Fockler (2016) described an innate moral sense resident within humanity, Grassl and Habisch (2011)

explored business ethics from an economic perspective. Research conducted by Wong and Rae (2011) highlighted how business thrives for humanity's benefit, but that benefit flourishes through a Christian worldview.

As the march toward others' ethical treatment in the business community continues to gain traction, the aspects of what constitutes ethical treatment, remain in question. Examination of the related literature focused upon defining and developing responsible leadership. As responsible leadership follows a model meant to advance the follower's position (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1998), those models must also be cognizant of the requirement to treat others ethically in business (Hill, 2017). Without a comprehensive understanding of ethical principles, leaders fall short of treating others amicably and waste valuable human resources (Grassl and Habisch, 2011). The related literature review also ascertained the importance of leadership development through training with a mindset toward others' ethical treatment. Finally, the related literature review explored the importance of communication as a foundation for leadership, incorporation of ethical principles, and a roadmap for developing future leaders that continue to act ethically toward others.

Responsible Leadership

Bennis (2009) defined desirable and undesirable leadership traits while examining several United States Presidents from the twentieth century, as well as unpopular CEO's who became bosses instead of leaders. Bennis provided detail to define the difference between a leader and a manager and signaled that sound leadership is necessary at all levels of management, not just at the executive levels. Toor (2011) offered similar comparisons stating that leaders inspire others to do work while managers tell others what to do. Toor also stated that leaders are future planners, while managers are doers within the present. Lunenburg (2011) believed both are

essential to a healthy workplace and defined leaders as individuals who challenge the status quo while managers develop and maintain a smooth operating workplace. Bennis (2009) provided insight into leadership importance and development by knowing oneself, and understanding the world and its challenges. Bennis further explained that responsible leadership development resides in resolving conflicts and the instituted ethical practices to resolve those conflicts. Bennis' research defined trust, stating the need to earn trust through constancy, congruity, reliability, and integrity. Trust is the basis of others' ethical treatment and the foundation for responsible leadership (Lencioni, 2002).

Bryman et al. (2011) explored the advancements of leadership studies through the eyes of different authors. Like Northouse (2019), Bryman et al. (2011) examined various types of leadership theory and explored the roles of gender bias, strategic leadership, and organizational theory in the business world. The editors ventured into psychological leadership perspectives by exploring creativity, innovation, and psychoanalytical approaches to leadership. Leaning upon previous works by Greenleaf (1977) and Spears (2010), Bryman et al. (2011) examined advantages of emerging leadership perspectives such as followership, servant leadership, and leading in a virtual environment where leaders and followers separate geographically. Bryman et al. provided insight into the emotional intelligence required of leaders in the virtual world and how that knowledge contributes to building future organizations dedicated to remote workers' success and leadership development through the virtual world where face-to-face interaction and performance monitoring yield to trust of employees to remain productive in a remote environment.

De Pree (2011) defined the artful leader as a leader from first to last, while also becoming a servant, bearing the organization's pain and accepting its failures and challenges, not just

celebrating its success. De Pree further defined the servant leader's responsibility as one who develops the leaders of the future to ensure the covenant within the organization maintains as those new leaders are developed. Similar to how Craft, Foubert, and Lane (2011) integrated Christian and professional aspects of life into education, De Pree (2011) integrated the values represented in a Christian worldview into a corporate world that often discounts those views. De Pree wrote about the need for a leader to guide with respect, understand the impacts of beliefs upon company policy, and understand the impact of relationships upon the business. De Pree further illustrated the relationship aspect by presenting eight essential attributes affecting relationships: understanding, involvement, needs, agreements, destiny, accountability, appeal, and commitment. These attributes contribute to the importance of ownership, communication, and trust as one strives to develop leadership conducive to serving others (Spears, 2010).

Sanders (2017) provided details about the eight essential qualities a leader must possess: discipline, vision, wisdom, decision, courage, humility, integrity, and sincerity. Discipline applies first and is essential to all other qualities for leaders. While examining vision, Sanders described the leader's ability to use both foresight and insight to look ahead and determine how policies will affect future generations. Those policies, instituted as corporate guidelines toward leading others, mold the development of leaders who embrace the organization's ethical vision. However, the existence of that ethical vision is not guaranteed when leaders follow guidelines that reside outside of ethical boundaries (Proios and Proios, 2014). Sanders (2017) described insight into the heart of issues, where knowledge turns to wisdom by the Holy Spirit's involvement, a concept not shared by secular business leaders (Early, 2006). Utilizing wisdom, Sanders (2017) painted a picture of a confident leader who is unafraid of tough decisions and uses courage to face those tough decisions, even when the outcome is less than desirable. Similar

to how Lencioni (2016) described humility as one of the essential attributes of a team player, Sanders (2017) highlighted how humility allows leaders to develop and achieve greatness by proving the worth of others ahead of themselves (Greenleaf, 1977). One final aspect of Sanders' (2017) roadmap to leadership development lies in examining integrity and sincerity together. The exploration details how these two qualities are some of the most important to a successful leader. Each leader must be loyal, faithful, upright, and honest; all of which lead to a greater degree of sincerity with impeccable credibility gained through integrity (Andersen, 2012).

Business Ethics

Fischer (2004) defined ethics as a moral principle system concerned with individuals' and societies' good based upon a specific moral philosophy. Hollinger (2010) wrote of Christian leaders' need to consider values within the leadership structure. Hollinger stated that values influence Christian beliefs and determine one's foundational beliefs, even to the point of affecting spirituality as one strives to understand the difference between good and evil fully. Wong and Rae (2011) highlighted similar aspects of leaders who strive to accomplish moral behavior within the workplace. The literature's challenge as an essential focus of this study was determining the difference between good and evil from a Christian perspective and a secular perspective (Proios and Proios, 2014) and deciding how the two views can coexist together. Hollinger (2010) explained how contradictory views away from Christianity are detrimental to a proper value system and exemplified Christians' need to remain servant-minded to live through the truth delivered in Scripture by developing servant leadership attributes and incorporating those attributes into leadership practices. Taylor (2009) and Fockler (2016) argued that the lines are not simple to draw.

Chase (2004) surmised that Christians often live dual lifestyles where Christian ethical values are lived at home, but secular ethical values reside at work. The shift from the compartmentation of Christian life from business life occurs by leveraging the common ground between the pluralistic societies (Enderle, 1997). The challenge becomes evident when attempting to evaluate where the commonalities lie between the two opposing views. Christians are challenged to love each other (NIVSB, 1985, John 13:34) and sacrifice wealth for the poor (NIVSB, 1985, Proverbs 28:27), but those principles are not held with the same regard in the secular business world where profit margins take precedence over fulfilling the needs of others (Enderle, 1997). Chase (2004) argued that Scripture-based ethics teachings survive independent of traditional profit and loss limitations, where the requirement to serve others outweighs the need to build personal wealth. Enderle (1997) surmised that the love for wealth trumps the need for some executives to act ethically, choosing to follow materialistic passions driven by greed and ignoring the underlying ethical motivations presented by God for all of humanity to follow.

Today's economic impacts have changed the humanistic landscape of how the business community reacts to ethical considerations. Rossouw (1994) introduced a hypothetical scenario where an airplane flies over a mystical city from medieval times where cathedrals dominated the landscape. That same plane then flies over the same city in the modern era where the tall business buildings dominate the same landscape, diminishing the cathedral's impact in the landscape. It is essential to realize the cathedral still exists within that landscape, although at a less distinguishable presence. That same non-physical scenario applies to the domination of Christian ethics in the business world. The Rossouw scenario applies to the impact of Christian ethics on business where the ethics are there, in the background, but dominated by the landscape

of other priorities within the business community. Christians must embrace the challenge to reveal those ethics and bring them forward within a secular business world.

How is that challenge overcome? How is the church, realizing it is no longer the dominant player in the reality of business that it once was in the Middle Ages (Rossouw, 1994), able to influence the business community as an acceptable resolution to ethical problems in business? The path to that reality lies in applying Scripture-based foundations within the corporate world (Grassl & Hasbisch, 2011). The ethical dilemma in business does not typically lie in business professionals' ability to know the difference between right and wrong. The dilemma occurs when business leaders choose the less than ethical path. Rossouw (1994) likened this response to the inability to maintain a Christian understanding of reality.

Similar to the development of the Christian worldview represented by Kim et al. (2012), Rossouw (1994) pointed to the need for Christians to intermingle the morality, reality, and identity of the workplace with the same justice, love, and kindness of the Christian lifestyle outside of the workplace. It is only through this intertwining of the two differential worldviews where real Christian ethics can be introduced into the global marketplace dominated by businesses (Voegtlin, Patzer, & Scherer, 2012) but allows the church to participate (Grassl & Hasbisch, 2011). Through this allowance, Christians must insert the Christian worldview without transforming to the modernistic worldview (NIVSB, 1985, Romans 12:2) and introduce real impact to ethical considerations in business without compromising the principles inherent within the Christian worldview. By interpreting moral content and structure to discern the characteristics of specific worldviews, Christians develop a sense of ethical consciousness that provides self-awareness of ethical actions necessary to build ethically transformed teams (Ledbetter, Banks, & Greenhalgh, 2016).

Leadership Development and Training

Not all hope for a morally based leadership education should be lost, at least not yet. Jeynes (2009) discovered that college students with a high level of biblical knowledge received higher test scores and held higher grade point averages (GPAs) than those with limited biblical knowledge. This finding suggests real educational knowledge does not rely just upon scientific study but also upon theological prowess. Craft, Foubert, and Lane (2011) supported this argument by deducing the spiritual component gives rise to developing better-defined questions for finding improved ways of doing things within the world and ultimately making a different world. Society challenges higher education with doing just that, educating humans to make a difference in the world through ethical behavior, not just to accept the world as is without challenge (Hotam & Wexler, 2014). Corporate executives should seek knowledge-based ethics and servant leadership attributes, avoiding secular derailments to ensure they are molding their leadership style toward one that serves others more than it serves themselves (Daniels et al., 2000).

In the absence of the ability to attribute credit to the biblical calling for servant leadership, the secular educational world has recognized the need for business education majors to study corporate ethics and develop the need to serve others. This revelation bridged the gap between religiousness and secularity, even if the secularist believes the values originate from the secular world instead of Scripture (Seo, 2014). Melé and Fontrodona (2017) introduced a study to discover the impact Christian spirituality has on business organizations and expressed the need for business executives to serve humanity through wealth but not living for that wealth. Melé and Fontrodona deduced that while leaders have incorporated Christian ethics into secular business mindsets, Christian spirituality has not been. Bryman et al. (2011) set expectations for ethical

leaders to avoid the dark side of leadership by understanding how to do the right things for the right reasons. Melé and Fontrodona (2017) noted an increased effort through focus groups to integrate Christian ethics and spirituality into leadership models, not just accept secular university teachings' status quo. Melé and Fontrodona highlighted the notion that undergraduate business college students are leaving school with a profound sense of technical acumen and business theory but do not have the specific leadership training to handle ethical issues in the workplace. An increased focus on Christian spirituality teaching helps bridge that gap by developing leadership education focused on higher principles instead of higher profits.

McMahone, Locke, and Roller (2015) investigated the difference between modern views of Christian business faculty members and postmodern Christian business students' views. The authors first dissected the differences between modern and postmodern thinking, settling on the differences being primarily epistemology, not one of theology. McMahon et al. interpreted faith differences with the postmodern student not as foundational as believing or not believing in God, but how that belief influences their daily lives and the ethical activities associated with that belief. The authors also discovered the need for postmodern believers to incorporate different cultures into their views, not merely relying upon the modern approach to worship stipulated within denominational institutions within the United States. McMahon et al. utilized the postmodern believers' analytical knowledge to apply revolutionary teaching principles to Christian business students. The authors pointed out a movement was established to develop postmodern Christians into believers of truth through ethical actions incorporated into the business world, not just because modern thinking dictates the revision, but because the frequency of changing worldviews remains an urgent matter.

As the public education system took shape in the early to mid-nineteenth century, anti-religious movements began to emerge within the public school setting. Horace Mann, considered by many to be the father of the public school system, determined that public education should be non-sectarian, even though he approved readings from the King James Bible (Knight, 2006). Through the incorporation of Darwinism, pragmatism, the social experiments and sexual revolution of the 1960s (Anthony & Benson, 2011), and Supreme Court rulings against prayer and Bible reading in public schools (Knight, 2006), teaching within the United States public education system became increasingly secular. With the subsequent move to secular teaching, the level of moral integrity and ethical instruction has suffered (Hull, 2003). In turn, this shift has led to unethical behavior by some adults brought up through the public school system, where the secular system views religious ideals as too dangerous and private for public institutions to comprehend (Copley, 2008).

In a study to prove the essential elements of ethical leadership, Hollinger (2010) surmised that values develop to drive Christian and even foundational beliefs. Those foundational beliefs suffer through a system landing on the wrong side of truth due to secular teachings. Without moral judgment integration into the most common teaching systems, the secular society's influence will negatively affect the shaping of children into adult-hood, even if Christians do not realize the impact of the secular education (Pike, 2004).

As secular teachings become detached from the truth, based solely upon what the world believes is provable science, the learned community continues to fall further and further away from Christian values. Those same Christian values that provided the basis for much of the early education system now face resistance as being discriminatory. In evidence of the wrongful persecution of the Christian faith and education, Blumenfeld (2006) wrote, "Norms of Christian

privilege and marginalization of members of other faith communities and non-believers in the schools are conveyed by curricular materials (curricular hegemony), which focus upon heroes, holidays, traditions, accomplishments, and the importance of a European-heritage Christian experience." While Blumenfeld held a systematic anti-Christian view of acceptable educational guidelines, Knight (2006) presented the opposing view where religious rights in general, not just Christian, are infringed upon by the public school system, limiting impartiality to non-believers as opposed to believers.

The lens of secularism has clouded the portrayal of truth. Hatred for Christian ideals, based upon faith instead of what scientists believe to be facts, drives a post-modernistic view within education where everyone may believe what they choose to believe and all will be right with the world (Baker, 2019). Since religious ideals may positively affect educational performance through rule-abiding behavior (Autiero, 2018), the real problem with the post-modernistic view is the definition of truth is lacking, leaving only perceived truth. Humans perceive this truth as real fact, even though it has no basis in facts. This lacking of absolute fact leads to the development of unethical behavior through education suited for pursuing one's ambitions instead of seeking the advancement and progression of others' well-being (Anderson, 2013).

Without truth, there is no understanding of reality, and without reality, there is no understanding of the need to serve others (Seo, 2014). Studies by LeBlanc and Slaughter (2012) showed that fifty percent of Christian students at public universities have abandoned their faith, and two-thirds of students at private universities have done the same before graduation due to secular teachings. With these alarming statistics about secular educational impact, it is easily understood why executives fail to realize the implications of serving themselves first, leading

their organizations to failure through conflict and further acts of unethical behavior by subordinates.

Communications

Understanding the problem and implementing the solution to that problem are two very different tasks. Grassl and Hasbisch (2011), Kim et al. (2012), and Rossouw (1994) all distinguished the importance of understanding a Christian worldview to implement Christian-based ethics into the workplace. However, how does one accomplish that transformation? Positive and complete communications are the key. Ruffner (2016) argued this point and highlighted the Holy Trinity as the ultimate example of positive communication. Ruffner (2016, p. 55) stated that "...the members of the Trinity exist in a perpetual plurality of one; communication occurs transparently and effortlessly." In this model, all entities are equal and represent a parallel voice where no one part is greater than the whole. The communication is seamless because of this equality, where the consideration of others becomes paramount to the cohesiveness of the entire organization.

Although pale in comparison to the Trinity, transparent human communication, supported by authentic dialogue, maintains unity and community interconnection between all team members, promoting ethical behavior (Ruffner, 2016). Through authentic dialogue prescribed by Scripture (NIVSB, 1985, Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:15; Proverbs 10:19), Christians can bridge the gap between corporate communications lacking substance to interject positive discussions that support the advancement and growth of others. Through these interactive discussions, Christians can present collaborative dialogue supporting the views of many while considering the positions of individuals (Ruffner, 2016).

Matthew 12:37 (NIVSB, 1985) challenges leaders to be authentic, knowing that positive or negative communication can make or break a team's morale as quickly as actions. To keep leadership communications in line, Ruffner (2016) suggested that leaders should remain visible to their employees, allowing employees to embrace two-way dialogue and keep the lines of communications open. Ruffner also recommended that leaders improve ethical behavior by slowing down the decision-making process by interacting with subordinates, peers, and superiors through deliberate conversations meant to foster transparent dialogue. One key element with this approach is the deliberate action to keep the conversations relevant to the topic at hand and not stray from the conversation for the sake of personal agendas. Through these same candid conversations, leaders should also reflect upon unethical decisions from the past that lead to an undesirable outcome (Ruffner, 2016), so the same mistake can be avoided, and unethical situations averted.

From a proactive perspective, Ruffner (2016) examined leaders' need to utilize mentoring of small groups to rehearse ethical situations. Through these rehearsals, honest and open communications about ethical challenges within the community add appropriate behaviors without hesitation. Ruffner (2016) surmised that as communications from leaders continue to evolve through "...self-awareness, reflection, and humility..." (p. 61), a close bond develops between the leader and follower, fostering ethical interactions that lead toward ethical transformation. Through positive communication, the ethical transformation is possible by keeping leadership communications graceful, and leaders' actions humble (NIVSB, 1985, Colossians 4:6; James 1:19).

Related Literature Summary

The related literature focused upon responsible leadership as defined by Bennis (2009), Bryman et al. (2011), De Pree (2011), and Sanders (2017). The foundational aspects of responsible leadership leads to conflict resolution, avoiding bias, fostering creativity, serving others, and providing a vision for one's organization. The roles defined through responsible leadership apply positive principles to the interaction of business ethics practices within the workplace and support the guidelines represented by Hollinger (2010), Chase (2004), and Rossouw (1994) to focus ethical practices not just on the individual but on the companies that are impacted by individual practices.

As leadership takes form and develops through on-the-job training, one must be cognizant of the need for future business leaders to incorporate ethical training into undergraduate and graduate education programs associated with business growth (Melé and Fontrodona, 2017). McMahon et al. (2015) explored the transition of education from modern and postmodern viewpoints to Christian worldview supported criteria to ensure ethical practices continue to develop into businesses that need them the most. The related literature review concluded with an examination of the impacts of communications on the ethical environment. Ruffner (2016) exemplified leaders' need to remain humble as they deliver positive and negative messages to employees to continue to offer service to others while working toward ethical practices.

Rationale for the Study and Gap in the Literature

Rationale for the Study

The evolution of business throughout the modernistic and post-modernistic eras has led to a move away from Scripture-based ethics to secular founded ideas. These secular ideas shift the

leadership focus from serving God to serving the shareholder by developing business to increase profit margins at all costs (Melé & Fontrodona, 2017). Bay et al. (2010) portrayed a modernistic society where business evolved from serving God to amassing large amounts of wealth used to serve man's needs alone. It is through this shift to serve money instead of God (NIVSB, Matthew 6:24) that business leaders, driven by secular education focused on profit and loss, have chosen to use leadership as a forum for self-advancement instead of a way to develop others through followership (Kessler & Kretzschmar, 2015).

Business leadership must be cognizant of the need to introduce ethical principles into business leadership practices. Without ethical consideration of others, inappropriate behaviors guide the decision-making process with a focus driven toward corporate advancement at the cost of others' ethical treatment (Northouse, 2019). Nass and Kreuer (2018) described an environment where Scripture-based ethical principles (NIVSB, Romans 12:2) play a decisive role in developing corporate ethical principles designed to serve others. The research indicated that business leadership ethics developed through the perceived good of the modernistic and post-modernistic eras falls short of the Scripture-driven ethical principles necessary to treat others with respect (Kim et al., 2009). A return to ethical principles driven by Scripture (NIVSB, Luke 6:31), where leaders choose to serve others ahead of themselves (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1998), is necessary to develop leaders who recognize the lack of Scripture-based ethics in the corporate business world. Leaders must be willing to recognize the disparity of practices grounded in perceived goodness and revert to ethical principles defined by Scripture and developed to serve God and others first (Nass & Kreuer, 2018).

The rationale for this study was to illustrate the need for leadership behavior grounded in Scripture-based ethics (NIVSB, Colossians 3:23) to be returned to the business community.

Specifically, Christians should emphasize and implement Scripture-based ethics that exist in private life into their corporate lives to ensure there is no separation of individual and corporate behavior (Hill, 2017). The study examined Modernistic and post-modernistic movements to discount the relationship between corporate ethics and unfounded personal truth (Daniels et al., 2000). Scripture-based ethics constructed upon love for others (NIVSB, 1 Corinthians 13:1-7) provided timeless examples of leadership attributes defined through the ethical treatment of others where biblical spirituality grows to emulate the image of God (NIVSB, Luke 16:10, Romans 6:12-13, James 1:12). Highlighting God's image as most essential drives a paradigm shift into the business community that allows individuals and teams to thrive as they support each other. As the transformation to restore glory to God through business takes place, the business will succeed as a direct result (NIVSB, 1985, Proverbs 16:3; Colossians 3:23). Ewest (2015) exemplified the Christian ethical viewpoint by highlighting the Christian way forward as not just following rules, but "...aligning ones behaviors with what is important for themselves and their faith community to do, in order to preserve a Christian identity and thus honor Christ" (p. 26).

Gap in the Literature

The literature supported the need to incorporate Scripture-based ethical principles into corporate ethics practices (Kim et al., 2009; Melé & Fontrodona, 2017). The literature also defined high moral standards in business not tied explicitly to Scripture (Fischer, 2004; Voegtlin et al., 2012). Servant Leadership Theory literature illustrated the characteristics of ethical leadership necessary to serve others' needs first and supported the idea of high ethical standards that positively influence business success (Greenleaf, 1977; Russell & Stone, 2002; Spears, 2010; Wallace, 2007). The literature did not precisely address how servant leadership

characteristics and Scripture-based ethical principles integrate into a secular corporate world where business advancement takes priority over humanity's advancement. While much of the literature identified the benefits of Servant Leadership Theory and recognized high moral standings of other forms of leadership (Bryman et al., 2011; Northouse, 2019; Parris & Peachey, 2013) the process definitions to bridge the gap between them were not apparent.

Roberts (2015) addressed the gap somewhat through Servant Leadership Human Resource Management (SLHRM). Roberts (2015) suggested using a journal to identify long-term behavior patterns and embracing candid appraisal feedback to push ethical practices toward reducing instrumentalism. However, Roberts (2015) did not specifically outline processes and procedures to integrate Scripture-based ethical practices into the secular corporate worldview. This research intended to bridge the gap between perceived moral goodness and Scripture-based ethics by developing a process to integrate the two into business practices. Incorporating a process to shift the paradigm from self-promotion to serving humanity supports both objectives to increase profit and serve humanity. As that process definition evolves, the introduction of Scripture-based ethics into the corporate code of conduct documentation may become more prominent.

Profile of the Current Study

This study aimed to define the nature of Scripture-based ethics within the corporate environment and develop a clear path to shift ethical principles from those based upon natural moral law to one based upon Scripture. The research questions directed the study toward analyzing ethical guidelines based outside of Scripture and ethical guidelines based within Scripture. The research questions further examined any positive and negative impacts of implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into corporate code-of-conduct practices.

The theological framework explored God's existence within the moral being of humanity and sought to understand how those ethical principles incorporate into business ethics practices. The literature sought to understand the level of spirituality necessary to incorporate Scripture-based teachings into the corporate world. Further study revealed the link between a Scripture-based worldview and ethical principles resides in Scripture. A link between theological exegesis and ethical principles examined an understanding of how perceived ethical teachings not grounded in Scripture differ from those grounded in Scripture.

This study's theoretical basis focused on Servant Leadership Theory as the guiding principle theory for ethical practices. The literature review was not exhaustive toward servant leadership, but the examination of Greenleaf (1977), Spears (1998), Russel and Stone (2002), Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), Van Dierendonck (2011), and Parris and Peachey (2013) revealed varying levels of complexity associated with the theory. While the theory's weakness lied in interpreting the theory's various contributing attributes, all aspects of the literature represented the foundational view of leaders serving others. The theoretical basis also examined the value added to corporate ethical dilemmas through formal education focused upon delivering ethical business teachings and foundational business practices.

The related literature provided a foundational viewpoint of what defines responsible leadership and how it influences others' ethical treatment. As Bryman (2011), De Pree (2011), and Sanders (2017) guided a responsible leadership foundation, a definition of business ethics by Fischer (2004) explored how Christianity could affect corporate ethics. Again, citing servant leadership as the precedent model for serving others through ethical treatment, the literature focused upon leadership development and training to ensure business students grasp how to treat others and how to manage the mechanics of the business. Finally, the related literature focused

on the importance of communications to others to represent positive ethical principles represented within Scripture and in need of incorporation into the corporate business practices.

The study's rationale focused the need for corporations to understand the essential aspects of treating others with respect. As the businesses continue to grow and dominate the world landscape, a focus away from profit and loss and toward others' ethical treatment will drive business to a place where employees flourish within the ethical environment and cause the company to flourish as a direct result of that ethical interaction.

Examining the literature in all categories revealed an astounding amount of literature that defined ethics, expressed a Christian worldview, developed leadership, and described the necessity of incorporating ethical practices into the leadership realm. A gap in the literature existed within the process definition for implementing Scripture-based ethical guidance into the corporate world. There may be an understanding of why that incorporation is necessary; however, the mechanics of that incorporation was missing. This study attempted to provide that guidance and close the literature gap between corporate ethics practices and Scripture-based ethical principles.

Chase (2004) challenged Christians not to live bifurcated lives, living as Christian on the weekends and falling prey to secular teachings while at work in the business community. One who wishes to bring Christian ethics to the business community need only follow Christ's teachings to serve others throughout the workweek, regardless of one's work culture. Dickson, Hartog, and Mitchelson (2003) suggested this concept might not be simple as cultural differences offer complexities to the leadership landscape where leaders become cunning and evasive when faced with cultural challenges. Overcoming the temptation to fall into cultural disparity inspires the Christian leader in the secular business world to grow spiritually and lead others to Christ.

Ethical guidelines written within the corporate code of conduct principles foster others' ethical treatment to avoid past leaders' ethical violations (Sarbanes, 2002). While most prominent corporations have incorporated ethical guidelines into practice, the origin of those ethical guidelines remains in question. Research supports that moral principles used to establish corporate code of conduct policies are grounded in Scripture and provide the basis for serving others through ethical treatment defined by God's moral character (Kim et al., 2009; Daniels et al., 2000). Citing the need to serve others (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1998), ethical leaders who employ servant leadership attributes develop relationships with followers that allows them to flourish in companies where moral principles are absolute (Grudem, 2018).

This qualitative phenomenological study sought to understand the implications of Scripture within corporate code of conduct policies. The study did not assume ethical guidelines reside in humanistic actions but derives directly from God's moral character (Grudem, 2018). Learning from the failings of past CEOs in the telecommunications industry, the study examined similar leadership dynamics within the Multi-System Operator (MSO) environment to uncover corporate ethical principles grounded in Scripture. The study also sought to understand if ethical principles exist that do not tie back specifically to Scripture. While the respondent population resides within the telecommunications industry, the nature of the study applies to all business corporations where code of conduct policies exist. The study provides an avenue for continued research within the corporate ethics environment, leading to further delineating ethical principles grounded in Scripture.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ethical leadership offers business the opportunity to thrive in the modern world by treating employees and customers fairly. Disregarding ethical principles often misleads executives, board members, and other business leaders into self-elevation actions when serving others should be the focus (Northouse, 2019). While not consistently recognized, Scripture-based ethical principles should play an essential role in developing corporate code of conduct policies meant to serve others (Nass & Kreuer, 2018). The established research indicates that modernistic and post-modernistic viewpoints have molded corporate ethics into a model that falls short of Scripture-based ethical principles (NIVSB, 1985, Luke 6:31; Romans 12:2; 1 Timothy 4:1-5) while focusing on the advancement possibilities represented by the secular worldview. Returning to a business ethics model, driven toward serving others ahead of oneself (Greenleaf, 1977) allows leaders the capacity to incorporate ethical behavior defined by God's moral character (NIVSB, 1985, 2 Timothy 3:16), instead of perceived goodness represented by a post-modernistic worldview (Nass & Kreuer, 2018).

This study explored ethical practices within the corporate leadership foundation that has drawn further away from a Scripture-based foundation upon God's moral character by secular beliefs from modern and post-modern worldviews. The study sought to answer where ethical treatment of others in a secular corporation derives the moral implications of those ethical definitions. If the ethics applied to treating others with respect resides in theory outside of Scripture, what is that theory? Is there an ethical foundation leaders employ that does not relate to Scripture? An open-ended question format studied the ethical phenomenon through personal interviews to discover the ethical basis of leaders within a major telecommunications company.

The findings categorized and coded data to identify themes to capture and incorporate processes of ethical grounding within corporate code of conduct policies.

Research Design Synopsis

The Problem

Business leadership must be aware of the need to introduce ethical principles into business leadership practices. Without ethical consideration of others, inappropriate behaviors guide the decision-making process, focusing on corporate advancement at the expense of others' ethical treatment (Northouse, 2019). Nass and Kreuer (2018) described an environment where Scripture-based ethics (NIVSB, 1985, Romans 12:2) play an essential role in developing corporate ethical principles designed to serve others. The research indicated that business leadership ethics developed through the perceived good of the modernistic and post-modernistic eras falls short of the Scripture-driven ethical principles necessary to treat others with respect and reverence (Bay et al., 2010; Hill, 2017; Kim et al., 2009). A return to ethical principles motivated by Scripture (NIVSB, 1985, Luke 6:31) and defined by God's moral character (*NIVSB*, 1985, Matthew 5:48) is necessary to develop leaders who recognize a lapse in ethical principles in the corporate business world (Grudem, 2018; Kessler & Kretzschmar, 2015). Leaders must be willing to recognize the disparity of practices grounded in perceived goodness and revert to ethical principles defined by Scripture and developed to serve God and others first (Chase, 2004; Hill, 2017; Nass & Kreuer, 2018; Wallace, 2007). Although the literature supports inclusion of Scripture in ethical foundations, the literature fails to present a compelling process to integrate ethical practices based in Scripture into everyday corporate ethical guidelines. Essentially, the literature fails to identify processes to bridge the gap between perceived moral goodness and Scripture-based ethical practices that place the needs of followers ahead of leaders.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the business leader's perception of Scripture-based ethical principles within the secular corporate environment and determine how those ethical principles transform into the value of serving others through leadership practices that emulate God's moral character.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this qualitative study:

RQ1. What value do corporate leaders place on introducing ethical guidelines into the leadership model used within the organization?

RQ2. What value do corporate leaders place on Scripture-based beliefs and the practice of those beliefs to model leadership behavior?

RQ3. From the leaders' perspective, what positive impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices?

RQ4. From the leaders' perspective, what negative impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices?

Research Design and Methodology

Striving to understand the study's impacts, one must first comprehend the qualitative phenomenological study's characteristics and recognize how the research attempts to solve the problem. Creswell and Creswell (2018) identified five qualitative study types: phenomenology, narrative, ethnography, grounded theory, and case study. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) quantified the same five and added a sixth dimension called basic qualitative study to tie the other five together. To understand better a study's nature as phenomenological, a comprehension of the other four types is prudent.

Qualitative narrative research inquires about the respondents' lives and incorporates personal experiences with those of the researcher's. The combined experiences then transpose

into a story representing a chronology of life events that affect the story's outcome (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), providing a biographical and psychological analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A qualitative ethnography study includes extensive fieldwork, allowing the researcher to observe respondent activities within the typical operational or social setting (Moustakas, 1994) to determine the studied group's specific culture (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Strauss (1987) defined a qualitative grounded theory study as one that unravels the elements of experience to develop the social setting's foundational theory. Creswell and Creswell (2018) described the grounded theory as a new process derived from the respondents' viewpoints, where the theoretical sampling of the respondents substantiates the theory experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Finally, a qualitative case study design requires the researcher to study a specific case, program, event, or process that applies to individuals impacted by those criteria (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The remaining qualitative design from the five types shared by Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015) is the qualitative phenomenological research design. Creswell and Creswell (2018) defined this design as an inquiry into the philosophy and psychology of a particular phenomenon that affects the study's respondents. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) described the method as focusing on experiences that transform lived experiences into consciousness. The design method typically involves conducting open-ended question interviews to review the phenomenon's specific impacts upon the respondents' life and social interactions. The qualitative phenomenological design fosters a return to the respondent's experiences and allows the researcher to lean upon those experiences' structure to interpret the impact through the situations where those experiences occur (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell and Creswell (2018) highlighted the qualitative researcher's ability to be innovative by exploring and understanding

meaning through the personal interview setting by observing behavior during the interview process. This concept exemplified Moustakas' (1994) statement, "The understanding of meaningful concrete relations implicit in the original description of experience in the context of a particular situation is the primary target of phenomenological knowledge" (p. 11). As the interview process unfolds, the data reveals the evidence but also highlights prior hidden information. The evidence allows the phenomenon to reveal itself through explanation of the findings (Giorgi, 1985) and their impact to emotional, passionate, and often-intense human experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Interviews take various forms, including face-to-face interviews, videoconference interviews, telephone interviews, focus group interviews, and E-mail internet interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The preferred method may vary based upon the studied phenomenon, but face-to-face interviews provide uninterrupted access between the researcher and the respondent to observe behaviors and body language. With advanced web-conferencing software, video interviews are a viable option to replace face-to-face interviews in light of travel restrictions or social distancing requirements. While phone and E-mail interviews satisfy convenience, they lack the personal interaction necessary to capture data points related to body language (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). One must also consider the sensitive nature of the study when employing the focus group technique. Avoidance of this option is paramount if the topic involves sensitive, personal, or highly volatile information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Interviewing allows the researcher to gain perspective from the respondent that might not be available in an observation setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). It also allows the researcher to choose the questions carefully and spontaneously respond to answers that direct the conversation differently (Moustakas, 1994). The interviewing process gives the researcher control over the

line of questioning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and allows the researcher to add or remove the interview questions' structure as the specific method dictates (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The process provides historical information for the problem in question and offers a valuable alternative when observing respondents in their natural setting is unlikely (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study of ethical treatment of others requires the researcher to understand the respondents' worldview (Wallace, 2007). One's worldview grounded in secular teachings will have a different impact than one's worldview grounded in Scripture (Kim et al., 2009). The open-ended question forum utilized within the phenomenological study format allows the researcher to seek spontaneous answers to specific questions that do not fall within prescribed categories, such as multiple choice survey questions in a quantitative study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This approach allows the researcher to measure the human experience highlighted by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) to capture the essence of the respondents' passion and emotional responses to questions regarding ethical impacts grounded in Scripture. The method also allows the respondents to offer additional information about the positive and negative aspects of Scripture upon one's leadership style, exploring avenues the researcher may not have previously considered.

Von Hagel (2009) conducted a similar phenomenological study to uncover why Information Technology (IT) professionals within the defense industry decided to leave their positions. Von Hagel utilized a face-to-face open-ended question interview protocol of 20 IT professionals that developed seven themes, revealing that the IT professionals left their positions primarily for one of three reasons. More recently, Klosterman (2021) performed a qualitative phenomenological study to uncover the difference in followership between culturally

heterogeneous team members and culturally homogeneous team members in virtual work environments. Through the interview process, Klosterman uncovered multiple codes that also revealed three prevalent themes, allowing the researcher to recommend bridges between the two philosophies. A similar design applied to this study captured field notes throughout the interview process to understand how the respondents viewed ethical behavior and where that behavior originated.

The methodological design consisted of a phenomenological study based upon servant leadership research first conducted by Greenleaf (1977) and supported by Northouse (2019), Russell and Stone (2002), Spears (2010), and Wallace (2007). The researcher conducted video conference interviews with each of the fifteen respondents residing within a significant telecommunications Enterprise organization. The researcher utilized field notes to capture behaviors observed while conducting the interview activities. This qualitative observation technique (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions within the interview process, revealing the respondents' behaviors while providing answers within their natural leadership process.

Video conference interviews allowed the researcher to read the respondents' physical expressions. The semi-structured interview process utilized a mix of structured and flexible questions and allowed the respondents to provide information previously unconsidered by the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The line of questioning probed the respondents to engage in a two-way conversation where they could offer intimate and self-revealing explanations (Roulston, 2010) of how they view the ethical treatment of others and how they employ ethical considerations into their specific leadership practices. Video conferencing offered advantages over phone interviews where body language and facial expression observations and interaction

allow the researcher to evaluate body language where visual cues are absent in phone interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Video conferencing also solved the geographical challenges presented by travel restrictions and allowed the respondent base to widen considerably (Merriam & Tisdell).

During the interviews, secured office facilities accessed camera feeds into video conference and web meeting conference bridges. The video feed recorded each interview using the web meeting recording tool. While there was a slight risk to confidentiality being compromised through the online nature of video conferencing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), the risk was mitigated by utilizing the company-licensed video web conference software within the company intranet. Correlation of the collected researcher notes and transcription with the captured video post-interview ensured that all essential aspects of the interview resided within those notes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The researcher established a consistent observation protocol before each interview to ensure the study's results remained reliable and to avoid questions of inaccuracy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). During the pre-interview stage, the researcher noted the respondent name, title, time of the interview, date, place, and descriptive representation of the interview setting. (Moustakas, 1994). The interview protocol was established and followed consistently for all respondents to ensure the study's integrity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Only the researcher knows the respondents' private data to ensure confidentiality throughout the study. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Setting

The research setting was indicative of a national telecommunications organization divided by operational regions that span the whole of the United States. Regional offices exist

within the company for eleven different operational regions. The Northeast Division supports regional headquarters locations in New York City and Rochester, New York; Zeeland, Michigan; and Madison, Wisconsin. The Southeast Division supports regional headquarters locations in Charlotte, North Carolina; Greer, South Carolina; Tampa, Florida; and Cincinnati, Ohio. The West Division supports regional headquarters locations in Austin, Texas; Greenwood Village, Colorado; and El Segundo, California. Additionally, operational Service of Excellence Centers are located in Syracuse, New York; Denver, Colorado; St. Louis, Missouri; and Charlotte, North Carolina. The corporate headquarters is located in Stamford, Connecticut.

The company leadership dynamic utilizes a traditional hierarchy leadership design, allocating employees to the craft, mid-level management, and leadership segments. The craft segment includes various levels of technician, analyst, coordinator, and customer service professionals. The mid-level management layer consists of supervisors, managers, and senior managers. The leadership layer includes directors, senior directors, and various levels of vice president. This study examined the director, senior director, and vice president layers within the organization. These three leadership positions offered an abundance of respondents within the eleven regions and other corporate locations considered viable for this study.

The company setting was typical of a publicly traded corporate structured business operation utilizing a corporate headquarters for oversight with regional vice presidents leading the eleven regional offices. The company's ethical environment governs a code of conduct policy that promotes integrity and respect, teamwork and trust, growth, and learning while delivering a high customer satisfaction level. The code of conduct policy maintains no specific Scripture or secular basis but mentions implementing the highest ethical standards used to define exemplary professional behavior. The verbiage describing the code of conduct is not restricted to just this

particular company. Multiple examples of other companies both within and outside of the telecommunications industry utilize similar code of conduct policies citing high ethical standards without establishing a basis for those standards. Lumen (2021) and Ford Motor Company (2007) offer two specific examples.

Each regional operational leadership organization includes regional vice presidents, vice presidents, senior directors, and directors. The size of each organization varies based upon geographic region and company presence within the region, but organizationally, the leadership structures are equal. The leadership members reside within identification card access secured regional headquarters buildings designed to provide security and separation between departments and department leaders. Each leader maintains an office within the regional headquarters, and utilizes shared conference room facilities equipped with video conference equipment for larger meeting areas.

The attitude and human behavior in the regional offices are indicative of a typical corporate business structure. Two regional vice presidents of different departments are the highest-ranking employees residing in each office. The company follows the dominant tenant protocol for developing control of the office. Due to the organizations' appropriate size, the Field Operations departments typically maintain the dominant tenant role. Other organizations share space within the facility, but the dominant tenant organization maintains control of the environment and facility by employing regional facilities managers responsible for maintaining a professional work environment. Each location is typically equipped with offices, cubicles, conference rooms, and break room facilities, including small kitchen facilities. A safe work environment is provided by multi-level card access security throughout each regional headquarter location. Human interaction is typical within a corporate office environment where

conversations often occur in common spaces such as hallways, break areas, and conference rooms. The senior leaders appropriated for this study resided in confinable offices where distractions may be limited by closing office and conference room doors to minimize interruptions to the interview process.

Participants

The available time to interview respondents drives the number of respondents for qualitative phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994). The nature of the study itself and the complexity of the problem most often drives the number of study respondents. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) state that "...the crucial factor is not the number of respondents, but the potential of each person to contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the phenomenon" (p. 127). With the anticipation of gaining valuable knowledge from a group incorporating a wide array of experience toward problem resolution, the research population for this study included fifteen leaders residing within a significant telecommunication company operations organization. The respondents represented three levels of executive leadership: Director, Senior Director, and Vice President, residing within the eleven regional locations, four Service of Excellence Centers, and the corporate headquarters. The participants in this organization provide a two-way communication avenue with internal and external customers, so a diverse level of people interaction was consistent within the group. Since this group works with internal business partners and external customers, an excellent representative example of others' ethical treatment resided within this team.

Each leader was representative of a long career in the service provider industry. The levels of experience, education, and leadership abilities were similar in strength. Each member of the population possessed a high degree of technical aptitude, which is a requirement of the

leadership position's nature. The geographically dispersed leadership positions encompassed the eleven different operational regions. The population sized proportionately by gender and age, with all of the respondents falling within specified salary ranges. The education requirements for all of the population were also similar for each position. Based on these pre-classification characteristics, stratification before selecting the sample was not necessary. The desired outcome preferred not to segregate the respondents based upon age or gender to maintain the study's integrity.

The study employed a typical purposeful sampling strategy that applied to the participant population as the leaders reflected ordinary people in leadership situations where the phenomenon of treating others ethically resides within their leadership skillset (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The researcher contacted the department Group Vice President through email to gain permission to conduct the study within the leadership forum's confines. The permission email approval is contained in Appendix A: Permission Request. Since there is a high level of leadership integrity training presently sanctioned within this company, resistance to this study was not expected, nor experienced. Once the researcher gained the necessary approvals, the researcher conducted video interviews with all fifteen respondents within the population. The purposeful sampling criteria reflected leaders who hold positions of Director, Senior Director, and Vice President. Each respondent managed direct reports of at least five employees to exemplify consistent supervision, policy development, and organizational strategies. Each leader's tenure with the company was at least five years to maintain an understanding of the corporate culture that drives normal business decisions (Merriam & Tisdell). The researcher solicited respondent participation through the recruitment email template in Appendix B: Recruitment.

Role of the Researcher

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated, "...a phenomenological approach is well suited to studying affective, emotional, and often intense human experiences" (p. 28). The analysis of these experiences through the interview and coding processes provides the researcher with a holistic view of the issues that affect human experiences (Moustakas, 1994). By acting as the key instrument, researchers have unrestricted access to the data behind the phenomenon and utilize the respondents' natural setting to observe and categorize the behavior associated with understanding the phenomenon in question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In other words, within the qualitative process, the researcher can discover the respondents' meaning by capturing it through the observance of human experiences as the interview process unfolds. While quantitative research supports statistical analysis of known characteristics and categorizes those characteristics into classifications, qualitative phenomenology studies provide more fluidity to the researcher's problem (Creswell, 2013).

The entire interview and analysis process resident with a phenomenological study provides the researcher an avenue to better understand the larger picture, not just minute pieces of the puzzle (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher affords the opportunity to examine the corporate setting where the phenomenon exists and develop concepts around the ethical behaviors resident within that setting. The researcher's interaction with the regional office leaders, Center of Excellence leaders, and corporate leaders provided a differential view for the researcher to draw conclusions where regional differences may influence the study in varying ways. By recognizing the settings' impacts, the researcher was prepared to recognize specific codes and themes that developed within specific region settings and not others.

Due to the qualitative study's nature, the researcher conducting this study reflexively identified biases, values, and personal background that may have affected the study's interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Specifically, the researcher examined reflexivity points relating to how experiences shape the study's interpretations. The researcher incorporated reflexive thinking into the study by utilizing notes throughout the study that identified codes and themes that may affect the study. Creswell and Creswell suggested keeping personal experiences limited within the study and identified through the note generation process to ensure the researcher's personal experiences do not override the study's content. The researcher followed the Creswell and Creswell suggested protocol.

Examining past experiences reflexively, the researcher has worked within the telecommunications industry in various capacities for over 37 years. Within this experience, the researcher has witnessed both improprieties and exemplary behavior by leaders. Specifically, Qwest Communications employed the researcher when the Board of Directors removed Joe Nacchio, CEO, before an insider trading indictment by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) (Stanwick & Stanwick, 2009). The researcher witnessed first-hand the devastation both emotionally and financially to company employees when the company's influential leaders acted with unethical behavior that led to its demise. Conversely, Qwest Communications also employed the researcher when the company's board leadership hired Richard Notebaert. Notebaert was a service-oriented leader who saved the company from bankruptcy, rebuilt its reputation through the "spirit of service" motto, and restored public confidence in the company (Palmeri, 2003), eventually allowing it to merge with CenturyLink.

The MSO Company, where the research population resides presently employs the researcher. The MSO currently employs approximately 100,000 employees in the eleven

operating regions, four Service of Excellence Centers, and the corporate headquarters. Leaders from each region were included in the research population, but none resided within the operational division where the researcher presently resides to provide separation between the respondents and the researcher, and to ensure the study encountered no personal relationship bias. The researcher alone knows the identity of the fifteen respondents selected from the respondent pool to maintain confidentiality.

Ethical Considerations

Safeguarding the study's respondent identity was the highest priority of the study, even to the point of discarding the respondent's data if discovery revealed a breach of confidentiality. All video interviews captured data utilizing the secured company web meeting software. The researcher did not share the interview videos with individuals outside of the study, or between respondents. The chosen respondents' identities remained private with regard to the other respondents to keep respondent confidentiality protected. Following considerations from Creswell and Creswell (2018), the researcher supplied the respondents with written and verbal explanations of the interview process and obtained written consent from all respondents to participate in the study. The researcher clearly explained the data collection and analysis process to all respondents individually, and kept final transcriptions and research reports protected in a secured location.

To identify ethical considerations grounded within Scripture, the very nature of the study drove the study to incorporate ethical practices in data collection activities. Keeping a strong focus on ethical processes and behaviors in business leadership was the focus of the study and carried over to the study process. Identifying and implementing ethical processes and procedures grounded in truths defined by Scripture was the goal, as was the ethical collection of data

supporting that implementation. The data collection, analysis, and findings presentation fell within the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines to accomplish the study's goals. The study did not include any respondents deemed "at-risk" or under the age of eighteen to ensure the involvement of only competent adult respondents to maintain the study's integrity.

To ensure confidentiality and data integrity the researcher recorded all video interviews and examined each interview specifically to ensure no data compromise and the respondents were not at risk (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Electronic copies of the video interviews stored on two separate external hard disk drives maintained by the researcher protected confidentiality and data integrity. The process did not utilize Cloud storage to minimize the risk of data corruption and confidentiality breaches. Upon conclusion and publishing of the study, the video files serve no purpose, so the researcher will destroy both external hard disc drives to ensure respondent confidentiality.

The IRB is a federally mandated body put in place by the institution to ensure research respondents' ethical treatment. The IRB governed the implementation of the process to ensure the respondents' privacy rights remained protected throughout the study and that the process to collect data for interpretation supported the ethical treatment of the respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The IRB regulated the research schedule and mandated that no research took place before the IRB's approval. This process began after the IRB successfully reviewed the prospectus and determined its viability as a research study. The IRB suggested minor changes to the study prospectus before implementation and granted the study's final approval to precede from the prospectus stage to the field-testing and data gathering phase (Liberty University, 2020).

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Data points in qualitative research methods are not explicable as in quantitative research. In a qualitative phenomenology research design, data points reveal themselves to the researcher in various ways, but it is incumbent upon the researcher to recognize and understand those data points when they present themselves (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The literature supports four different data collection types within the qualitative research model: observations, interviews, documents, and digital audiovisual materials. The interview process is the most conducive data collection type to the phenomenological study.

Collection Methods

Data collection in the interview process completed in two ways. First, the Cisco Webex Meetings platform captured video interviews by utilizing the platform's recording function. This platform allowed the recording of web meetings with audio or video inputs through the tool, but most importantly, ensured the preservation of the interview contents for analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The software generated video capture files post-interview for the researcher to review and analyze response data to capture codes and develop themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to answer the research questions. Video recordings allowed the interviewer to review the video interview for non-verbal behavior and afforded the interviewer the luxury of using the recorded videos to refine the interview technique (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Secondary to the video capture, the researcher took notes throughout the process. Since it was impractical to transcribe the entire interview during the conversation, the purpose of taking field notes was to highlight essential items of information throughout the interview for later examination during the analysis section (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Whenever possible, the researcher time stamped the notes to correlate the exact note generation time during the

interview. The Cisco Webex Meeting tool includes a continuous recording clock that allowed the researcher to correlate the note timestamp with the exact recording time to compare the note against the captured video later to gain more code analysis insight.

The researcher leveraged Microsoft Word to generate the interview transcript notes as the interviews progressed. The researcher used a dual-screen computer setup to ensure the Cisco Webex Meeting session displayed on one screen while the interview note transcription utilized the additional screen. This method allowed the researcher to maintain a head-up posture to keep eye contact with the respondent during the interview instead of looking down to write hand-written notes. The researcher could type faster and more seamlessly than writing hand-written notes and note editing was more efficient within the electronic format for this researcher. Microsoft Word supported the insertion of the accurate time stamp into the notes by utilizing the current time function for future video correlation.

Instruments and Protocols

This study utilized online video interviews conducted by the researcher. Each interview with each respondent dissected into four distinct sections, each section dedicated to the data gathering for each of the four research questions. Incorporating a hybrid of semi-structured and informal interview continuum (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), the research utilized a video interview style where the population was contacted directly through company communications channels. The specific topic of ethics residing within a business resonated throughout the interview process to gain the respondents' perspective on the topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach allowed the respondents to define ethics in their unique way yet provided the researcher with an avenue to keep the conversation focused on the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The goal of the interview process was to ask good questions that drove toward answering the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Patton (2002) suggested utilizing six types of questions to stimulate intuitive responses deemed valuable to the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2105). Patton (2002) defined the six question types as experience and behavior questions, opinion and values questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, and background or demographic questions. The background or demographic questions capture the self-explanatory respondents' specifics. The sensory question types are similar enough to the behavior questions that they do not warrant additional questions in this question type. Each of the remaining four question types held significant value to the ethical phenomenon this study addressed, and all four of these types were correlated to the research questions previously defined.

Patton's (2002) experience and behavior questions leveraged literature supporting service to others (Greenleaf, 1977; Russell & Stone, 2002; Spears, 2010) and how that service drives the ethical behavior of others (Wallace, 2007). The opinions and values questions (Patton, 2002) gauged the respondents' understanding of one's moral character and any worldview that influences those opinions and values. The questions drew from studies completed by Hill (2017), Kim et al. (2009), Pearcey (2005), and Pettit (2008) as the questions probed whether the respondents' values relied upon Scripture or an alternative moral basis. By introducing feeling questions (Patton, 2002), the study captured the essence of how the respondents feel about moral ethics being grounded in God's moral character (Grudem, 2018) and how His moral character applies to their feelings and beliefs. The researcher understood that some of the respondents may not be believers and the researcher was prepared to field those responses without passing judgment or interjecting personal beliefs into the interview process. The final question category

involved interpreting the respondents' factual knowledge (Patton, 2002). These questions challenged the respondents to supply knowledge they believe resides in fact or truth and to provide a source for their particular knowledge. The questions were supported by literature from Chase (2004), Melé and Fontrodona (2017), and Nass and Kreuer (2018) as the researcher aimed to link ethical behavior in business to ethical behavior grounded in Scripture.

Moustakas (1994) provided a comprehensive list of requirements for a phenomenological interview process. The first requirement begins with discovering the topic and conducting an exhaustive review of the literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Moustakas (1994) surmised that a specific set of questions guides the interview process. The questions should be precise, but the researcher should also be prepared to deviate from the prescribed questions with follow-up questions when the interview direction alters. If follow-up interviews become necessary, the researcher must also be prepared with additional questions that support the nature of the follow-up interview. Creswell & Creswell (2018) highlighted the importance of maintaining confidentiality within the interview setting and highlighted the researcher's need to recognize that their presence may constitute biased responses. Recognizing this fact allows the researcher to formulate the questions in advance to minimize or eliminate the perception of researcher bias (Moustakas, 1994).

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) described three levels of interview structure. Highly structured or standardized interviews use questions in a predetermined order, often as an oral form of a written survey. The qualitative nature of the highly structured survey gathers demographic data similar to data captured in a marketing or related survey. Merriam and Tisdell defined a semi-structured interview as one including a mix of structured and unstructured questions where flexibility remains constant throughout the process. No predetermined question

order exists, but the questions organize into a list to guide the conversation. The final interview level Merriam and Tisdell highlight is the unstructured or informal interview where open-ended questions provide maximum flexibility. The interview flows more like a conversation where the interviewer probes the interviewee to provide more information and allows the line of answers to direct the interview's direction.

The study incorporated three questions from four question types introduced by Patton (2002) for a total of twelve interview questions for each respondent. The interview questions are included in Appendix C: Interview Protocol. Assuming a maximum five-minute window for each question, the question and answer portion of the interview took less than 60 minutes to complete. Adding some additional time at the beginning of the interview for introductions, respondent data gathering, and a brief explanation of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), and at the end to accommodate additional probing questions and further discussion (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), each interview was scheduled for a maximum of 90 minutes to reduce fatigue for both the researcher and respondents.

The interview questions avoided asking multiple answer questions since the answers to those questions can confuse the study and often restrict the respondent from answering some of the questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Leading questions that introduce a bias or assumption being made by the researcher were also avoided to ensure the respondents' responses were accurate representations of their thought process, not that of the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell). Finally, the study avoided yes-or-no answer questions because they offered very little information and often slow the respondents' answering and thought process (Merriam & Tisdell).

The researcher organized all questions into an interview guide to ask the same questions of each respondent. The guide did not incorporate any particular order of the questions, and the

researcher allowed the interview process to guide the question and answer session for each respondent (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). It is acceptable for the researcher to present the questions in a different order and may offer alternative data points for later categorization during the analysis process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher ensured each respondent answered each question regardless of the question order utilizing the question guide checklist. The researcher also made every effort to memorize the question beforehand to ensure a continuous flow to the conversation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Procedures

To minimize human rights violations, the researcher sought approval from the IRB by applying to the IRB before collecting any data or starting the study in any way. The IRB submission contained the procedures implemented within the study and information about the study's participants so the IRB could review the potential risk of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition to the IRB application, the researcher also sought the approval of the highest Vice President level one-step above the highest-ranking respondent. The researcher provided each respondent with the informed consent form found in Appendix D: Informed Consent before the study began (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The form identified the researcher, Liberty University, the purpose of the study to identify a Scripture-based grounding to ethical practices in business, the level of participant involvement, notation of any risks to the participants, a confidentiality guarantee, assurance to the respondents that they can withdraw at any time, and a list of contacts for future questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The researcher conducted and recorded each video interview utilizing the Cisco Webex Meetings platform to minimize travel and facilitate a fluent data-gathering technique. The captured videos were stored upon two separate removable external hard disk drives. Copies of

the Microsoft Word interview transcript files were also stored on each removable disk drive. Each of the removable disk drives were store in separate locations to ensure the protection of the collected data. One disk drive was deemed the master copy, and the other was deemed the backup copy. All analysis was conducted on the master copy, and the work was saved on the backup copy as the interview capture and analysis process progressed. To ensure the confidentiality of the respondents and protect the integrity of the data, once the study is completed and published, both removable disk drives will be destroyed.

The interviews were scheduled through email with a link to the Cisco Webex Meeting Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that allowed each respondent to enter the conference bridge through their computer for video and audio capture. The Cisco Webex Meeting program identified each member on the call and ensured no other participants were present. This feature allowed the researcher to ensure confidentiality of the respondent by monitoring the participant screen to ensure no additional attendees had joined the web conference. To ensure adequate time to refresh the process, save video and Word files to the separate disk drives, and perform initial analysis, the researcher conducted a maximum of two interviews per day. This approach fostered a fresh perspective and ensured equally positive engagement for each interview.

The researcher constructed a pre-determined list of questions before the interview phase, with no specific order in mind. The series of questions related as sub-questions of the four main research questions and sought to provide insight into the overall problem. Each question required a deeper level of respondent thinking to understand each respondent's ethical foundation. The questions remained flexible to leverage the interview as a conversation but guided the conversation. The conversation may have dictated the use of follow-up questions to prompt

further thought. However, the follow-up questions remained within the focus of the original research questions' objectives.

Data Analysis

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) deducted that the preferred way to analyze interview data from a qualitative phenomenological study is to perform analysis simultaneously with the data collection. The researcher utilized ongoing analysis throughout the data capturing activity to recognize essential data points when they arose and flagged those points for further analysis by collecting field notes throughout the process. Merriam and Tisdell suggested that applying this concept keeps the researcher from being overwhelmed during the data analysis phase with piles of interview transcripts to review and no logical sequence for data analysis. Merriam and Tisdell suggested employing concepts like capturing respondents' comments, developing analytical questions throughout the interview process, exploring the literature during the field study process, and utilizing metaphors and analogies to interpret and understand the data. By employing these and similar tasks throughout the process, Merriam and Tisdell stated that the coding process reveals itself to the researcher as the process flows, not just at the end when data analysis can become overwhelming.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) offered a systematic approach. Similar to the direction from Merriam and Tisdell (2015) to remain engaged with the data throughout the process, Creswell and Creswell (2018) offered steps to incorporate data analysis into the process from the beginning. In the beginning, the researcher notated the basic information about the interview: time, date, place, researcher and respondent names, interview type, and digital copy file name and location. The researcher provided an introduction that explained the study and offered an icebreaker question to place the respondent at ease before moving into the content question

phase. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) agreed that the data analysis starts through using field notes, introducing probes, and asking follow-up questions directed by the interview flow. Once the content questions completed, the researcher prompted the respondent to offer further information or suggest other respondents who may add value to the study. The researcher carefully captured data from these questions, as this data could lead the researcher toward new data discovered within the initial question development phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The researcher compared interview responses to the literature findings to ascertain whether new questions arose. The researcher also compared the responses to theories encountered in the literature and drew comparisons between leadership theory and personal observations of theory application within the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher did not influence the respondents' answers by interjecting personal experiences. The study's questions drove the conversations, and the researcher relinquished to a listener and recorder role. The study limited two-way conversations about leadership theory to the confines of the literature, and the researcher did not offer opinions to the respondents at any time during the interview process.

The study employed a similar coding process described by Tesch (2013) to identify and code the data after completing the interviews. The Tesch process called for the researcher to select random interviews as the beginning to start the coding process, make a list of similar topics, categorize those topics, assign abbreviated codes to the topics, and then verify the coding by re-examining the existing data if necessary. The coding process utilized codes developed through the emerging data collected from all respondents and did not attempt to utilize any set of predetermined codes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The flexibility of the emerging code process

allowed the researcher to identify factual trends presented within the interview data and guard against the researcher's experience bias.

Analysis Methods

The researcher established a consistent protocol before each interview. During the pre-interview stage, the researcher took notes specifying the respondent name, title, time of the interview, date, place, and descriptive representation of the interview setting. The researcher provided a study introduction and proceeded to the question content sessions scribing field notes throughout the interview. The researcher remained flexible throughout the interview process by employing probes to glean more information from each respondent when necessary. To record and transcribe each interview, the researcher utilized video conferencing software. The researcher collected the transcription and compared each with the captured video post-interview to ensure that all aspects of the interview resided within the notes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Throughout the interview process, the field notes correlation with the recorded video sessions facilitated coding and theme generation during the post-interview data analysis process to draw conclusions and publish findings to the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The Microsoft Word time stamps within the field notes enabled finding the exact place in the video transcription where the field note occurred. The researcher compared each notation to the captured video to review the note and assess its accuracy. The researcher then manually generated codes and themes from the review process utilizing definitions provided by Moustakas (1994) for Epoche, Phenomenological Reduction, Imaginative Variation, and Synthesis. The comprehension of these themes allowed the researcher to understand the ethical phenomenon before transcribing the data through the NVIVO software.

After verifying the note correlation, the researcher transcribed, sorted, and analyzed the video files utilizing the NVIVO software package to transcribe the videos into text files. The Microsoft Word field notes files were also loaded into NVIVO software. The software leveraged the assigned codes throughout the transcripts and Word files and arranged the codes into recurring themes encompassing all of the video transcriptions and field note files. When the NVIVO code and theme generation completed, the researcher compared the outcome of that effort with the manual coding captured using the field notes and time stamps during the interview process. This data validation step allowed the researcher to add and verify personal observations by comparing the captured field notes and observations to the NVIVO theme generation views. Once the comparison completed, the researcher deemed the data as valid.

The researcher then proceeded to summarize the data. NVIVO generated visual representations of the captured themes. Charts, graphs, tables, and figures created through the NVIVO software represented the study's findings within the data analysis visually. The visuals were included within the summary and used to represent the findings. The researcher drew an explanation from comparing the NVIVO data and the manual theme generation to understand the essential ethical implications of Scripture within the business community.

The interview, data collection, and data analysis protocol was established and followed consistently for all fifteen respondents to ensure the study's integrity. The researcher kept, and will continue to keep, the respondents' identity private to ensure confidentiality. Since the researcher has been employed within the telecommunications industry for over 37 years, care was taken to ensure biases were identified from the onset and appropriate action was taken to avoid those biases throughout the interview, data collection, data analysis, theme generation, and study summation processes.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness measurement in a qualitative study hinges upon conducting the investigation ethically to ensure the study's validity and reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The researcher can address trustworthiness concerns by employing varying levels of validity strategies to ensure the data is not only credible but may also be duplicated and validated by additional studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) surmised that the degree of trustworthiness a study possesses is directly proportionate to how the researcher collects, analyzes, interprets, and presents the findings. Doing so in an ethical manner, which is ironic considering the objectives of this study, is paramount to the study's acceptance as trustworthy. From Moustakas' (1994) perspective, the trustworthiness of the qualitative study relies primarily on the trustworthiness of the researcher conducting the study. Since a qualitative study describes how people react to events or interpret others' reactions to those events, a certain amount of subjectivity will exist in the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Managing that subjectivity to the point of maintaining trustworthiness lies within four separate sub-categories of trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility

Often referred to as internal validity, credibility interprets how research finding relates to reality and examines if actual reality exists (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell interjected that reality is "...holistic, multidimensional, ever-changing...not a single, fixed objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured..." (p. 213). In other words, reality is constructed by how people understand the world they live in (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research provides a means of interpretation of those alternative views of reality through observation and interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Mitigating the credibility of one's research project may utilize various methods. One specific method the researcher employed in this study is triangulation, where different data sources compare against each other to ensure the accuracy of each (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Denzin (1978) proposed four types of triangulation: multiple methods, multiple data sources, multiple investigators, and multiple theories. This study utilized the multiple data sources triangulation approach. The researcher conducted the interviews within the respondents' office setting over video conference allowing the interviewer to observe behaviors during the interview process. Since the respondents maintain diverse backgrounds in geographically dispersed locations, the researcher anticipated and observed different perspectives of the research problem. Different perspectives, video observations at different times and places, and follow-up interviews with the same people provide the required triangulation to ensure the study's credibility (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The researcher leveraged respondent validation as another form of triangulation in this study. The researcher sought respondent feedback to verify the interpretation of the themes represented through the interviews. This process ensured the researcher interpreted the meaning of the interview responses correctly and verified that the captured information represented the respondent's thoughts correctly (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The researcher conducted some level of respondent validation during the interviews as codes and themes became evident during that process. The researcher also authenticated responses in the field notes and annotated them as respondent validation points revealed themselves within the interview process flow.

Another method of ensuring credibility is to ensure the researcher maintains reflexivity in the study. Creswell & Creswell (2018) define reflexivity as the researchers' ability to reflect how one's past experiences, background, and culture can potentially shape the outcome of the study's

interpretations. Reflexivity comes into focus when the researcher is the study's instrument and the researcher fails to understand their biases and assumptions regarding the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The researcher in this study made every effort to identify biases relating to career experiences and worldview and disassociated those perspectives from the data gathering, theme generation, analysis, and interpretation sections. Recognizing the need for reflexivity, the researcher added one more dimension of credibility to the study by mitigating the effects of personal bias throughout the interview and data gathering process. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Dependability

The dependability of one's study hinges upon the ability of others to replicate the study. The nature of research assumes a single reality exists for a phenomenon, but that concept is problematic with qualitative research because human behavior constantly changes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Since human behavior affects qualitative outcomes, proper documentation of the processes and procedures to complete the study is essential to supporting the dependability of that study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Triangulation ensures the study's credibility, but it also supports its dependability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The researcher leveraged previously defined triangulation processes to ensure the study's dependability. In addition to triangulation, the implementation of peer review adds a level of dependability that ensures the integrity of the study. The researcher ensured the dependability requirements were satisfied by providing the collected data, code and theme generation documentation, interview transcript files, and final interpretation documentation to at least three peers for the peer-review process. Utilizing at least three peers employs a triangulation thought process into the document review process supporting the dependability of the study.

Confirmability

An audit trail was established and maintained throughout the study to aid additional researchers' authentication abilities as the study is reviewed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The use of a working journal supported the audit trail. The journal defined and maintained every process and procedure employed throughout the study. It included dates and times of interviews, pseudo names of the respondents to protect respondent confidentiality, code and theme generation processes, analysis processes, locations and names of interview transcript files, and locations of the study's interpretations and findings. Capturing all of the pertinent data for the study into a journal will allow future researchers to follow the detailed account of how the study ensued so the study's replication may prove its reliability (Merriam & Tisdell). The researcher authored the journal in electronic format with backup copies to accommodate simplified sharing with other researchers, ensuring the confirmability of the study.

Transferability

Also known as, external validity, transferability defines the extent to which the findings of a particular study apply to another researcher's study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). Since human behavior changes, generalizability is not possible in qualitative research as the findings will not be duplicated precisely; however, the reader may decide whether the study's findings can generally apply to additional studies. To aid the efforts of future studies, this study employed rich, thick descriptions of the study's setting, participants, detailed descriptions of the findings, field notes, transcription files, and the study's audit journal. Merriam & Tisdell stated, "Providing enough description to contextualize the study such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situations match the research context, and, hence, whether findings can be transferred" (p. 229). The researcher protected the respondent confidentiality by

not including the video files themselves; however, the transcripts with pseudo names are included within the rich, thick descriptions documentation housed in Appendix E.

This study may apply to any corporate setting where ethical considerations of employees contribute to the company's performance. The study may also apply to academia, as ethical considerations within the university setting require students and faculty to interact and treat each other with respect. The study also applies to the church congregation setting, where church members and leaders serve each other and provide the foundation for living within God's moral character (Grudem, 2018) by striving to emulate God's image (Hoekema, 1994). Since God created humanity in His image (NIVSB, Genesis 1:27), and that creation emulates the moral character of God (Grudem, 2018), there is no ethical treatment setting where this study will not apply.

Chapter Summary

The study sought to explore the origination of ethical behavior in business and show that the true origin of ethical behavior resides in Scripture, defined by God's moral character. The study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore ethical principles in business and discover the origination of those principles. The study captured data from online video interviews conducted with fifteen respondents within a large telecommunications company. The interviewed leaders housed in various geographical settings across the United States represented three executive leadership levels responsible for employing and enacting ethical business practices.

The study ensured trustworthiness by securing credibility through triangulation using multiple data sources. Respondent validation employed capturing the essence of respondent data and ensuring accurate transcription of the findings. Triangulation leveraged the study's

dependability, while peer review instituted another level of review. Keeping a working journal supported the study's confirmability and offered an audit trail for other researchers to follow throughout the study. This process allowed the researcher to remain transparent regarding the study's findings and provided an avenue for data clarification and validation. While qualitative studies cannot generally be wholly duplicated due to the changing nature of human interaction, the study's transferability was supported by capturing and publication of detailed, thick descriptions throughout the study that clearly define the setting, respondents, study context, and findings.

Through the careful deployment of the processes and procedures outlined in this chapter, the researcher expected to uncover facts revealing God's moral character (NIVSB, 1985, 1 John 1:5) in the ethical treatment of others (NIVSB, Luke 6:31). The study protected respondent confidentiality at all times and took the necessary steps to ensure bias was recognized and addressed. Identifying and applying research strategies uncovered in the literature to ethical considerations protected the study's integrity, and the integrity of the qualitative research process. The study ultimately attempted to close the literature gap between Scripture-supported ethical principles and the process and procedures necessary to implement those principles into corporate code of conduct practices.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

Previously identified in chapter one, this study explored the business leaders' perception of Scripture-based ethical principles embedded into corporate code of conduct practices and how those ethical principles transform into serving others. This chapter identifies the structure and analysis surrounding the qualitative themes identified through the research process. The data analysis uncovered details relating to the four research questions identified in chapter one by utilizing twelve sub-questions identified in Appendix C to capture the essence of ethical behavior grounding in Scripture in business. The participant interview process generated themes represented in tables and charts, supported by a data set encompassing the narrative analysis of the interviews themselves. The researcher conducted manual theme analysis and utilized the NVIVO software package to generate auto-coded themes for comparison. Appendix F defines the combined theme data set.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

Permission Request

The study began by obtaining the permission of the senior leader within the organization under study. The senior leader was very receptive to the study and was ultimately interested in reading the study's findings. The senior leader supported the interview process and offered encouragement to the researcher at the onset of the study. The researcher first contacted the senior leader through email requesting a one-hour video conference to discuss the study's parameters. The researcher supplied the senior leader with a summary PowerPoint presentation of the study, highlighting the research purpose, four research questions, assumptions, delimitation, population, design, and instrumentation. The senior leader offered support for the

study and agreed to respond to the IRB-approved permission request email. Appendix A houses a copy of that confirmed response.

Research Participant Selection Process

Upon receiving senior leadership permission to conduct the study, the researcher assembled a list of prospective participants per the participant guidelines highlighted in chapter three. The initial list of invitees consisted of thirty-four geographically dispersed leaders possessing the title of Director, Senior Director, and Vice President. The researcher emailed each of the thirty-four potential participants individually to solicit their participation in the research study. A sample of the IRB-approved email language template sent to each potential participant resides in Appendix B. The researcher attached a copy of the informed consent letter for each email recipient to review, sign, and return the document should they choose to participate. Appendix D houses a copy of the IRB-approved informed consent letter template.

The researcher emailed the thirty-four prospective participant requests on the same day and waited approximately one week for responses from the group. Within one week, the researcher received seventeen acceptance and two decline responses. The remaining fifteen potential candidates did not respond to the initial request. Of the seventeen acceptance responses, two candidates opted out of the study due to scheduling issues and their availability to respond to the interview request. The researcher assigned a pseudonym in the format of P1, P2 ... P15 to the fifteen participants agreeing to participate in the study. To protect participant confidentiality, the researcher refers to participants only by their respective pseudonyms.

Interview Protocol

An online video interview format achieved the data compilation goals for this research study. Before scheduling each interview, the researcher ensured each active participant returned

the signed informed consent form displayed in Appendix D. The researcher scheduled video conference calls with the fifteen interview participants utilizing the Cisco Webex video conference platform. The Cisco Webex platform offers a clear and concise video conference experience where face-to-face interviews are not practical. The platform proved essential to accommodate the geographic displacement of the research participants throughout various regions of the United States.

The Cisco Webex platform offered a seamless recording function that recorded all captured dialog within the video stream of each participant on the video call. The software tool captured the speaker by linking the video feed to the audio inputs into the conference bridge. The participants utilized a headset, computer microphone, or dial-in phone connection to facilitate the best possible audio representation. The researcher utilized a Microsoft high-definition external video camera to capture the video and manipulated the Cisco Webex software tool to dial the researcher's office phone. The Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) office phone connection provided the most precise audio level for each video call and ensured the security of the conference bridge by dialing the researcher's office phone upon entering the video conference. The researcher utilized the hands-free audio option to allow the researcher to type notes during each video conference. The Cisco Webex platform maintained the list of all active participants so the researcher could verify if any unauthorized participants joined the video call via video or audio at any time. The researcher did not encounter any such security breaches during any of the fifteen participant interviews.

Transcript Protocol

The Cisco Webex platform provides transcript security through a cloud-based web meeting system utilizing s Single Sign-On (SSO) protocol. Access to the Cisco Webex cloud is

password-protected, and only the researcher has access to the cloud server where the Cisco Webex tool stored the captured video files. Upon initiation of each interview call, the researcher advised each participant when the session recording would begin. The researcher then utilized the record function within the tool to record the video session. When each video session ended, the researcher stopped the recording and ended the Cisco Webex session. The ending of the Cisco Webex session prompts the tool to save the video file to the cloud server. Once each session ended, the researcher opened the Webex online tool to retrieve the video and transcript files. When the researcher entered the online tool, a rendering of a downloadable video file began. Each file took approximately 7 to 10 minutes to compile, render, and generate. The tool provided a date and time stamp and categorized each file with the duration, size, and format along with a download icon to download a local copy. The researcher downloaded each video file to the researcher's password-protected computer and deleted the video files from the cloud storage location.

After the video file render process completes, the Webex cloud tool generates a text file of the Video transcript. The researcher immediately downloaded each text file to the researcher's password-protected computer and deleted each file from the cloud storage location. When the download was completed, the researcher edited each file and replaced the participant's name in all locations within the transcript with the pseudonym assigned in the participant log to protect participant confidentiality. Each transcript contained a line-by-line dialogue between the researcher and participant and was time-stamped with each change of speaker or break in the audio transference from the video file to text transcription. The researcher carefully examined each transcript for continuity with the rendered video file to determine that the transcript

generation process did not discard any data points captured within the video files. The researcher repeated the video capture and transcript process for each of the fifteen participant interviews.

Manual Data Manipulation

The researcher reviewed each transcript file to identify themes manually within the context of each interview. The researcher copied the text from the downloaded transcript file and pasted it into a two-column table in Microsoft Word. The researcher pasted the transcript verbiage into the left-hand column of the table. As the researcher read the transcript verbiage, the researcher entered data codes into the right-hand column of the table corresponding with the location of the identified codes within the transcript. As the researcher read the transcript to identify codes, the researcher watched the accompanying video file to clarify any sections of the transcript that did not transfer cleanly. The researcher also compared field notes taken during the interview and transcribed those notes into the coding sections (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Once the file review was completed, the researcher copied all the manually generated codes and entered them into a master code spreadsheet. The researcher repeated this process for each of the fifteen participant transcripts. The researcher assigned each participant transcript with an associated column in the master code spreadsheet.

Computer Data Manipulation

To ensure the accuracy of the data and remove any researcher bias from the study, the researcher downloaded and installed the latest version of the NVIVO research tool. While cumbersome at first, the researcher discovered the value of the tool and the graph and chart analysis power that the tool possessed. After several hours of becoming familiar with the NVIVO tool, the researcher imported all video transcript files into the NVIVO software tool. The researcher then initiated the steps to allow NVIVO to auto code the data directly from the

transcribed video files. This process proved fruitful and offered a complementary view of the manually coded data the researcher previously completed.

Demographic and Sample Data

Participant Demographics Data Set

Table 1 represents the demographic data of the fifteen respondents who accepted the invitation to the study. The original thirty-four participant invitees consisted of 12 female and 22 male participants. Twelve male participants accepted the study invitation, while only five females initially accepted. The two participants who opted out of the study after initial acceptance were both females. The remaining potential participants, seven females and eight males, did not respond to the initial invitation.

Table 1: Participant Demographic Data

Participant Demographic Data

Participant	Gender	Region	Education	Leadership	Company	Employees
P1	Male	West	Some College	28 years	14 years	9
P2	Male	Midwest	Bachelor	9 years	13 years	14
P3	Male	Northeast	Bachelor	16 years	13 years	5
P4	Male	Midwest	Associate	28 years	33 years	15
P5	Female	Midwest	Bachelor	35 years	13 years	11
P6	Female	South	Some College	21 years	10 years	59
P7	Female	Northeast	Associate	7 years	9 years	10
P8	Male	Southeast	Bachelor	20 years	5 years	11
P9	Male	West	Master	30 years	9 years	68
P10	Male	South	Bachelor	20 years	19 years	15
P11	Male	South	Associate	30 years	15 years	7
P12	Male	Northeast	Associate	25 years	13 years	70
P13	Male	Northeast	Bachelor	30 years	5 years	18
P14	Male	West	Bachelor	20 years	10 years	24
P15	Male	Northeast	Master	21 years	10 years	33

The fifteen participants represent an average of 22.7 years of leadership experience with an average of 12.7 years of employment with their present company. The participant field included two Vice Presidents, three Senior Directors, and ten Directors, with an average of 24.7 employees reporting into their specific leadership hierarchy. Geography separated the fifteen participants, with three residing in the Midwest, five in the Northeast, four in the South, and three in the West. The Midwest region encompasses the states surrounding the Great Lakes and the Ohio River valley. The Northeast region represents states along the Eastern Atlantic seaboard, north of Washington, DC. The South region includes states south of Washington DC and the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River. The West region encompasses all states west of the Mississippi River.

The education levels of the participants varied. Two had attended college with no awarded degree. Four participants possessed Associate degrees, seven participants had earned Bachelor of Science degrees, and two had earned Master of Science degrees. None of the participants was currently enrolled or pursuing higher education above their present degree level at the time of the interview sessions.

Interview Transcript Data Set

The interview process began on August 24, 2021, and concluded on September 14, 2021. The transcription process revealed that the fifteen interviews lasted for 628 minutes and encompassed 87,337 words. The average interview duration was 42 minutes, with an average of 5822 words. Table 2 represents the complete transcription data set, including the participant pseudonym, the interview start time, interview duration in minutes, and the total word count for each interview.

Table 2: Interview Transcript Data Set*Interview Transcript Data Set*

Participant	Start time	Duration (minutes)	Word count
P1	12:56 PM	32	3809
P2	1:28 PM	46	7596
P3	10:28 AM	38	5867
P4	1:58 PM	44	6903
P5	11:28 AM	36	4813
P6	1:58 PM	40	5228
P7	1:58 PM	55	3216
P8	8:58 AM	51	4427
P9	12:01 PM	59	9065
P10	10:29 AM	49	2849
P11	1:58 PM	32	4041
P12	12:59 PM	36	7906
P13	8:59 PM	42	8618
P14	10:29 AM	36	6292
P15	8:28 AM	32	6707
Totals		628	87337
Average		42	5822

Data Analysis and Findings**Horizontalization**

Moustakas (1994) called for the researcher to horizontalize data by categorizing data regarding every horizon the data can form. This process provides meaning to the data by considering every relevant topic that reveals itself through the analysis, allowing the researcher to label the data with equal value. Horizons of data emerge and re-emerge throughout the interview and data analysis process. Correlation of the data through clustering, overlapping, and repetitive actions led the researcher into theme generation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). The researcher developed the textural hierarchy map highlighted by the themes to bring meaning to

the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). All verbatim participant responses used to generate coding to facilitate theme generation are contained in Appendix E.

Theme Generation

The NVIVO software provided a dynamic tool for the researcher to incorporate manually generated themes with auto-coded themes from the NVIVO software. The theme identification exercise generated six main themes and eleven sub-themes from the manual and auto-coded analysis. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the Transcript Coding Hierarchy Chart that generated the six main themes: (1) Corporate Foundations, (2) Beliefs, (3) Ethical Foundations, (4) Scriptural Foundations, (5) Life Experience, and (6) Doing the Right Thing. Figure 1 also portrays the sub-themes associated with the six main themes: The complete codebook housed in Appendix F displays a combined representation of how each RQ is associated with each sub-theme and how each main theme answers each specific RQ. An analysis of the theme to RQ comparison appears later in this chapter.

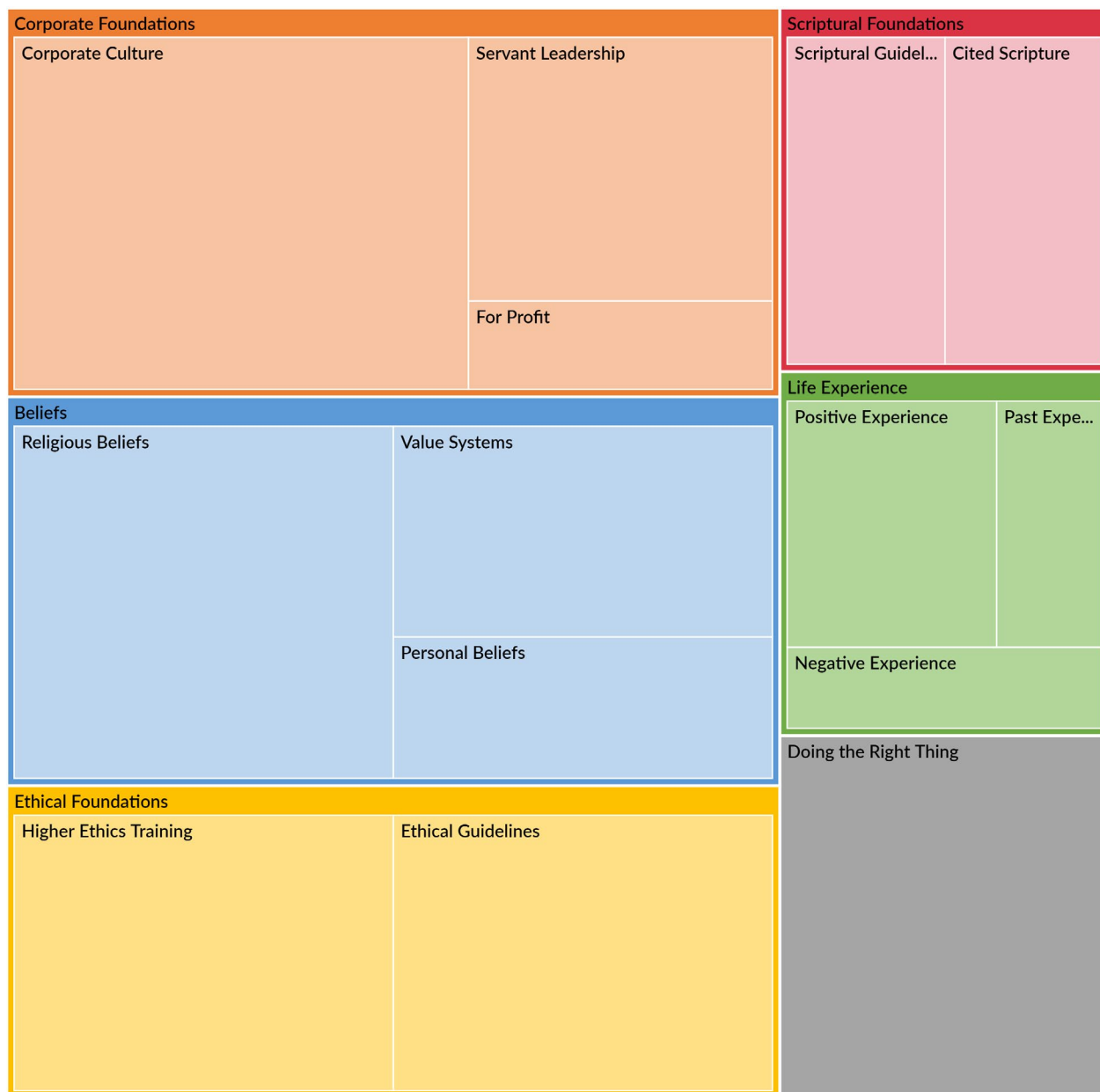
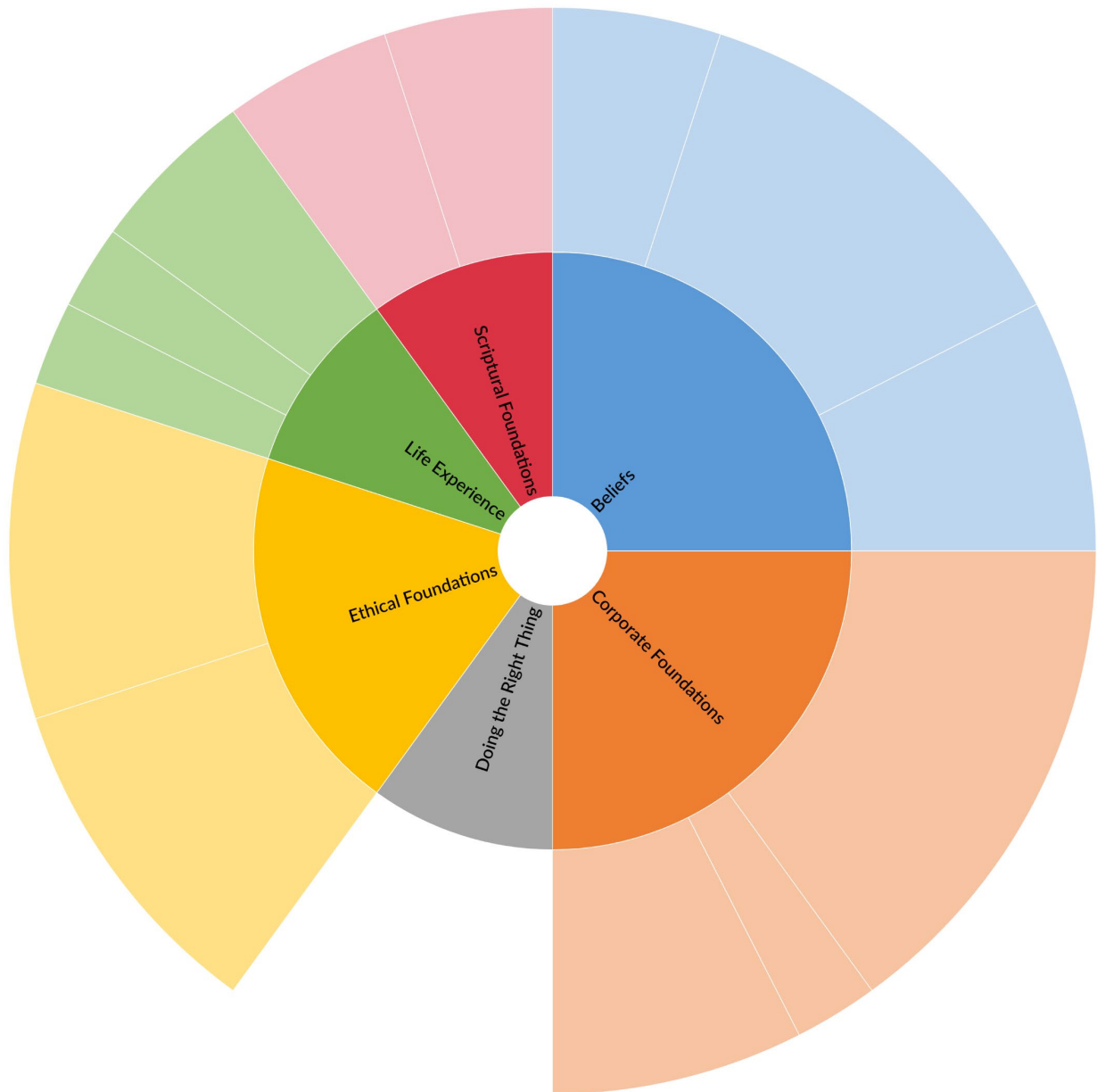
Figure 1: Transcript Theme Hierarchy*Transcript Theme Hierarchy*

Figure 2 provides a somewhat different view of the discovered theme data. The Figure 2 chart shows graphically how the three main themes of Beliefs, Ethical Foundations, and Corporate Foundations represent the largest code groups associated with the various themes.

Figure 2: Transcript Theme Chart

Transcript Theme Chart



One interesting observation that immediately became evident when examining the data associated with Figure 2 is the lack of additional sub-themes within the Doing the Right Thing theme section. Both the researcher and the NVIVO software singled out this theme with no additional sub-themes emerging. This simple chart shows a consolidated view of all fifteen

study, to realize the ethical foundation of truth and the ability to interpret right from wrong residing in Scripture. The compilation of the interview transcripts solidifies that concept (Nass & Kreuer, 2018).

Codebook Development

The researcher took advantage of the data analysis spiral described by Creswell (2013) to organize, peruse, identify, and summarize the data into themes for presentation. Stepping through this process utilizing manual code and theme generation allowed the researcher to triangulate the themes identified in the NVIVO software with the manual themes recognized in the research notes and manual theme generation exercise (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Further classifying the theme determinations, the researcher utilized the NVIVO software tool to generate the initial theme codebook format and then added manual codes to the description section. Manually manipulating the descriptions allowed the researcher to relate a description to the specific RQ each participant addressed within the video transcripts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The codebook housed in Appendix F defines six main themes, further granulated into thirteen additional sub-themes.

Table 3: Theme Codebook Template

Theme Codebook Template

Theme	Dominate RQ
Beliefs	RQ1
Ethical Foundations	RQ1
Scriptural Foundations	RQ2
Corporate Foundations	RQ3
Doing the Right Thing	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3
Life Experience	RQ4

Table 3 provides a visual expression of the six main themes identified by the NVIVO analysis. The table provides a high-level representation of which research question dominated the specific theme generation. Appendix F captures the complete NVIVO generated theme codebook.

RQ1 Theme Generation and Analysis

Research Question 1 asks: What value do corporate leaders place on introducing ethical guidelines into the leadership model used within the organization? The NVIVO and manual code analysis comparison revealed 185 codes gathered across the fifteen participants within the answer section of the three sub-questions for RQ1. The code analysis revealed three main themes associated with RQ1: beliefs, doing the right thing, and ethical foundations. The analysis further delineated the beliefs theme into three sub-themes: personal beliefs, religious beliefs, and value systems and sub-divided the ethical foundation theme into two sub-themes: ethical guidelines and higher ethics training. The doing the right thing theme stood alone in the analysis with no subcategories identified by the analysis tools. The codes defining the RQ1 theme generation are included in Appendix G.

RQ1 Theme One: Beliefs

Table 4 portrays that eleven of the fifteen participants cited parental guidance as the most significant influence on their belief system, revealing a 73% penetration of parental influence. Three of the remaining participants tasked family, other than parental influence, as providing the most influence on distinguishing the difference between right and wrong. Incorporating parents and family together revealed that 93% of the participants felt their upbringing and their family's influence helped form the basis of their ethical foundation. When prompted further, family guidance questions revealed specific direction from the Golden Rule, the Bible, the Ten

Commandments, and specific churches in twelve of the fifteen participants revealing an 80% penetration rate for a scriptural foundation for specific belief systems.

Table 4: Beliefs

Beliefs

Participant code	Participants	Percentage
Parental Guidance	11	73%
Extended Family Influence	3	20%
Catholic Church	1	7%

Personal Beliefs. All of the participants found a need for leaders to introduce ethical guidelines into leadership practices, but the responses varied on where personal beliefs gathered the basis for those ethical guidelines. Participants cited actions such as representing a higher calling, not bringing harm to others, loving others, and valuing others' opinions as essential aspects of a personal belief system. Prompted and unprompted responses revealed that six of the fifteen participants believed an internal understanding of the difference between right and wrong drives one's personal beliefs. Ironically, this internal ethical viewpoint came from five participants without strong backgrounds tied to a scriptural foundation. These responses resonate that God's moral character resides within man as stated in Jeremiah 31:33 (NIVSB, 1985), "...I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts." Paul states this again in Romans 2:15, "They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them" (NIVSB, 1985). Even though 33% of the participants did not correlate their

personal beliefs to Scripture, they correlate them to something internal, which is ironically explained within Jeremiah 31:33 & Romans 2:15 (NIVSB, 1985).

Religious Beliefs. The religious foundations for the 80% of the participants who cited specific religious backgrounds varied between the participants. Interpreting the denominational influence upon each participant was beyond the scope of this study; however, the scriptural foundation influence within these participants was unmistakable. Table 5 details that four participants specifically mentioned the Ten Commandments (NIVSB, 1985, Exodus 20:3-17), while four others referenced the Golden Rule, highlighting Jesus Christ’s statement in Matthew 7:12 (NIVSB, 1985), “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you...” While most people equate the Golden Rule to not harming others, the real meaning behind the concept is to love others as oneself. Paul emphasizes this in Galatians 5:14 (NIVSB, 1985) “For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Three participants quoted Scripture during their responses and surmised that the Holy Bible populated the foundation for all ethical decisions through their Christian upbringing. Four others referred to Catholic school as the basis for their moral beliefs. One of those four citing specific agnostic viewpoints admitted the influence of Catholic schools on their ethical principle foundation.

Table 5: Religious Beliefs

Religious Beliefs

Participant code	Participants	Percentage
The Ten Commandments	4	27%
The Golden Rule	4	27%
Catholic School Influence	4	27%
Christian Upbringing	3	20%

Value Systems. The final sub-theme associated with the main belief theme is the emergence of value systems within one's belief structure. Several participants repeatedly mentioned core values as essential for the ethical treatment of others, even when Scripture does not explicitly tie to those core values. Truth was another aspect of the values system specified by participants as foundational to ethical behavior. Perspective and ownership rounded out the codes feeding the value systems sub-theme category as several participants revealed the need for leaders to own problems and provide a positive perspective to followers (Greenleaf, 1977).

RQ1 Theme Two: Ethical Foundations

The ethical foundations theme responses generated two sub-themes, ethical guidelines, and higher ethics training. Across the expanse of the interviews, recurring codes emerged from the interview transcripts defining the various aspects of participant ethical foundations. The foundation discussions recognized many similarities, and an almost 100% equal response to the higher-level training paradigm emerged.

Ethical Foundations. As previously stated within the beliefs introduction, 73% of the respondents cited parental guidance for their beliefs, and 93% cited overall family involvement for their belief structure. The exact percentages applied to the belief system foundations also formulate the participants' ethical foundations. However, different leadership guidelines emerge as clear ethical guidelines aside from parental guidance, church, and family interaction. Five participants mentioned the societal impact on ethical foundations, citing the tendency of modern society to dictate ethical principles (Kim et al., 2009). Beyond societal viewpoints, culture, integrity, truth, and the legal aspect of ethical foundations come into question. Like the belief foundation, those participants without a decidedly religious background cited an ingrained moral foundation that emerged from one's internal ethical foundation. Once again, this innate moral

foundation links back to Scripture in the form of God's moral character written on the hearts of humanity (NIVSB, 1985, Jeremiah 31:33, Romans, 2:15) to ensure humanity knows the correct way to treat other humans.

Higher Ethics Training. An essential aspect of understanding how ethical guidelines influence leadership practices is recognizing where leaders obtain ethical training. Melé and Fontrodona (2017) highlighted the need for business students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels to learn the mechanics of a business leadership education and become people leaders within the same educational realm. Melé and Fontrodona found that educators provided little attention toward ethical foundation training in these programs. This research confirms those findings. An overwhelming 87% of the participants responded that they received no formal ethics training outside of the annual code of conduct refresher training the company prescribes for all employees. The foundational challenge again lies in the underlying ethical principles used to deliver the code of conduct training. If a company chooses to include less-than-ethical principles in their code of conduct policy, who outside the business hierarchy can challenge that foundation? As long as those ethical guidelines fall within the guidelines of corporate law, the training is seldom questioned (Melé & Fontrodona) and often goes unchecked.

While the research uncovered the need for additional higher-level ethical training, defining the specifics of that training need is beyond the scope of this study. However, addressing those training needs in business professionals and developing the specific guidelines for that training opens the topic for future studies to narrow the gap between perceived ethical foundations and required training to reach prescribed ethical levels. As future studies explore additional industries and geographic regions, those studies may uncover specific training needs in specialized areas not considered in this study.

RQ2 Theme Generation and Analysis: Scriptural Foundations

Research Question 2 asks: What value do corporate leaders place on Scripture-based beliefs and the practice of those beliefs to model leadership behavior? The NVIVO and manual code analysis comparison revealed 149 codes gathered across the fifteen participants within the answer section of the three sub-questions for RQ2. The code analysis revealed one main theme, scriptural foundations, associated with RQ2. The analysis further delineated the scriptural foundations theme into two sub-themes: cited Scripture and scriptural guidelines. The codes defining the RQ2 theme generation are included in Appendix H.

Cited Scripture

As the research question seeks to answer whether Scripture-based beliefs provide value to leadership, the question somewhat infers that leaders understand that Scripture provides a basis for ethical guidelines in leadership. The participant interviews revealed that is not necessarily the case as not all participants were willing to accept the influence of Scripture. While monitoring for emotional responses during the video interviews, the researcher perceived a feeling of anxiety from many participants when asked to speak specifically about Scripture. The participants were willing to discuss diversity and inclusion, but the subject of quoted Scripture seemed to make several participants apprehensive. The researcher did not measure the level of anxiety of any participant but witnessed an uneasiness with some when discussing quoted Scripture.

The fascinating part of the study revealed that while all participants displayed at least some knowledge of Scripture, they were hesitant to admit that knowledge due to the pressures of society. Participant 12 likened discussions about Scripture to discussions about diversity and inclusion, stating that society talks about race and gender in the diversity discussion but not belief systems. Participant 6 revealed that society has no issue with quoting an athlete, politician,

or other famous people, but the walls of discernment elevate when Scripture is inserted into the discussion. The consensus of the participant observations revealed that the participants were somewhat uncomfortable speaking about Scripture specifically. The uncomfortableness was not because the teachings fell outside of their belief systems but because postmodern society has driven humanity so far from the basis of Scripture that the corporate world views the discussion as insulting to non-believers (Kim et al., 2012).

Scriptural Guidelines

The second sub-question for RQ2 asks, do you feel ethical guidelines can be defined without a knowledge of Scripture? The answers came in mixed responses. Summarizing the codes revealed that 73% of the participants believed Scripture has at least some impact on all ethical guidelines. The coding varied from ethics was impossible without Scripture, to Scripture providing the basic guidelines for humanity to make moral judgments. The remaining 27% believed Scripture does not dictate ethical guidelines but that ethical behavior is subjective and often driven by political correctness instead of scriptural guidelines. The 27% bracket of responses leaned more toward legal requirements and interjecting respect for others than an overall basis in Scripture.

Three dominant sub-codes throughout the participant population revealed an inclination for the business leader to lean upon one's internal sense of good. The sub-codes ingrained, solid foundation and basic values present an argument that individual leaders possess the willingness to treat others ethically within themselves internally. Once again, falling back to God's moral character written on humanity's heart (NIVSB, 1985, Jeremiah 31:33, Romans 2:15). As one realizes the need to treat others with love and respect, one must also realize that Jesus Christ delivered the same commandment in Matthew 22:37-39 (NIVSB, 1985), "Love the Lord your

God with all you heart and with all your soul and with all you mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” While some wish to deny the origin of love resides within the very existence of God (1 John 4:8, NIVSB, 1985), the impact love has on the ethical treatment of others is undeniable (Grudem, 2018).

RQ3 Theme Generation and Analysis: Corporate Foundations

Research Question 3 asks: From the leaders’ perspective, what positive impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices? The NVIVO and manual code analysis comparison revealed 141 codes gathered across the fifteen participants within the answer section of the three sub-questions for RQ3. The code analysis revealed one main theme, corporate foundations. The NVIVO software further dissected the corporate foundations theme into three sub-themes, corporate culture, for-profit, and servant leadership. The codes defining the RQ3 theme generation are included in Appendix I.

Corporate Culture

When tasked with defining how Scripture affects secular business practices, the participants provided mixed responses. Table 6 reveals 74% of the participants agreed that Scripture provides a moral foundation for corporate viewpoints but the participant views varied on specific scriptural applications. Seven participants cited Scripture as the basis of understanding and the foundation for proper behavior, while two shared views that scriptural meaning resides within humanity and is unavoidable. One participant cited biblical parables as the foundational instruction for society, and another participant viewed scriptural teachings as a way of life, not just a guideline. The remaining four participants felt that individual perception played a more important role in ethical definitions and that understanding Scripture added no value to corporate ethical guidelines.

Table 6: Corporate Culture*Corporate Culture*

Participant code	Participants	Percentage
Scripture provides basis of understanding	7	47%
Scriptural meaning is unavoidable	2	13%
Biblical parables are society's foundation	1	7%
Scripture provides way of life	1	7%
Scripture adds no value to corporate guidelines	4	26%

A fascinating aspect of this line of questioning revealed that 100% of the respondents agreed that corporations should be following ethical guidelines; however, there was no consensus on the grounding of those guidelines. Participants cited society, executive-level leadership, the corporate legal department, the diversity and inclusion department, and human resources as viable sources for ethical standards driving the corporate culture. Uneasiness and hesitation ensued as the recipients struggled with the idea of Scripture directly affecting corporate business. While 74% of the participants agreed Scripture would provide a positive outlook on corporate ethical guidelines, the remaining 26% saw no positive influence at all.

For-Profit

Some participants viewed a for-profit mindset in the corporate realm as a driving force behind ethical guidelines. One respondent singled out executive leadership and the domination of profit over serving others as the company's guide for ethical principles. Indeed, profit generation has its place in business, but not at the expense of ethical treatment to employees, customers, and shareholders (Chase, 2004). According to 53% of the participants, the legal aspects of the code of conduct policy drive a large portion of the language included. In a for-profit environment, that language may certainly lean toward protecting the company over protecting others the company's actions affect (Grassl & Habisch, 2011).

Servant Leadership

This research study's literature review includes much about the benefits of servant leadership within a corporate environment (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 2010; Wallace, 2007). What cannot be lost in the servant leadership conversation is the references to the shepherd's work, one that is ever prevalent in Scripture (NIVSB, 1985, Luke 22:26, Mark 10:45). When the researcher asked all fifteen participants about the impacts of serving others in the corporate environment, every participant responded positively to the application of servant leadership, instantly recognizing its value within the corporate landscape. The responses cited building relationships with others, providing avenues for promotion, and developing others to impact decision-making. The participants highlighted the value of paying forward the benefits of servant leadership, such as building trust, removing obstacles, fostering teamwork, and helping to relieve the followers' burdens. All fifteen participants agreed that servant leadership is the model to follow for corporate leadership.

Although Greenleaf (1977) did not classify his original work as scriptural because he did not wish to alienate specific religious groups, further studies after Greenleaf have made the connection more prominent. Roberts (2015) explicitly ties Scripture into human resources practices by building the bridge from Scripture to the corporate world through servant leadership practices. However, only one of this study's participants connected servant leadership and the scriptural foundation of that same principle. Participant 9 likened serving others to having faith, living through that faith, and using servant leadership to disciple others. Beyond the Participant 9 response, the other fourteen participants viewed servant leadership as crucial and essential to building personal relationships, but did not directly correlate a relationship between the theory and a scriptural basis.

RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 Joint Theme: Doing the Right Thing

The doing the right thing theme emerged as a stand-alone theme with no sub-themes identified by the research. The codes associated with this theme spanned across RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. The concept of doing the right thing reached a saturation level of 100% across all participants. However, while this research did not attempt to define the right thing, the study participants provided insight into their views of what constitutes the right thing. Table 7 portrays how five of the participants listed the Ten Commandments as the guideline for doing the right thing, while five also listed the Golden Rule as governing the actions of doing the right thing, and the other five listed moral obligations as a driving factor behind doing the right thing. The participants also listed rules, fairness, teamwork, respect, and listening as contributing factors to doing the right thing. The sources varied from the attributes mentioned above to an innate sense of knowing what the right thing to do is and how to do it. Again, the findings point back to God's moral character written on the hearts of humanity so all will know the difference between right and wrong (NIVSB, 1985, Jeremiah 31:33, Romans 2:15).

Table 7: Guidelines

Guidelines

Participant code	Participants	Percentage
The Ten Commandments	5	33.3%
The Golden Rule	5	33.3%
Moral Obligations	5	33.3%

RQ4 Theme Generation and Analysis: Life Experience

Research Question 4 asks: From the leaders' perspective, what negative impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices? The NVIVO and manual code analysis comparison revealed 118 codes gathered across the fifteen participants

within the answer section of the three sub-questions for RQ4. The code analysis revealed one main theme, life experience. The NVIVO software dissected the life experience theme into three sub-themes, negative experience, past experience, and positive experience. The codes defining the RQ4 theme generation are included in Appendix J.

Negative Experience

Unfortunately, modern society has driven a wedge between scriptural-based thoughts and the realities of ethical behavior within the business community (Kim et al., 2012). The results of this study bear that out through the codes generated for research question 4. Careful examination of the Appendix F Theme Codebook reveals that the negative experience theme contains more sub-themes than any other main theme. All of the sub-themes represent negative connotations toward the use of Scripture in the corporate world. However, as the interviews progressed, the researcher uncovered a typical emotional response from the participants. Most of the participants were knowledgeable about Scripture but were reluctant to speak to its value in the corporate world. Participant 8 used the word desensitized and likened believers in the corporate world to the boiling-frog syndrome. Laplante (2004) best describes that syndrome as follows:

The boiling-frog syndrome derives its name from the purported fact that if you place a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will instantly jump out. But, if you place the frog in a pot of tepid water and slowly raise the temperature, the frog, unable to sense the gradual increase in water temperature, will remain until it boils to death. (p. 56)

The boiling-frog syndrome references the desensitizing of believers to modernistic and post-modernistic views over the previous century (Bay et al., 2010). This syndrome drives Leaders grounded in Scripture-based ethical thoughts away from those standards by the secular world that downplays its value. The code analysis of the fifteen participants in this study supports that theory.

Most of the fifteen participants struggled in one way or another with the first RQ4 sub-question: Is highlighting Scripture-based ethical principles within the corporate leadership world appropriate. The struggles came down to resistance from others in the corporate environment, not the actual implementation of Scripture. The majority of the participants expressed concern about the perception of others, alienating other people, and meeting with resistance when scriptural references enter into the corporate workplace. Even the participants who agreed with Scripture as appropriate in the corporate setting guarded against offending others and suggested one must know the audience very well before broaching the subject. Anything less leads to negative pressure from those resistant to Scripture-based ethical principles.

Past Experience

For 73% of the participants, parental guidance encompassed with experience influenced their perception of ethical guidelines. Core values and applying those values as the participants built relationships with co-workers, leaders, and subordinates led to the ethical foundations presented by the participant community. The participants placed an overwhelming emphasis on understanding cultural limitations and the context of those limitations. As one leverages previous experience to understand the present culture, one applies that understanding to the present culture's context to leverage the need to treat others with respect. Those who dare to step outside the accepted norms may face friction if the correct social normality is not recognized.

Positive Experience

Most leaders rely on positive experiences to influence team behaviors (Northouse, 2019). The fifteen respondents fully recognized the need to treat others ethically, even if that ethical guidance derived from a source other than Scripture. The participants cited good behavior, peace, trust, respect, gratitude, and even prayer as positive attributes driving ethical behavior. Not one

of the participants voiced a lack of concern for ethical principles. While the grounding of those principles varied by the participant based upon their parental guidance, formal education, and previous experiences, the consensus agreed that the ethical treatment of others is not an option but a requirement in the realm of corporate leadership.

Evaluation of the Research Design

Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state that qualitative research "...can be stimulating, challenging, illuminating, and quite enjoyable – a very personally rewarding experience" (p. 345). This researcher achieved all four attributes, and even though it was a long journey, it was undoubtedly rewarding. Looking back on the research design provided clarity to the process and endorsed the need to persevere in the face of new challenges. The following evaluation offers insight into lessons learned through the research and suggestions for future researchers.

Video Interview Protocol

Upon clearing the Liberty University IRB requirements, the researcher immediately began obtaining permission, seeking participant candidates, verifying participant availability, and scheduling online video interviews. The researcher chose to utilize the Cisco Webex video conferencing product for its availability to all participants and the researcher and its full video recording and transcription capabilities. The researcher uses this software platform daily, so the learning curve was short; therefore, the researcher achieved positive results without significant time spent learning a new video platform.

The recorded video provided transcription clarity as the process challenged the researcher to review and decipher many of the videos to clarify the auto-generated transcription's misinterpretation. The note-taking process throughout the interviews (Creswell, 2013) provided a means for the researcher to qualify the transcript data and correlate the findings to the video.

While the interview process worked well, the researcher discovered and made minor adjustments from interview to interview that made the process flow more smoothly. First, the initial request for a 90-minute interview length was too long. A one-hour interview session was sufficient in all cases. The researcher believes the initial 90-minute interview request may have limited the participant pool due to time restraints on specific leaders. One potential participant cited the length of the 90-minute interview as the main reason for not participating in the study. Second, while the researcher followed an interview guide as suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), the researcher failed to use good voice markers to identify the specific question transitions in the early interviews. This small oversight proved challenging when the Cisco Webex software generated the transcripts as the software did not precisely identify each transition. The researcher identified the transitions clearly by re-playing the captured video while reading the video transcript. As later interviews materialized, the researcher added more defined audio markers to aid in the video transcription of the remaining interviews and used those markers to identify information transitions.

Cisco Webex Video Conference Software

The Cisco Webex video conference tool proved invaluable for the researcher. The tool was available for all of the participants, and all participants were familiar with its operation, so the initial joining of the conference bridge was seamless. The tool made easily understandable recordings of each participant interview and immediately produced the transcript when the recording was completed. The tool audibly notifies the participants when the recording begins and ends so that each participant is fully aware of when the recording sessions begin. The tool produced high-quality video recordings that the researcher later used to correlate the transcripts with interview notes to identify themes. The video recording capabilities of the Cisco Webex

tool allowed the researcher to complete the fifteen interviews within a three-week window. That aggressive interview schedule would not have been possible if the researcher had utilized face-to-face interviews. Overall, the Cisco Webex video conference tool fostered a positive experience for the participants and the researcher.

NVIVO Software

Initially, the researcher was apprehensive about using the NVIVO software due to unfamiliarity with the software product. After working through some minor licensing and software compatibility issues, the researcher settled on the latest version of NVIVO as the preferred product suite. The initial use of the tool proved cumbersome, but the researcher utilized the software manufacturer's website to become educated on the software's features and capabilities. The researcher's most valuable aspect was the favorable comparison between the manual coding exercise and the auto-coding provided by the NVIVO software. The researcher utilized the software exclusively to generate the theme and word cloud charts previously displayed as Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3. The use of these charts, accompanied with the software-generated codes, correlated nicely to the manual codes list identified by the researcher. The researcher believes the combination of manual coding with the NVIVO comparison left no holes in the data analysis process.

Saturation

As saturation became evident, a natural move from inductive to deductive reasoning occurred within the research study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Data saturation began to occur with the Participant 11 interview and became more prominent through the remaining four participant interviews. Upon saturation, the researcher probed the remaining participants in a few different directions to ensure the process captured all remaining theme possibilities and that no

new data categories could be uncovered (Creswell, 2013). The researcher realized data saturation due to taking proper notes throughout the interview sessions and conducting initial code generation before all interviews were completed. This process allowed the researcher to probe deeper for theme recognition, ensuring that no new information would be forthcoming to the research project (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Bias Recognition and Control

Early in the research interview process, the researcher realized the importance of removing bias from the interview conversations to protect data integrity (Creswell, 2013). To maintain a neutral position, the researcher did not offer any participants any religious labels before or throughout the interviews. The researcher did not ask any participants to provide their religious affiliation, although many of them eventually provided that information during the interview. Even when this occurred, the researcher still did not reveal any specific religious denomination affiliation to ensure the interview data would remain valid to the research study. The researcher believes these efforts promoted the validity and reliability of the data transcribed within the study by allowing the participants to provide open and honest answers to the questions without feeling persuaded by the researcher's beliefs (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

CHAPTER FIVE, CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This study intended to bridge the gap between perceived moral goodness grounded in humanistic intentions and the steady presence of God's moral character. The research sought to understand the ethical guidelines that drive corporate code of conduct practices by performing phenomenological research of fifteen participant leaders within the corporate environment. The researcher tied the analysis to the four main research questions through transcript coding and theme generation to draw conclusions against the problem and identify a means to progress forward. The researcher applied those findings to conclude the research by answering each research question through the theme generation process. The researcher also identified the study's theoretical, empirical, and practical implications and attempted to develop applications of the research findings to the corporate setting. The researcher discussed the limitations of the research and analyzed those limitations to identify the need for additional research to expand the scope and volume of this study into different industries, including a broader leadership audience, and even expanding into the international setting. Finally, this chapter provides an overall summary of this research study and offers the researcher's viewpoint of the study's most important findings.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the business leader's perception of Scripture-based ethical principles within the secular corporate environment and determine how those ethical principles transform into the value of serving others through leadership practices that emulate God's moral character.

Research Questions

RQ1. What value do corporate leaders place on introducing ethical guidelines into the leadership model used within the organization?

RQ2. What value do corporate leaders place on Scripture-based beliefs and the practice of those beliefs to model leadership behavior?

RQ3. From the leaders' perspective, what positive impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices?

RQ4. From the leaders' perspective, what negative impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

This research intended to bridge the gap between perceived moral goodness and Scripture-based ethics. The research sought to understand where business leaders secure their moral foundation and apply those foundations to business leadership practices. The research indeed discovered those groundings and successfully answered the four research questions developed in the study.

RQ1 Conclusions

The research uncovered that the ethical guidelines leaders implement derive primarily from their belief systems. Those belief systems predominantly originate from parental and family influence. Driving toward more profound meaning, the researcher uncovered that 80% of the participants contributed their moral foundation to some religious background and that those backgrounds summarily influenced their belief systems. Core values and truth emerged as recurring themes in the ethical foundation discussions as 53% of the participants directly mentioned either the Ten Commandments or the Golden Rule as the driving force behind truth and values implemented within leadership practices.

Considering familial influence, 93% of the participants cited family as the dominant force behind their ethical foundation. Aside from family influence, society and the impact of ethical actions on society also significantly influenced ethical guidance. The overwhelming theme attributed to answering RQ1 fell back to a moral aptitude ingrained into the very being of humanity. While no participants directly quoted Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 11:19, or Romans 2:15 (NIVSB, 1985) where God makes very clear that He writes His moral character on the hearts of humanity so humanity will know the impact of ethical actions, the “ingrained within us” theme reoccurred several times throughout the fifteen interview discussions.

An important aspect of ethical treatment of others is the need to introduce ethical training into leadership practices. Melé and Fontrodona (2017) noted that business education students lack the higher ethics training necessary to handle unethical workplace situations, and the findings of this research support that notion. The research uncovered that 87% of the participants had not received any form of ethics training outside of their company's annual mandatory code of conduct training. The underlying problem here is that the “check in the box” code of conduct training does not sufficiently address morality questions and provide answers for the proper ethical treatment of others within a business community.

As a conclusion for RQ1 and segue into RQ2 and RQ3, the research participants believed that doing the right thing was essential to ethical treatment of others. The participants listed the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, moral obligations, truth, fairness, and listening as essential aspects of doing the right thing. The connotation toward an ingrained sense of morality also drove the conversation as the participants believed they understood what doing the right thing meant and that their corporate leadership practices reflect that ingrained sense of morality, even if it lacks definition in corporate documentation.

RQ2 Conclusions

RQ2 was difficult for many of the participants to answer. The difficulty lay not within scriptural undertones in ethical practices but in the unwillingness to recognize them due to societal pressures. When asked how Scripture influences the corporate structure, most of the participants hesitated to the point of becoming anxious about the question. Participant 12 specifically highlighted how Scripture is not included in diversity and inclusion discussions at the corporate level. Other participants voiced concerns that the pressures of society to ignore religion in the workplace have driven the basis of humanity's belief systems further away from the truth maintained in Scripture. All participants recognized the hesitance to include scriptural references within their leadership practices for fear of insulting others with different beliefs.

When asked if leaders could define ethical guidelines without knowledge of Scripture, 73% of the participants believed Scripture directly influenced ethical direction. The remaining 27% believed the legal aspects of ethical guidance provide more influence to corporate leadership. However, the dominant theme within the RQ2 section and sub-question answers were that leaders maintained an ethical foundation within themselves, even if they possessed little or no knowledge of Scripture. Grudem (1994) highlights that all humans are born with a basic understanding of God's moral law, and Fockler (2016) describes an innate moral sense that resides within humanity. Scripture defines the concept in Jeremiah 31:33 (NIVSB, 1985): "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts...they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest..." Similar to the RQ1 conclusion, the RQ2 conclusion, while pointing toward the legal aspects of business as an escape, the ingrained sense of right and wrong wrote on the hearts of humanity by God is undeniable. The participant responses about ingrained morality confirmed this conclusion.

RQ3 Conclusions

From a corporate perspective, 100% of the participants agreed that ethical foundations within a business are critical for the company's prosperity and employees. Although the participants maintained varying views on the importance of Scripture in defining those principles, all agreed the principles were essential to the highest degree. Direct references to Scripture were natural for some, unnatural for others, and essentially foreign to the few remaining. The one aspect of Scripture that made all participants somewhat uncomfortable was the pressures of society to suppress speaking of Scripture in the workplace. The researcher experienced this as well when conducting the initial permission conversation. The researcher was anxious that the approving leader would not grant permission to conduct the study; however, the leader granted permission and showed genuine excitement toward the study. This general concept emerged within the RQ3 discussions, as the participant consensus was that Scripture provided a positive influence, but corporate leadership would not acknowledge that influence.

An overwhelming aspect of the participant responses regarding corporate influence on ethical guidelines was that corporations developed ethical practices for the company's benefit, not the benefit of the employee. A few participants cited the need for the company to realize profit margins ahead of ethical treatment of others. Chase (2004) describes this concept as detrimental to corporate growth as leaders seek to grow personal wealth instead of company employee solvency.

The most positive aspect of the RQ3 questioning was the overwhelmingly positive response to inclinations of servant leadership in the workplace. All of the participants agreed that serving others in leadership is paramount to providing ethical guidelines by building personal relationships between leaders and employees. Although all fifteen leaders agreed that Servant

Leadership Theory was crucial, only one connected the theory and the inclination toward discipleship outlined within Scripture. Again, this fact supports the theory that God has instilled morality and a need to serve others ahead of oneself, even if the individual does not understand the scriptural connection.

RQ4 Conclusions

The first sub-question of RQ4 provided the most significant challenge for the participant pool to answer. The question asked about the appropriateness of Scripture-based ethical principles within leadership. Most participants struggled with this question, not because of their personal beliefs but because of the political fallout of mentioning Scripture in the context of business. Even those with a solid Scripture-based background were hesitant to name Scripture as appropriate in the corporate world due to societal pressures against it. Many believe that the concepts are appropriate, but quoting direct Scripture within the corporate environment is not, due to the possibility of alienating non-believers. The diversity and inclusion conversation developed, deflecting the Scripture question into a question of alienation, not toward Scripture, but non-believers. The consensus was that even if Scripture has a positive influence on society and business, corporate leaders view it negatively simply because of the religious connotation it carries. The majority of the fifteen participants exemplified a real fear of discipline from the corporate Human Resources department if they quoted Scripture directly.

From a positive aspect, all fifteen leaders agreed that ethical treatment of others is essential to business growth. Without the ethical treatment of others, society fails, and a subsequent lack of trust destroys the employee and company relationship. While not all participants agreed upon the prominence of Scripture in the corporate environment, all agreed that the ethical undertones found in Scripture are crucial to corporate success.

Empirical Literature Implications

Within the theological framework of the study, Nass and Kreuer (2018) highlighted the need for Scripture-based ethics to become more influential in leadership practices in secular business. Northouse (2018) explicitly challenges leaders to behave ethically and to serve others, as highlighted by Greenleaf (1977) and Spears (2010). The two most prominent themes of this study that exemplified overwhelming support to the established literature were an ingrained sense of ethical values defining right and wrong and the need to serve others.

Through an empirical view of the research study, the participants displayed a true passion for leading ethically. While not all participants were willing to accept scriptural influence within their ethical practices, all portrayed that some natural force drove them to act ethically. Whether that ethical foundation came from parents, Scripture, or society, the participants implied an underlying feeling of goodwill towards others drives humanity to do the right thing for other people. Moving beyond what one thinks is right versus another, most participants agree upon fundamental core values. Ironically, Scripture sufficiently defines those core values. Whether delivered through the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, or an ingrained sense of right versus wrong, the respondents repeated the value of treating others with respect and serving others ahead of oneself.

Ethical foundations developed by corporations do not always follow the same strict ethical guidelines. The participants in this study found ethical foundations in their leadership practices, but many felt the company they worked for fell short in those same principles. The study implied that the company developed the code of conduct to protect company profits rather than protecting the moral obligation to its employees. Hill (2017) highlighted that some businesses with strict ethical codes realize more ethics violations. This research implies that the

concept is genuine since most participants viewed the annual code of conduct training as a legal requirement rather than a valuable ethical training tool.

Chase (2004) suggested that one's biblical worldview does not need to be separate from one's professional life. However, the participants of this study implied the opposite dynamic that corporate ethics and personal ethics do not necessarily mesh. When challenged with incorporating Scripture into business practices, the study participants were hesitant to commit to that practice, not because it was the wrong thing to do, but for fear of offending others. The consensus was that direct scriptural references may alienate other people, but if leaders utilize the underlying guidance provided through Scripture without quoting Scripture directly, that behavior is acceptable. This notion implies that post-modernistic society gets in the way. While the ethical principles outlined in Scripture are perfectly acceptable to society, society rejects the same notion when quoted through Scripture directly.

Theoretical Literature Implications

The theoretical aspects of the study aligned well with Servant Leadership Theory first introduced by Greenleaf (1977) and supported by Wallace (2007), Spears (2010), and Northouse (2019). When questioned about serving others, 100% of the participants agreed that serving others is a foundational aspect of leadership that leaders cannot ignore. According to the study's participants, serving others builds trust, fosters inclusion, develops relationships, and involves followers in the decision-making process. The participants could not overstate the importance of serving others. The participants used descriptors such as crucial, critical, highly impactful, and essential when describing the need for leaders to serve others. These concepts fall directly in line with the theoretical framework established in chapter two of this study.

The participants of this study recognized the importance of ethical behavior in the workplace and the importance of ethical training. However, only 13% of the participant population acknowledged receiving formal ethics training outside of the company's annual mandatory code of conduct training. According to the participants, there is an ethical gap between that prescribed code of conduct training and actual ethical training used to teach leaders how to serve others. Anderson (2013) outlined the importance of ethical education for leaders from a Christian worldview perspective. Baker (2019) argued that education and religious beliefs could co-exist. The value found in Servant Leadership Theory by the participant population implied that co-existence is indeed possible.

While Greenleaf (1977) did not direct his initial work on servant leadership toward a specific religion so all may benefit from its principles, the scriptural basis of the theory is arguable (Hege, 2017). The participants of this study did not specifically tie serving others to Scripture, but they did highlight the need to serve others as paramount to successful leadership. This study highlighted the need for leaders to act ethically, but how do leaders know how to define ethical standards? The majority of the participants revealed ingrained ethical guidelines, which the researcher has linked to Scripture. Without that ingrained revelation of ethical principles, how does the average leader understand the difference between good and poor ethics? The answer to that question, and the gap in the literature, lies in the ethical training in leaders. It is not enough to require leaders to complete corporate-sponsored ethical guideline training pertaining specifically to that company. Leadership must reach beyond those restrictions and seek outside ethical principle guidance through formal training. Whether that guidance comes directly from Scripture or other developed sources, the need to incorporate outside views into the corporate leadership structure is paramount to bringing positive change into the corporate ethical

setting. Without the introduction of outside influence, behaviors remain status quo and squelch the possibility for improvement by resisting the need for corporate change. The research identified a real need for formal outside ethical education to help bridge the gap between ethical principles developed to benefit a corporation and servant leadership principles to foster employee growth and well-being.

Empirical Applications

This study highlighted the awareness of the importance of ethical behavior in the corporate workplace environment. While there was no consensus around the use of quoted Scripture within the corporate environment, the participant field provided empirical evidence that humanity has intrinsic ethical characteristics ingrained within human nature, and those characteristics drive the ethical treatment of others. While direct Scripture quoting may not become a practical application for the corporate environment, implementing the principles outlined within Scripture is appropriate. The researcher observed the participant pool's passion for doing the right thing, adherence to the Ten Commandments, and implementing the behavior that describes the Golden Rule. As leaders understand better the need for ethical behavior, they must also understand better the need for an ethical foundation of that behavior.

Simply calling behavior good does not make it ethical. Subjectivity within a society plays a role in that decision; however, education is the key to better defining that subjectivity. Is truth applied to ethical considerations, or is it perceived truth based upon the subjectivity of modern society? As leaders seek to do the right thing for followers, they must understand what the right thing is. Applying outside ethical training within the corporate environment is just one way to coincide what the right thing is with the empirical knowledge that provides that definition. Corporate leaders would serve their followers well by seeking outside ethics training to

supplement the prescribed corporate-sponsored training. The outside training provides the leader with the technical knowledge to apply the real meaning of doing the right thing and allows the leader to qualify that perception.

Theoretical Applications

While all of the study participants agreed that serving others while leading is the preferred leadership model, only a few participants possessed an advanced understanding of Servant Leadership Theory. Only one participant cited the theory by name, and one other likened the theory to discipleship. None of the participants initially expressed familiarity with Greenleaf (1977) and the origination of the theory. However, all participants seemed to understand the importance of the theory within the corporate environment and the theory's impact on corporate ethical behavior.

Aside from the need to serve others through leadership, leaders must maintain a high level of trust and respect within the corporate community (Lencioni, 2002). Leaders who damage that trust risk alienating their teams and negatively affecting the business relationships necessary for company success. Bennis (2009) describes leaders earning trust through constancy, congruity, reliability, and integrity. The participants of this study placed a high value on the ability to serve others and emphasized the positive interactions between leader and follower based upon trust. That level of trust becomes an avenue for building relationships within corporate teams that bleed over into the corporation itself. As a theoretical application, a proficient way to increase ethical treatment within a company is to start at the base level, not just at the executive level. As leaders build trust with employees through service, they return the action to peers and followers alike. The servant leadership culture constructs from within and

supplants the corporate culture of protecting profit first and employees second. As the paradigm shifts, so shifts the level of ethical treatment of others.

Practical Applications

The research results suggest that corporate ethics training environments branch out beyond the benefits to the company and incorporate the benefits to employees. Corporate ethics training should begin with the concept of serving others and work the corporate guidelines around that principle to benefit both company and employee. Since the majority of the participants viewed the code of conduct training as a legal requirement activity, efforts toward improving that training to make it meaningful should bridge the gap between uneducated leaders and ethical violations.

Moving corporate training departments to change their leadership training packages may be a tall task to overcome. To combat the resistance to change, leaders should reach out beyond the confines of the corporate training departments to seek ethical training from academia. This researcher provides one example of that action by pursuing this particular degree program. The researcher sees the need for increased ethical guidance within the corporate world and sees no better example than God's moral character to provide that guidance. While this degree program typically focuses upon church leadership, this researcher intends to apply the learnings from the program to the corporate world to provide ethical guidance to those needing more than business profit and loss acumen. While others may not choose to follow this same path or to this level of intensity, the need exists for corporate leaders to reach outside of the corporate environment to introduce new ideas into leadership. Leaders obtain those ideas through outside training sources specifically developed to deliver a higher level of ethical guidance.

Research Limitations

Research Population Gender

The initial list of 34 prospective leaders included 12 female and 22 male participants. As the leaders accepted, declined, or chose not to respond to the research request, only three female participants were included in the final fifteen. Initially, two additional female participants accepted but then chose to remove themselves from the study due to time constraints. The researcher hoped to obtain an equal representation of both male and female leaders in the study; however, that hope evaporated as only five of the original twelve female invitees responded to the research invitation. Perhaps the researcher could have worded the invitation differently to obtain more female representation. That dynamic is an unknown aspect, but the researcher recognizes the disparity between male and female respondents as a research limitation.

Research Timing

Aligning with the previous research limitation, at least four potential research candidates declined to participate due to the length of the interview sessions and the relatively aggressive schedule to complete the interviews. Two of those four were female. Perhaps if the researcher extended the interview timeline or shortened the initial request from 90 minutes to 60 minutes, the participant pool may have included a more diverse population. As previously illustrated in Table 2, the average interview duration was 42 minutes, and none of the interviews extended beyond 60 minutes.

Participant Number

The researcher initially settled upon fifteen participant candidates to conduct the research interviews. An odd number was chosen to provide an odd number of responses should coding become comparative between specific questions. While the odd number did not become a factor

in the study, the study appeared to reach saturation around the participant 11 interview session. Even though the research reached data saturation at participant 11, the researcher continued to perform the interviews until all fifteen interviews were completed. Fifteen participants proved to be a significant participant pool from a data-gathering perspective. Future research may consider downsizing participant pools from fifteen to ten or eleven participants.

Code Generation

As previously stated in chapter 4, the researcher sequenced manual code generation and NVIVO auto-coding together to establish the thematic structure. The unfamiliarity with the NVIVO software from the onset proved difficult but not impossible for the researcher to overcome. The researcher should have invested more time becoming familiar with the NVIVO software before beginning the research gathering and writing phase of the study. However, the licensing limitation of the NVIVO software, accompanied by the relatively high cost of the software versus the potential gain, proved problematic to an earlier software training cycle. The researcher's background in the IT industry allowed for a short software learning curve, but future researchers may consider that learning timeline carefully.

Ethical Training Definitions

The findings of this study have identified a need for leaders to seek additional outside ethical leadership training. However, the study does not define the training quantity or offer suggestions about the availability of that training. While this researcher intends to use the Christian leadership forum presented in this degree program to influence corporate leadership ethics questions, that same path may prove difficult for other leaders to follow. While the research identifies the need for additional higher ethical learning, identifying the avenue for that learning is beyond the scope of this study.

Further Research

Additional Leadership Levels

The ethical concepts behind this leadership study do not originate or end at the Vice President and Director levels. Lower-level leaders early in their leadership careers may benefit more greatly than seasoned leaders from this study. Individuals realizing their potential to lead earlier in their professional careers benefit by encompassing those early learnings into their higher-level leadership practices. Future research focused upon leaders at the manager and supervisor levels should prove fruitful. An extension of this study to lower-level managers, possibly even into the professional or individual contributor sector, may provide an avenue for early ethical training to combat unethical behavior before leadership pre-conceived notions prove impactful.

Other Industries

This researcher chose to address this phenomenological study toward the telecommunications industry since that industry experienced some of the most prominent ethical violations that drove policy change. However, future research studies of Scripture-driven ethical principles may include any industry where human interaction through leadership is prominent. Including other industries and varying degrees of employee-to-leader interaction should expand this study and provide additional insight into the importance of Scripture-driven ethics that affect leaders, followers, shareholders, and customers in progressive business communities.

International Applications

This research focused upon leadership within the United States but could extend beyond those geographical boundaries. Ethical leadership requirements exist in other countries outside the United States and are essential to employees' ethical treatment worldwide. Future research

extending beyond the United States borders may focus on international departments within domestic headquartered companies to uncover if ethical guidelines change as company locations disperse into other countries. The value gained by uncovering international ethical considerations may prove even more valuable to the academic and professional communities as companies explore ethical education for leaders.

Ethical Training Guidelines

Throughout this research study and previous coursework, the researcher has uncovered a need for higher levels of ethical training. The participants in this study exemplified the lack of professional ethics training at the leadership level beyond annual mandatory leadership training; however, a comprehensive list of that training is not readily available. Moving beyond inter-company ethical training, the researcher struggled to uncover specific degree programs focused upon ethical leadership as the foundation for leadership. Additional research focused on developing ethical leadership degree programs may support a shift in the leadership training many universities provide. Stepping outside the confinement of traditional business programs to focus on the ethical development of leaders may provide the avenue to increase more than the technical attributes of leadership and increase the emotional intelligence of those leaders as they become more ethically focused upon serving others.

Future Research Designs

As future studies branch out to other industries, companies, and countries, the researchers should expand the design to match the dynamics of those studies. Additional qualitative research within different cultures may prove valuable as an ethnography or case study, but future research may also extend to a quantitative or mixed-methods study foundation to match the environment of each proposed study. Since ethical leadership is required of all leaders, researchers and leaders

should explore the boundaries surrounding the level of scrutiny describing that behavior. The study of ethics is broad enough to incorporate many different aspects of research design. Restricting the concept to a specific methodology restricts the discovery of human behavior embedded within human nature.

Summary

The goal of this research was to link corporate ethical guidelines to Scripture. While the study participants did not directly link Scripture to ethical guidelines through quoted Scripture, the consensus was that an internal or ingrained sense of moral right and wrong exists within humanity. Jeremiah, 31:33 (NIVSB, 1985) states, “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.” This concept applies to all of humanity. The Apostle Paul, while speaking of God’s judgment, reveals that even the Gentiles who obey the law are righteous when he states, “They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, the consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.” (NIVSB, 1985, Romans 2:15). These Scriptures solidify the concept that humanity knows the difference between right and wrong because God has written his moral character directly onto the hearts of humanity. Scripture defines that concept, so there is no question that ethical guidelines derive directly from Scripture. Human conscience provides the link between the two.

Another goal of this research was to bridge the literature gap between perceived moral goodness and Scripture-based ethics by developing an integration process. The research identified the need for formal ethical training at the leadership level to help close that process gap. The institution of formal training that teaches leaders to serve others ahead of themselves and approach the human side of leadership as an avenue to promote human progress ahead of corporate profit and loss, bridges the process gap between perceived moral goodness and

Scripture-based ethics. Reverting to the critical finding where God has written His moral character upon the hearts of humanity, leaders would be wise to realize their leadership shortfalls accompany a lack of genuine caring for others. When the need to increase profits or meet financial targets at the expense of followers takes priority, a division between high-level morality and leadership actions exists. A prominent way to eliminate that division is through ethical training guiding leaders to put others' needs first and realize profit second. As the needs of others are recognized and supported through concrete ethical training, employees will react more favorably to being involved. Follower engagement and enablement develop the positive work environment needed for employees to flourish, which coincidentally allows the company to profit.

One final observation this researcher views as impactful to the study is the tendency for leaders to diminish scriptural ethical basis in favor of postmodern-driven societal norms. While 73% of the participants agreed Scripture provided a foundation for ethical behavior in one way or another, all participants were hesitant to bring discussions about Scripture into the corporate workplace for fear of alienating another person's beliefs. The research pushes one to realize that the secular corporate world has driven a wedge between God's plan for humanity and humanity's plan for itself.

When postmodern views take precedence over ethical principles designed by God, leaders fall short of providing the best ethical guidance. Perhaps leaders should revert to Paul's statements in Colossians 3:23 (NIVSB, 1985), "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters" or Romans 12:2 (NIVSB, 1985), "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Both

verses challenge humanity to find true ethical principles within God's moral character, not humanity itself. Leaders would serve others more completely by following Paul's advice.

REFERENCES

- Adam, A. M., & Rachman-Moore, D. (2004). The methods used to implement an ethical code of conduct and employee attitudes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 54(3), 225-244.
- Andersen, E. (2012). *Leading so people will follow*. Jossey-Bass.
- Anderson, D. W. (2013). The teacher as servant-leader. *International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal*, 8(2), 2.
- Anthony, M. J., & Benson, W. S. (2011). *Exploring the history and philosophy of Christian education, Principles for the 21st century*. WIPF and Stock Publishers.
- Autiero, G. (2018). Secular education and religious values in the formation of human capital. *International Journal of Development Issues*, 17(1), 55-68.
- Baker, D. P. (2019). The great antagonism that never was, unexpected affinities between religion and education in post-secular society. *Theory and Society*, 48(1), 39-65.
- Barbuto Jr, J. E., & Wheeler, D. W. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership. *Group & Organization Management*, 31(3), 300-326.
- Bay, D., McKeage, K., & McKeage, J. (2010). An historical perspective on the interplay of Christian thought and business ethics. *Business & Society*, 49(4), 652-676.
- Bennis, W. (2009). *On becoming a leader*. Basic Books.
- Blumenfeld, W. J. (2006). Christian privilege and the promotion of “secular” and not-so “secular” mainline Christianity in public schooling and in the larger society. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 39(3), 195-210.
- Bryman, A., Collinson, D., Grint, K., Jackson, B., Uhl-Bien, M. (Ed.). (2011). *The SAGE handbook of leadership*. Sage Publications.
- Burns, J., Shoup, J. R., Simmons, D. C., & Anacker, G. J. (2014). *Organizational leadership, Foundations & Practices for Christians*. IVP Academic.
- Chase, K. (2004). Christian perspectives on business ethics, Faith, profit, and decision making. *Business & Professional Ethics Journal*, 23(4), 3-12.
- Copley, T. (2008). Non-indoctrinatory religious education in secular cultures. *Religious Education*, 103(1), 22-31.
- Craft, C. M., Foubert, J. D., & Lane, J. J. (2011). Integrating religious and professional identities, Christian faculty at public institutions of higher education. *Religion & Education*, 38(2), 92-110.

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design, choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design, Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage publications.
- Daniels, D., Franz, R. S., & Wong, K. (2000). A classroom with a worldview, making spiritual assumptions explicit in management education. *Journal of Management Education*, 24(5), 540-561.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act, A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). McGraw – Hill.
- De Pree, M. (2011). *Leadership is an art*. Currency.
- Dickson, M. W., Den Hartog, D. N., & Mitchelson, J. K. (2003). Research on leadership in a cross-cultural context, Making progress, and raising new questions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(6), 729-768.
- Dukart, J. R. (2000). Bundling services on the fiber-optic network. *Utility Business*, 3(12), 61-61.
- Early, G. (2006). The Inner Work of the Chief Executive, Humility and Wisdom in the Service of Leadership. *Transformation*, 23(4), 243–252.
- Enderle, G. (1997). In search of a common ethical ground, corporate environmental responsibility from the perspective of Christian environmental stewardship. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 16(2), 173-181.
- Ewest, T. (2015). Christian identity as primary foundation to workplace ethics. *Religions, A Scholarly Journal*, 2015(1), 12.
- Finch, K. P. (2007). The image of God, servant-leadership and forgiveness. *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, 3(1), 203-216.
- Fintel, H. (2013). *The top ten mistakes leaders make*. David C. Cook.
- Fischer, J. (2004). Social responsibility and ethics, clarifying the concepts. *Journal of Business ethics*, 52(4), 381-390.
- Fockler Jr, J. (2016). Is there an innate moral sense?. *Torch Magazine*, 89(3), 33-38
- Ford Motor Company (2007). Code of Conduct Handbook. Retrieved March 26, 2021, from <https://corporate.ford.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en-us/documents/governance-and-policies/COC-Handbook-Public-Vsn-CURRENT-english-11082017.pdf>

- Giorgi, A. (Ed.). (1985). *Phenomenology and Psychological Research*. Duquesne University Press.
- Grassl, W., & Habisch, A. (2011). Ethics and economics, towards a new humanistic synthesis for business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 99(1), 37-49.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership, A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.
- Grudem, W. A. (1994). *Systematic theology, An introduction to biblical doctrine*. Zondervan.
- Grudem, W. (2018). *Christian ethics, An introduction to biblical moral reasoning*. Crossway.
- Hanna, M. F. (2006). What is" Christian" About Christian Leadership?. *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 1(1), 21-31.
- Hege Jr, G. H. (2017). *The Taxonomical Value of Koine Greek Words for Identifying Conceptual Streams in Servant Leadership Literature, A Content Analysis Study* [Doctoral dissertation, Lancaster Bible College]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Hill, A. (2017). *Just business, Christian ethics for the marketplace*. InterVarsity Press.
- Hoekema, A. A. (1994). *Created in God's image*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Hollinger, T. D. (2010). Placing Christ at the center of Christian leadership values. *Inner Resources for Leaders*, 2, 1-13.
- Hotam, Y., & Wexler, P. (2014). Education in post-secular society. *Critical Studies in Education*, 55(1), 1-7.
- Hull, J. E. (2003). Aiming for Christian education, settling for Christians educating, The Christian school's replication of a public school paradigm. *Christian Scholar's Review*, 32(2), 203.
- Jeynes, W. H. (2009). The relationship between biblical literacy, academic achievement, and school behavior among Christian-and public-school students. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 18(1), 36-55.
- Kapic, K. M. (Ed.). (2014). Sanctification and Ethics. In *Sanctification, Explorations in theology and practice*. (p. 150-166). InterVarsity Press.
- Kessler, V., & Kretzschmar, L. (2015). Christian leadership as a trans-disciplinary field of study. *Verbum Et Ecclesia*, 36(1), 1

- Kim, D., Fisher, D., & McCalman, D. (2009). Modernism, Christianity, and business ethics, A worldview perspective, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 90(1), 111-121. doi,10.1007/s10551-009-0031-2
- Kim, D., McCalman, D., & Fisher, D. (2012). The sacred/secular divide and the Christian worldview, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 109(2), 203-208. doi,10.1007/s10551-011-1119-z
- Klosterman, K. F. (2021). *Exploring Follower Characteristics in Culturally Heterogeneous Virtual Teams, A Qualitative Phenomenological Study* (Order No. 28258915). [Doctoral dissertation, Colorado Technical University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Knight, G. R. (2006). *Philosophy and education, An introduction in Christian perspective*. Andrews University Press.
- Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (2017). *The Leadership Challenge* (6th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Laplante, P. A. (2004). Staying clear of boiling-frog syndrome [work environment]. *It Professional*, 6(2), 56-58.
- LeBlanc, P., & Slaughter, P. (2012). Growing thinking Christians, An investigation of the outcomes of Christian education. *Journal of School Choice*, 6(1), 62-81.
- Ledbetter, B. M., Banks, R. J., & Greenhalgh, D. C. (2016). *Reviewing leadership, A Christian evaluation of current approaches* (2nd ed.). Baker Academic.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2019). *Practical research: Planning and design* (12th ed.). Pearson.
- Lencioni, P. M. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team*. Jossey-Bass.
- Lencioni, P. M. (2016). *The ideal team player, How to recognize and cultivate the three essential virtues*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Liberty University (2020). Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership Program Handbook. Lynchburg, VA, Liberty University.
- Lumen (2021). Governance. Retrieved March 26, 2021, from <https://www.lumen.com/en-us/about/governance/documentation.html>
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2011). Leadership versus management, A key distinction—at least in theory. *International Journal of Management, Business, and Administration*, 14(1), 1-4
- Markham, J. W. (2015). *A financial history of modern US corporate scandals, From Enron to reform*. Routledge.
- Mambrol, N. (2018). Trauma Studies. *Literary theory and criticism*.

- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- McMahon, M., Locke, L. G., & Roller, R. H. (2015). Whose faith? Faith integration for postmodern Christian business students. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 10.
- Melé, D., & Fontrodona, J. (2017). Christian ethics and spirituality in leading business organizations, Editorial introduction. *Journal of business ethics*, 145(4), 671-679.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research, A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications.
- Nass, E., & Kreuer, E. (2018). Methodology and applications of Christian leadership ethics. *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, 11(2) doi,10.22543/0733.62.1228
- New International Version Study Bible (1985). *The NIV study Bible, new international version*. Zondervan Bible Publishers.
- Northouse, P. G. (2019). *Leadership, Theory and practice* (8th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Palmeri, C. (2003). Qwest, Off the Critical List, But... Cash on hand doesn't help a declining core business and big accounting probes. *Business Week*, (3856), 73-73.
- Pandey, S. C., & Verma, P. (2004). WorldCom Inc. *Vikalpa*, 29(4), 113-126.
- Parris, D. L., & Peachey, J. W. (2013). A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts. *Journal of business ethics*, 113(3), 377-393.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Pearcey, N. (2005). True Spirituality and Christian Worldview. In *Total truth. Liberating Christianity from its cultural captivity, study edition*. (pp. 351-379). Crossway Books.
- Pettit, P. (Ed.). (2008). *Foundations of spiritual formation, A community approach to becoming like Christ*. Kregel Publications.
- Pike, M. A. (2004). The challenge of Christian schooling in a secular society. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 13(2), 149-166.
- Proios, M., & Proios, I. (2014). Christian and secular ethics, A distinct relationship. *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, 2(3), 75-91.
- Raven, B. H. (1993). The bases of power, Origins and recent developments. *Journal of social issues*, 49(4), 227-251.

- Roberts, G. E. (2013). Leadership coping skills, Servant leader workplace spiritual intelligence. *Journal of Strategic Leadership*, 4(2), 52-69.
- Roberts, G. (2015). *Christian scripture and human resource management, Building a path to servant leadership through faith*. Springer.
- Rossouw, G. J. (1994). Business ethics, where have all the Christians gone. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 13(7), 557.
- Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective interviewing, A guide to theory and practice*. Sage Publications.
- Ruffner, B. (2016). From diabolical to dialogical, transforming ethics through dialogical leadership. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 10(2), 52-65.
- Russell, R. F., & Stone, A. G. (2002). A review of servant leadership attributes, developing a practical model. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*.
- Sanders, J. O. (2017). Essential Qualities of Leadership. In *Spiritual leadership, Principles of excellence for every believer*. (pp. 45-56). Moody Publishers.
- Sarbanes, P. (2002). Sarbanes-Oxley act of 2002. In *The Public Company Accounting Reform and Investor Protection Act*. Washington DC, US Congress (p. 55).
- Seo, Y. S. (2014). What Lies between the Religious and the Secular? Education beyond the Human. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 48(1), 86-99.
- Spears, L.C. (1998), *Insights on Leadership, Service, Stewardship, Spirit, and Servant-leadership*, John Wiley and Sons.
- Spears, L. C. (2010). Character and servant leadership, ten characteristics of effective, caring leaders. *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership*, 1(1), 25-30.
- Stanwick, P. A., & Stanwick, S. D. (2009). Qwest Communications, A case study of fraud and greed. *Journal of Business Case Studies (JBCS)*, 5(2), 1-4.
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, C. (2009). *A secular age*. Harvard university press.
- Tesch, R. (2013). *Qualitative research, Analysis types and software tools*. Routledge.
- Toor, S. U. R. (2011). Differentiating leadership from management, An empirical investigation of leaders and managers. *Leadership and Management in Engineering*, 11(4), 310-320.
- Valdez-de-Leon, O. (2016). A digital maturity model for telecommunications service providers. *Technology innovation management review*, 6(8).

- Van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant leadership, A review and synthesis. *Journal of management*, 37(4), 1228-1261.
- Voegtlin, C., Patzer, M., & Scherer, A. (2012). Responsible leadership in global business, A new approach to leadership and its multi-level outcomes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 105(1), 1-16.
- Von Hagel Jr, W. J. (2009). *Precipitating events leading to voluntary employee turnover among information technology professionals, A qualitative phenomenological study*. University of Phoenix.
- Wallace, J. R. (2007). Servant leadership, A worldview perspective. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 2(2), 114-132.
- Wong, K. L., & Rae, S. B. (2011). *Business for the common good, A Christian vision for the marketplace*. InterVarsity Press.
- Wray-Bliss, E. (2012). Leadership and the deified/demonic, A cultural examination of CEO sanctification. *Business Ethics, A European Review*, 21(4), 434-449.
Doi,10.1111/beer.12001

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION REQUEST

From, [REDACTED]
Sent, Tuesday, August 10, 2021 1,40 PM
To, [REDACTED]
Subject, RE, Permission Request Authorization

Steve,

You have my approval.

Best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From, Smith, Steven T
Sent, Tuesday, August 10, 2021 1,28 PM
To, [REDACTED]
Subject, Permission Request Authorization

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. The purpose of my research is to explore the business leader's perception of Scripture-based ethics within the corporate environment. The research will attempt to answer four research questions that explore the value leaders place upon ethical guidelines in leadership, the value leaders place on Scripture-based beliefs in leadership practices, and the positive and negative impacts Scripture-based ethical principles have on leadership practices.

I am writing to request your permission to contact members of your leadership team to invite them to participate in my research study.

The participants' involvement in the study will consist of answering twelve open-ended interview questions during a 90-minute, recorded virtual interview. The participants may review the post-interview transcripts for accuracy. I will analyze the data to establish the presence, or

lack thereof, of Scripture-based ethical principles within the corporate leadership environment. Each participant will receive a consent document prior to participating in the study. Taking part in the study is voluntary and any participant may discontinue or decline participation at any time.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by replying to this email thread.

Sincerely,

Steve Smith
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT

Dear [Recipient],

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. The purpose of my research is to explore the business leader's perception of Scripture-based ethics within the corporate environment. The research will attempt to answer four research questions that explore the value leaders place upon ethical guidelines in leadership, the value leaders place on Scripture-based beliefs in leadership practices, and the positive and negative impacts Scripture-based ethical principles have on leadership practices. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be at least 18 years of age or older; hold the title of director, senior director, or vice president within an enterprise level business organization in the telecommunications industry; manage at least five direct or indirect reports; and have managed employees for a minimum of five years. Participants, if willing, will participate in an interview via video conference to answer twelve open-ended questions regarding the research topic. The interview process should take approximately 90 minutes to complete. Participant's names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please respond to this email request with your intention to participate so the process to schedule the interview may commence. A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, please sign the consent document, and return it to me via email prior to the start of the interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Steven T. Smith
Doctoral candidate
Liberty University, Rawlings School of Divinity


APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Demographic Background Questions

1. What is your highest level of education?
2. How many years have you been leading or managing others?
3. How many years have you been with the company?
4. How many direct and indirect reports do you lead in your organization?

Interview Questions

RQ1. What value do corporate leaders place on introducing ethical guidelines into the leadership model used within the organization?

1. Where do you obtain your moral foundation that distinguishes right from wrong?
2. Where do you feel the ethical guidelines that define the company's code of conduct policy originate?
3. What specific ethical foundation training have you received throughout your leadership career?

RQ2. What value do corporate leaders place on Scripture-based beliefs and the practice of those beliefs to model leadership behavior?

1. How impactful do you feel Scripture is in establishing an ethical foundation for how leaders should serve others within the corporate environment?
2. Do you feel ethical guidelines can be defined without a knowledge of Scripture?
3. If your peer, leader, or follower quoted Scripture during a meeting, how would you respond?

RQ3. From the leaders' perspective, what positive impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices?

1. What value do you find in Scripture when defining ethical principles applied by leaders?
2. Based upon your leadership experience, how does serving others first provide a positive influence to followers within your organization?
3. What process guidelines would you implement to incorporate Scripture-based ethical knowledge into your leadership practices?

RQ4. From the leaders' perspective, what negative impacts attribute to implementing Scripture-based ethical principles into secular business practices?

1. Is highlighting Scripture-based ethical principles within the corporate leadership world appropriate?
2. Do your peers, leaders, or followers view you negatively if you express your opinions and knowledge of Scripture?

3. If you were to incorporate Scripture-based ethical knowledge into your leadership practices, would you expect your followers to react negatively to references to Scripture?

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT

Title of the Project, A Phenomenological Study of Scripture-based Ethical Principles Embedded within Corporate Leadership Practices.

Researcher, Steven T. Smith, doctoral candidate, Liberty University
Rawlings School of Divinity

The purpose of this request is to invite you to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be at least 18 years of age or older, hold the title of Director, Senior Director, or Vice president, manage at least five direct or indirect reports, and have managed employees for a minimum of five years. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

The purpose of this research is to explore the business leader's perception of Scripture-based ethics within the corporate environment. The research will attempt to answer four research questions that explore the value leaders place upon ethical guidelines in leadership, the value leaders place on Scripture-based beliefs in leadership practices, and the positive and negative impacts Scripture-based ethical principles have on leadership practices.

The participant's involvement in the study will consist of answering twelve open-ended interview questions during a 90-minute video interview. The research study will analyze the data to establish the presence, or lack thereof, of Scripture-based ethical principles within the corporate leadership environment. The participant data will also provide information to establish any positive or negative impacts Scripture-based ethical principles have on the corporate environment.

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would normally encounter in everyday life.

The researcher will keep all records of this study confidential. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. The researcher may share data collected from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If the researcher shares the collected data, the researcher will remove any information that could identify you, before sharing the data.

- The researcher will keep participant responses confidential with codes. The researcher will monitor the video software for intruders and conduct the interviews in closed office locations where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- The data will be stored on a password-locked computer. The researcher will store backup copies on external hard disk drives that will remain solely in the researcher's possession.

The researcher will destroy each of the external hard disk drives three years after publishing the study.

- The researcher will record and transcribe all interview videos. The researcher will store the recordings on a password locked computer and external hard drives for three years. After three years, the researcher will erase the files from the password-protected computer and destroy the external hard drives. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, the researcher will destroy the data collected from you immediately and it will not be included in this study.

The researcher conducting this study is Steven T. Smith. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact Steven T. Smith at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Gary Bredfeldt at [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED].

Disclaimer, The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. The researcher will provide you a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS

The researcher collected the following interview comments directly from the interview transcripts produced by the Cisco Webex platform. The researcher simplified the format to combine all participant responses in order of the RQ's and the supporting interview questions. The researcher leveraged ellipses punctuation to remove non-essential phrases and pauses from the transcript language to make the transcripts easier for the reader to comprehend.

RQ1 Interview Dialogue

Participant	Dialogue
Researcher	Q1. <i>Where do you obtain your moral foundation that distinguishes right from wrong?</i>
P1	"From the Bible from church and from parents."
P2	"I just obtain that from growing up with my parents...The Golden Rule...do unto others as you want done unto you. Overall, it really stems from my upbringing."
P3	"It's going to be how you were raised by your parents. How you treat others...and how you want to be treated."
P4	"The basis for me...is tied directly to my parents and their backgrounds. My morals and my decision-making, and my thought process, the bulk of it probably stems from my dad."
P5	"The environment that I was raised in...decisions that I make...based upon wisdom...time in service."
P6	"I get that from a couple of different places...from family past experience...and then internally."
Researcher	"Can you elaborate somewhat on where your family gets their moral guidance?"
P6	"The majority of my family gets their spirituality from their church, which is Southern Baptist...and I kind of get mine from them."
P7	"My parents...and what they instilled in me growing up."
Researcher	"To elaborate on that a little more, do you know where they get theirs?"
P7	"My father was Catholic and my mother Methodist. They grew up in church, different churches, but in church."
P8	"It's just engrained from my upbringing. I was raised in a Christian home with parents who lead by example. My dad is a pastor. The commandments kind of rule how you think..."
P9	"I received it from my parents...ultimately comes from the Bible. Taking the Bible as the first priority...foundational principles is really the Ten Commandments...genesis of morals is love God and love others like yourself."

Participant	Dialogue
P10	"Probably through my life experience and the values that I was raised with from my parents, and then of course just my experience. That all points to some sort of internal code of conduct that I built for myself from all those influences."
P11	"Parents...that's the first place you get a sense for what is right and what is wrong. I think a big part of that can be extended family...or a church family."
P12	"I believe it starts with the leaders, the leader sets the tone good or bad. My foundation started with my father...for negative actions. My grandparents showed me the flip side of those negative actions...with a basis grounded in truth."
Researcher	"You mentioned truth. How do you define truth?"
P12	"I actually remove the subjectivity out of it. For me, truth is empirical. Truth is something you can see, feel, and hear."
P13	"I am Catholic. I go to church every Sunday. I have my entire life. I take more out of how to treat people...to do the right thing, from that aspect of my life, not some leader led training that somebody comes up with...once a year."
P14	"That's a huge question. I would say that my ethical guidelines come from my upbringing, from my associations both familial and friends. I would also say that woven within that culturally would be religious teachings and doctrines that I've learned over the years. I wouldn't consider myself a person of faith...more of an agnostic. I just think that the questions of religion are too vast for the human mind to comprehend. I think that religion has some...great teachings...whether we know it or not, we are impacted by those as being part of a greater culture."
P15	"I believe I obtained it from my parents. The Catholic Church was a big part of growing up. I think my parents gave me that ethical foundation of doing right and wrong and I believe somewhat within the church."
Researcher	Q2. <i>From where do you feel the ethical guidelines that define the company's code of conduct policy originate?</i>
P1	"So this one again, like a philosophical where do all typical guidelines originate, it's kind of like...we've forgotten as a society, but historically our legal codes and all of that come from the Bible. I think as far as company code of conduct goes, some of that also is societal...but there's some general acceptance of some of the stuff in the Ten Commandments Et cetera."
P2	"It all stems off how much profit the company can make."
Researcher	"So what do you feel it should be?"
P2	"My ideal approach for the company would be, how can we better serve our customers, listen to what our customers need, what they want and meet them with that and really drive our thinking that way, instead of a pure profit base."
P3	"I feel like a lot of those standards or principles...are rooted in The Golden Rule...but it gets changed with cultural egos. I think...it is rooted in the morals of the day...to be in tune with what is possible with popular morals."
P4	"I think the...legal applications that are implications are associated with it...they have to protect themselves. I also believe...stem from religious background...A lot of the concepts are very similar."
Researcher	"Anything specific come to mind?"

Participant	Dialogue
P4	"I think it's just that the underlying concept of doing the right thing...or the Ten Commandments...a lot of those things in the code of conduct could read similar to Scripture..."
P5	"I would hope they would originate from...a governing body that includes folks on our executive team as well as our legal team."
Researcher	"What do you think the legal department would use as their ethical basis for the code of conduct?"
P5	"Certainly anything that's associated with the legal aspects of it..."
P6	"Honestly, I don't know...if we look at a lot of the guidelines, I feel they are probably more legal based than spiritually based."
P7	"I feel like it is just a thing they do...without getting too specific...to meet the legal requirements."
P8	"I think it comes from simple things like the Golden Rule...it falls back to commandment-based methodologies... Our country is based on liberty and is a God based country."
P9	"Some business school. There are threads that come from the Bible."
P10	"I think they originate from a combination of taking care of customers, taking care of employees, and limiting liability of both of those. I think there is a moral basis in some of that, but I think there is also a financial basis as well."
P11	"With the Lawyers."
P12	"It starts with the CEO setting the expectations...what's important for the corporate culture, and I think that word culture is important..."
P13	"I'm sure leadership has a view. I don't think I've ever worked in a company where...leadership didn't want to be ethical or didn't want to treat people right...what does that really mean?"
Researcher	"What do you think that means?"
P13	"I think it means understanding that every person has their own life, their own experiences, their own wants and desires...they all deserve the same level of respect and support..."
P14	"I don't want to sound cynical, but I think the vast majority of ethical guidelines that the company comes up with are pretty much self-serving. I think a lot of it has to do with the legalities and technicality."
P15	"It comes from leadership...along with working with the HR department."
Researcher	Q3. <i>What specific ethical foundation training have you received throughout your leadership career?</i>
P1	"I attended a program called Vineyard Leadership Institute through a church. It is a two and a half year program. I had another one called Saturated Austin Institute. It's through Dallas Theological Seminary offered at a church here in Austin. I was a member of this group called C12 and it is basically a board of 12 guys with a chair."
Researcher	"Was any of it biblically based?"
P1	"All of it."

Participant	Dialogue
P2	"Outside of the standard ones that we get from...HR, there is not a lot of outside ethical foundation training that I have received. I have received some ethical training from the military and Catholic school in my younger years."
P3	"Just the annul required code of conduct training."
P4	"I have had numerous trainings from the company over the years, like do the right thing training...I can't think of the others specifically by name."
P5	"The company code of conduct training...at least one ethics course at my Christian college and one class outside of the company."
P6	"We have done the code of conduct training here. I have done a few classes outside of the company though...like the Rocking Leaders program...Leading with Influence and Power a few years ago."
P7	"Just the standard once a year generic code of conduct training that everyone gets."
P8	"Lots of different seminars on leadership...leading with integrity, establishing you brand, knowing what people think of you and then leading by example. A lot of courses like that over the years."
P9	"I've gone through the classical American business corporate model."
P10	"I think all of that...right versus wrong training, but how to deal with people...I think we got here at work."
P11	"Not really. Most of it has always been company structured."
P12	"Not outside the company but within the company I attended a three month session...that included leading a respectful workplace. There was another session about executive presence and leading. What I took from that was...active listening...to actually listen."
P13	"Somewhere in my bachelor degree program...I did take a semester long ethics class..."
P14	"I don't recall any specific ethical training...other than the check the box from a corporate standpoint. I never took ethics in college either."
P15	"I've taken courses like coaching for success, understanding what type of leader you are, so that you can adapt. I feel like I should have taken more courses, and feel like the company does not provide that foundation...it's more check the box."

RQ2 Interview Dialogue

Participant	Dialogue
Researcher	Q4. <i>How impactful do you feel Scripture is in establishing an ethical foundation for how leaders should serve others within the corporate environment?</i>
P1	"I feel it is highly impactful, assuming you have an understanding of what is in there and how it is interpreted and used."
P2	"I feel that it should be more impactful than it is...I do believe that the more grounded you are, and whatever faith it is that you practice or believe in the better leader you will be. It has a way of grounding you a lot better than the non-belief system would."

Participant	Dialogue
P3	"I think there is a big movement away from...a higher order...and more toward community rules that we play by."
P4	"I think it...doesn't show up on the surface. I think it's underlying to a lot of those things that leaders may do whether they're religious at this point in time or they got it from their religious parents or grandparents along the way. While it might not be reading correctly from a Bible, the undertone is there."
P5	"I believe that it can be impactful...I believe that it can be highly impactful. It's almost like it has to be."
P6	"I think is semi-important...not going to say crucial."
P7	"I think it would be hugely impactful. I have parents who have a good foundation...but not everyone has that unfortunately. I think that Scripture could be a good universal foundation that people could draw from...to understand right and wrong. The things we are given today are very vague."
P8	"You can almost tell folks affiliation just by the way they lead. In the corporate world it seems that you have to be very agnostic because of all of the different types of folks that you lead. I think over time we've gotten away from some of the core values that used to be more faith based...and moved more toward guidelines that are less faith based."
P9	"It's probably not, but it should be. It's the basis of our current foundation of our laws...based on the Ten Commandments...over hundreds of years, those things have become social."
P10	"I think we have a generally agreed upon way to behave and a way to treat other people. So, I don't think it matters as much which Scripture it is. I think that all of those values have engrained themselves into us."
P11	"I think most of the guidelines now that we see, as far as behavior in the workplace...is driven by legalities. In some instances, the profit line."
P12	"To my knowledge, I don't believe we use that directly in making a decision for the company, or for the trainings that we have. I think that ethics are based upon the belief system of the individual. What a person deems is ethical behavior is subjective to them."
P13	"I'll be honest with you, in my entire career, I can't think of one conversation ever that referenced anything religious or Scripture based, so I really don't know."
Researcher	"Do you think there should be more of that?"
P13	"Different people would react differently. If you happen to be talking to somebody who shared your beliefs...the conversation would be fine. If you run across that person that is offended by everything, it could get real ugly real quick."
P14	"Companies are led by individuals who have their own right and wrong list. I think Scripture finds its way into some of the practices..."
P15	"I think from the early business years, we did formulate some of the rights and wrongs based on the Bible. So I think serving others is very impactful."
Researcher	Q5. <i>Do you feel ethical guidelines can be defined without a knowledge of Scripture?</i>

Participant	Dialogue
P1	"It depends. We have ethical norms in society and there are ethical norms and values expressed within the framework of other religions. I think we do define them without a knowledge of Scripture, regardless of what our background is. I do think the highest one is the Bible."
P2	"Just a lot of what I do is based on the Scripture guidelines. Honestly, I really do not know how you can do that without having some sort of a background to base it on."
P3	"I think you have to have some sort of knowledge...but do not think there is a whole lot of work given to that."
P4	"Actually...I think they could, I think they benefit from the undertone. That's their history that's embedded with people's families or thought processes."
P5	"I can answer that quickly and say, yes. I say that because I have an appreciation for everybody and their beliefs are."
P6	"Yes, yes I do." The researcher prompted, P6 responded,
Researcher	"If it is not Scripture based, where would you say the foundation comes from?"
P6	"...at that point you have to take it back to a legal basis...you have to have that separation of church and state."
P7	"I'm sure they could be. Everyone has a different opinion...so when you use something like Scripture as a foundation, everyone can go and reference what the foundation is."
P8	"In my opinion, no. Even if people don't think it came from the Bible...it's based there. You just know...it all goes back to the Ten Commandments...all they are doing is just changing words."
P9	"Because...God innately placed it in us as long as we're created by God...it's fundamental. How do you know right from wrong? Where does that come from? Inside of you. That discernment is what makes us human because we are created in his image and I believe that is in us even when we deny Him."
Researcher	"How can you know what good is if you can't recognize evil?"
P9	"That is part of the lifelong sanctification process...understanding that evil cannot coexist with God...right and wrong has clearly been established in societies that have never had Scripture, but since God created everything, God also created morality and placed it within humanity."
P10	"Oh, totally, yes, very much. I think many people have it engrained in them, and again, that goes back to how there were raised..."
P11	"Sort of. Most any right or wrong question, somewhere along the line has a basis in Scripture, so there is room for it."
P12	"Mine has been based on life experience, good and bad. For me, it's always been about truth. You never have to question the truth. You never have to ask for forgiveness for the truth. Truth just is."
P13	"You say the word Scripture, you immediately go to a religious conversation. I think the Ten Commandments...is supposed to be the baseline governance of how a person lives their life, but do you need to know the Ten Commandments to internally know that people deserve respect? I don't know that that's the case."

Participant	Dialogue
P14	“Yes. I think they can be defined without knowledge of Scripture. I think that because every person has a sense of right...and even a sense of fairness is at the basis of our ethical guidelines, so I do believe it can be defined outside of Scripture...”
P15	“I believe we are all born with a very good heart and things happen to people at a very early age that changes their view on how they live their life. I’m saying...I don’t believe that you have to have Scripture, while I say it is important. I do take foundation with a good family, supporting parents, is very important.”
Researcher	Q6. <i>If your peer, leader, or follower quoted Scripture during a meeting, how would you respond?</i>
P1	“I would be surprised, but I would be supportive.”
P2	“I have two parts to this answer. Personally, I really would not say much of anything. I would just acknowledge it, move on, and see how that Scripture would play into what the meeting was. Secondly, the corporate leader side of me would have to say something like, you know, I understand your belief system, things like that, but I am not sure that would be applicable to the situation...”
P3	“I do not see that being...a common occurrence today. I cannot remember a time when that has happened.”
P4	“I really have no issues with that. I’m independent...maybe it depends on when you stop. I think the part that might bother people is when it’s a very direct quote, whether it’s the information relayed...or the information related to a specific quote...it comes across differently.”
P5	“At that very moment I would pause...I would process and think about not necessarily me, but others and what that may have done them. Then I would probably reach out...to HR...I would also say...it may have made others uncomfortable.”
P6	“I have no personal problem at all. I do not see any difference in quoting a Scripture as any different as quoting an athlete or author.”
P7	“Depends on what they said, but I try to value everyone’s opinion. Even if you’re talking about different religions...you can understand their foundation and understand them as a person...or leader.”
P8	“Amen (laughs). It gives you that person’s perspective and helps you understand they are leading outside of the corporate world...gives you a window into their personal beliefs.”
P9	“One, I would be shocked. Two, I think it’s pretty cool...someone has the courage to use God’s word in the right way...People isolate themselves from God and Scripture and don’t realize how much comes from the Bible.
P10	“That would make me very uncomfortable. I think there is a fine line there of places where you can have those conversations...I do not think work is one of those places.”
P11	“Personally, it would probably get my attention and not make me cringe, but would cause me to give thought to whether that was the right point for that person to make with that comment.”

Participant	Dialogue
P12	"I would listen. I want to know your perspective. I can always learn something. For me, it is about diversity and inclusion. Giving others with different views the respect they deserve."
P13	"I'll admit, I'm not an avid reader. I can't quote Scripture, but if somebody said something along those lines and it made sense and it fit in the moment, I would have no issue with it."
P14	"Personally, as an individual, I would not have a problem with it, but it would depend upon the circumstances. I don't think we should shun religious discussions, but I think setting a policy based upon one person's beliefs...that would be a problem."
P15	"I wouldn't have an issue with it because I know everybody's got their opinion and I'm fine with it."

RQ3 Interview Dialogue

Participant	Dialogue
Researcher	<i>Q7. What value do you find in Scripture when defining ethical principles applied by leaders?</i>
P1	"High value. The leaders...compare to a shepherd...a higher standard...models of stewardship and a higher calling."
P2	"I think it's huge. I find it very, very beneficial for me to go back on those sorts of things... to help somebody else. I know that my team and my role is better served with a relationship...where principles equals benefits."
P3	"When I work with my team and there is a level of frustration...I tell my team to be empathetic to the other side of the equation...take the other person's perspective into consideration. If that's tied to any sort of Scripture-related behavior, then I definitely do that."
P4	"I think they are directing, to the point. If you are looking at the code of conduct compared to Scripture, other than the way things are phrased...there's many things that will be...almost identical, but they don't need quotations. I think it has a place within the workplace."
P5	"I think that's innate. I don't think you can avoid that. So the value from Scripture, if I'm not using that, something is wrong with my internal wiring."
P6	"For me, it's fair treatment of people. Every person is an individual. It does not matter if you are rich or poor...everyone matters...and as a moral guideline, we need to make sure we are aware of that."
P7	"I think it's a reference point for a foundation...for ethical principles that are very similar...across different religions."
P8	"The Bible is full of parables you can use in any type of situation...servant leadership is based in the Bible. What happens to most of us that are Christian leaders is you find it is in your DNA, it's in your background, and you don't actually have to quote Scripture, but you can lean on a story or parable and adjust it for the corporate world."

Participant	Dialogue
P9	"You feel a comfort and peace...because you are doing God's will. It gives me peace knowing that I am aligning with God's will. It's interesting how society has fallen so far from the truth."
P10	"I don't know that Scripture really guides how I view or frame any of those types of things. I don't want to say this wrong because I don't want to diminish the value of the message of the Scripture, but that's not where I find my compass. That's not my measuring stick."
Researcher	"Is there a written moral code that you prescribe to, or is it more internal?"
P10	"I think it's internal. I think you could look at several different Scriptures and probably get pretty close to how I operate, but I don't use any one of them as the be all, end all."
P11	"I think it can give you a basis of understanding for why the policy is there."
P12	"...I had a negative connotation as a child with Scripture...so I don't include it. That isn't me saying it's not appropriate, that's me saying it's not something I can speak to, as my experience with it was negative."
P13	"I'll go back to every person deserves the same level of respect, support, and understanding. I draw that from my ethical learning. I mentioned the Ten Commandments...I think that is what drives me."
P14	"I don't know that I find a value to it. On an individual level, I find that it is probably very valid for many people, but as an organization, I don't find that it gives us a lot of value. We can't escape our belief systems...but I think we have to filter everything."
P15	"I think you can apply Scripture to everyday situations within the workplace...Do unto others as they do unto you. You want to do the right thing. It goes back to the way you lead based on those principles and I do think it is important."
Researcher	Q8. <i>Based upon your leadership experience, how does serving others first provide a positive influence on colleagues and staff within your organization?</i>
P1	"It helps relieve their burdens; it models humility, which is oftentimes the opposite of what we think it takes to get ahead. It creates a positive work environment."
P2	"I always say to my direct reports...I will have your back whenever I possibly can. The more you can show your people that you trust them, you are trying to show them positive that if you make a mistake...you can overcome that mistake...and lead to a more positive work environment."
P3	"Yes, definitely pay it forward. I look to collaborate with people...especially people who are genuine in the way they do their work...to gain cooperation."
P4	"That is something I have done very early in my management career. I think it builds exceptional teams. I like to be shoulder to shoulder with people to make them better...to get to the right place."
P5	"That's my leadership style, servant leadership. I don't know any other way."
P6	"I think it builds up a sense of trust. I think it builds up a personal connection."
P7	"When you are serving others, you can see the value in what you are doing."

Participant	Dialogue
P8	"Servant leadership really starts with leading by example. Serving others...has gotten me a long way by just being compassionate for the people that work for me."
P9	"It's not enough to have faith...you have to do faith. If you are not doing faith, it's hard for others to know what your faith is. Serving provides our opportunity to disciple."
P10	"I think it provides a tremendous influence. I think it's crucial."
P11	"Gives the impression you are looking out for the interest of others and doing good for them...not just yourself."
P12	"That one is easy...putting someone else first makes them feel part of the decision."
P13	"I think it makes my organization a place where other people want to be. I've seen that many times in my career. I'm here to clear the road to make others successful, That's my job."
P14	"Serving others first, that is huge. I think if we all acted in that fashion, we would take care of many problems."
P15	"I think it's very important. If you are consistent, and serve others consistently, you are recognized as a good leader. It's not about me. I love promoting people...elevating them to the next level. I'm doing something that's good for other people."
Researcher	Q9. <i>What process guidelines would you implement to incorporate Scripture-based ethical knowledge into your leadership practices?</i>
P1	"One of the things we've used is core values and then writing them down, having them visible, and measuring performance against core values. I guess an example of that would be humility."
Researcher	"How do you think you measure humility?"
P1	Well, if someone is being arrogant, they are not being humble."
P2	"Honestly....not sure if...it would be welcomed in our environments or not, but I would try to incorporate as much as I possibly could by just reading whatever the scripture is and applying it...for modified meaning."
P3	"Treat others with respect...try to become a partner with them and work together."
P4	"What's embedded in you, whether it came from Scripture, your parents, your work ethic, if you can do the right thing while nobody is looking."
Researcher	"What is your view of the right thing?"
P4	"I think it comes down to being ethical. I'm not going to do harm."
P5	"I feel like I'm a fair person...and have learned to listen more, talk less...I think that a platform of fairness is definitely something that is learned."
P6	"This would be a personal journey for each person. I don't think you can draw an across the board hard line on any of these guidelines."
P7	"I have no idea. Honestly, I have never thought about what I would do because in the times we are living in right now it is just, dangerous."
P8	"In the corporate world you have to tip toe around certain things and you can implement things very lightly...You just have to know your audience."

Participant	Dialogue
P9	"I am not sure I would have the fortitude to put in place any guidelines or processes specifically tied to Scripture."
P10	"I would not do that."
P11	"I think that' where your gut check comes from."
Researcher	"Can you elaborate a little more on that?"
P11	"You may not consciously think, this is why I am doing this one way or another...it is based on past experience...if you have a basis in Scripture, you will naturally lean that way."
P12	"I would probably be hesitant...my vantage point is probably a bit jaded. I would have a great fear of alienating any one group."
P13	"I think the change we need is people to get a little more open-minded when they're at the table talking about process. I think we need more of that."
P14	"I wouldn't. I would not use Scripture-based guidelines...The more fervent of a believer I am...the more it sets up a myopic view of things and...can marginalize another belief system, so I don't think it is a good practice."
P15	"I have to go to standards first of all. I feel like...set high ethical standards...be a good servant of others...I think it's engrained in me."

RQ4 Interview Dialogue

Participant	Dialogue
Researcher	Q10. <i>Is highlighting Scripture-based ethical principles within the corporate leadership world appropriate?</i>
P1	"You are going to have friction. Some people are going to see that and they are going to attribute it to the context of religious. You could do those things based on core values. We can all agree on five core values that are scripture based, but do not necessarily tie into Scripture directly and we do not have to quote them exactly. It just depends on the delivery, I guess, because of the friction that exists."
P2	"If you are working for a Scripture-based or a church-based company, obviously that question is going to be yes. If you are working for a Wall Street company, that question can very well be no."
P3	"Not going to happen anymore....you are not going to highlight anything based in any sort of formal way. I think it is a good idea...but you are not going to see that...called out that way."
Researcher	"Do you think it should be?"
P3	"I think it should be...you are not going to win that battle. It is a secular world now, and I think anything you do to drive to those principles...will not be acknowledged."
P4	"I come back to where we're at right now in society. Everybody is offended by something you do, and I think that is one of the downfalls you potentially run into."

Participant	Dialogue
P5	"The answer is yes. I feel like it's not saying specifics...but more just about you and your choice to highlight Scripture-based ethical principles, which I think is kind of all encompassing...so absolutely, yes."
P6	"I don't have any issue with it. I don't see where it is not appropriate. As long as someone is quoting something inspirational, something that is a positive message, and not trying to push their feelings or beliefs on someone..."
P7	"Yes. We talk about being diverse and included. That doesn't just involve race or sexual orientation, it involves religion and their ethnic background. It is wildly appropriate to understand people and how their foundations are built."
P8	"It all depends on the environment. You really have to understand where people are coming from, because it will be the first thing you get an HR complaint on...so you have to be very careful."
P9	"Absolutely it's appropriate if you're a Christian. Since what we are called to do is stand up for the truth. Is it easy? Do we always do it? No."
P10	"I do not believe so because I think you are walking the line of putting certain moral or religious structure...into people's lives where they may not want it. Could you have Scripture-based ethical principles that are not highlighted as Scripture-based ethical principles and have them be perfectly appropriate? Yes, but I think once you get into laying out what the origin is...you run the risk of alienating other people."
P11	"I think it depends on the company. In certain circumstances, it could be beneficial...but with a more diverse work group...it may not work as well."
P12	"I do feel it's dangerous to simply avoid talking about certain topics. I truly believe that finding common ground is the key to success, not just in business but in society."
P13	"It's such a foreign topic. I don't know how it would be received. I think it would be a major change. I think it might be interesting if you could figure out a way to do it."
Researcher	"You think there is a fear there?"
P13	"I think there is a fear of saying anything that has any chance of controversy at this point."
P14	"I don't think it's appropriate to cite specific Scripture, regardless of that Scripture's origin. The crux of most belief systems are relatively the same...I think we are in safe territory there, but even then we have the problem of respecting people...and their belief systems."
Researcher	"For you it's about respect of others?"
P14	"It's all about respecting others. I think that most atheists, regardless of their lack of belief in God, believe in the basic tenets of what most religions teach, which is respect for others, caring for others, putting others first. I think that can be done without...citing specific Scripture."
P15	"I would say no, because we are so diverse. Culturally, we have to be very careful with that. We talk about diversity and inclusion but we leave religion to the side...people don't like to talk about it. So, I would say, no."

Participant	Dialogue
Researcher	Q11. <i>Do your peers, leaders, or followers view you negatively if you express your opinions and knowledge of Scripture?</i>
P1	"I would say not to my knowledge. I would say those with the same beliefs, no. Those with different beliefs, yes."
P2	"I try to wordsmith what it is...but I have not just...credited Scriptures...to any of my peers, or my direct reports. So, I honestly do not know."
P3	"Since I do not do it, I do not know."
P4	"I don't think there is any animosity. There's a substantial amount of the population in this part of the world that falls into that category, so probably not here. You're not surprised if you see someone from work at church."
P5	"I don't know, because I don't do it. But, I don't think they would because some people at work know my knowledge of Scripture and I don't feel any resistance or negative connotation as a result of that."
P6	"I cannot answer that...because I don't know Scripture well enough to quote or reference it in a setting. I'm very much a...history scientific person...it's hard for me to take some things just on faith."
P7	"I have no idea. I don't do it often because of the culture we are living in...but there have been circumstances where I have referenced something that is Scripture-based with somebody and no one has ever said they have an issue with it."
P8	"I don't think so. I've been well accepted with the folks that work for me. I've had many people follow me to different jobs. I think leading with integrity is one of the things that people want...and they see that in your actions."
P9	"You try to make your way through...even with the uncomfortable conversations...without violating your internal truth."
P10	"I don't do that, so I don't have an answer for that."
P11	"I don't think so."
P12	"I actually don't talk about it, but I don't know that they would. I hope that their impression of me is based on what they see...my abilities...my ethical behavior...my ability to just speak the truth. I hope I'm judged on that, not on aspect of what I believe."
P13	"I wouldn't think so. I mean, it's not something I do on a regular basis, but I've certainly made comments over the years. You know, it's always a positive reference. I've never had an issue when I've made a statement...at least not to my face."
P14	"I don't think they would, but again, that's probably not a good answer because I don't ever cite Scripture to others."
P15	"In the workplace now, it's a little weird that we don't talk about it, but I think companies have shied away from it and said that's not something we want to get into."
Researcher	Q12. <i>If you were to incorporate Scripture-based ethical knowledge into your leadership practices, would you expect your followers to react negatively to references to Scripture?</i>

Participant	Dialogue
P1	"Some might, yeah. Anyone that that has a different belief system could react negatively. I think many feathers...get ruffled.
Researcher	"How do you think you would handle it?"
P1	I try not...to be offensive, but still try to get the point across. I think when you tie it into something that anyone can hold as the value, it steers it away from that."
P2	"I know there are different levels of faith on my team...if I quote something...from the Bible...they may react negatively to it. I may ask them to look past the actual language...and look at what the outcome is...even apply their own belief system to that."
P3	"No, I don't think that they would...react negatively to it, but if it was a thing that I did every meeting and I opened it with a prayer...that would be an odd thing. I think on a wider audience...you may be viewed negatively."
P4	"For the most part, I don't think so, but there's always someone that it would bother."
P5	"Okay, that is specific. Yes, I would. Especially in the group that I am in. I don't know that it would have been so in other groups I have managed, but in this one I would have to say yes."
P6	"Honestly, I don't think I would have any pushback. It goes back...to building that relationship with individuals. They know me well enough to know I would not do that if they would be uncomfortable with it."
P7	"I would expect that some people would, just because...they don't agree...or their religion is different. But I still think we could use it as a foundation."
P8	"I think there are people who don't even know how to research and understand...if you quote a Scripture...they may not know how to look that up or validate it. Ignorance is no excuse to get into the gates."
P9	"Yes, somewhat because some people are more focused upon themselves than God. God gave us the ability to love him back...we need to take that step to love him, even though that is in us. It is that self-promoting position in the world that causes conflict."
P10	"I would not expect it, but I would not be surprised if it happened...it would depend upon the group really."
P11	"I don't think that my team would have a problem with that."
P12	"Yes and no. I expect that folks on my team would embrace it if that was already their belief system and those that it wasn't their belief system would fall into a couple of camps. Some would be a little shocked and maybe curious and others would feel alienated. My biggest fear...alienating any one of them."
P13	"I would hope not, because again, I would be using it in a positive fashion. It's not something I would...do on a regular basis, It would be situationally based and I hope it wouldn't be negative."
P14	"No. I would say not where I live."
P15	"I would say definitely yes. Based on the environment we are in, especially now with the country being so divided. That's probably why I don't have discussions about religion. I think probably HR would be calling me."

APPENDIX F: THEME CODEBOOK

Research Question	Theme	Thematic Description	Dominate Theme
RQ1	Beliefs		
	Personal Beliefs	Higher Calling Value Others' Opinions Ingrained	Ingrained
	Religious Beliefs	Parents Bible Agnostic Christian Catholic Ten Commandments Golden Rule	
	Value Systems	Core Values Truth Perspectives	
RQ1	Ethical Foundations		
	Ethical Guidelines	Societal Ethical Norms Written on the Heart Integrity Truth Legal Spiritual Responsible Parents Church Ingrained Culture	Ingrained
	Higher Ethics Training	Code of Conduct Ethical Seminar	
RQ2	Scriptural Foundations		
	Cited Scripture	Ten Commandments Golden Rule Bible Reference Sanctification God's law God's Moral Character Solid Foundation Faith Basic Values	Ten Commandments

Research Question	Theme	Thematic Description	Dominate Theme
RQ3	Corporate Foundations		
	Corporate Culture	Society Leadership Legal Diversity Inclusion Human Resources	Corporate Policy
	For Profit	Policy Code of Conduct	
	Servant Leadership	Serve Crucial Impactful Promote Others Proven Coaching	
RQ1, RQ2, RQ3	Doing the Right Thing		
		Morals Rules Right vs Wrong Fairness Ingrained Written on the Heart Listening	Ingrained
RQ4	Life Experience		
	Negative Experience	Friction Harm Judgment Jaded Ignorance Marginalizing Myopic View Confused Isolated Anxiety Detrimental	Anxiety
RQ4	Past Experience	Family Values Relationships Knowledge Courage Context Culture	Family

Research Question	Theme	Thematic Description	Dominate Theme
	Positive Experience	Family Good Behavior Peace Trust Respect Prayer Gratitude	Family

APPENDIX G: RQ1 CODES

P1 Codes	P2 Codes	P3 Codes	P4 Codes
Bible	Parents	Parents	Parents
Parents	Golden rule	How raised	Decision making
Church	Upbringing	Experiment	Father
Philosophical	Harm someone	Golden rule	Legal
Black and White	Profit	Principles	Protect Company
Straight forward	Ethical guidelines	Morals of the day.	Religious background
legal	Shareholders	Politics	Similar concepts
biblical	Reward	Cultural norms	Do the right thing
society norms	Loyalty	Branding	Ten commandments
COC is societal	Do the right thing	Popular morals	Rules
General acceptance	Rewards	Code of Conduct	Beginning of time
Ten Commandments	Serve Others	Sexual harassment	Code of conduct
Ethics program	Listen	Ethics	Scripture
Theological studies	Meet needs	Company first	Employee handbook
C12 – biblical based	Help others		Company training
Life experience	HR		Ethical standards
Work	No outside training		Trust
Scripture impactful	Military ethics		Behavior
All ethics = Scripture	Roman Catholic		Commitment
Behavior	Church		Philosophy
Context of Scripture			Performance
P5 Codes	P6 Codes	P7 Codes	P8 Codes
Reference document	Family	Parents	Christian home
Right or wrong	Past Experience	Catholic	Parents
Business standard	Internally	Methodist	Ten Commandments
Environment	Moral pros & cons	Forced ethics	Golden rule
Parents	Written on my heart	Legal	Respect
Wisdom	Spiritually	COC training	Liberty
Time in service	Southern Baptist		God based morality
P5 Codes	P6 Codes	P7 Codes	P8 Codes
Governing body	Less spiritual		Lead by example
Executives	COC classes		
Ambiguity	Unspoken spirituality		
COC training	Moral question		
Christian College	Legal perspective		

P9 Codes	P10 Codes	P11 Codes	P12 Codes
Parents	Parents	Parents	Starts with leaders
Bible	Life experience	Extended Family	Jaded
First Authority	Internal COC	Church	The means matter
Glorify God	Written on my heart	Legal	Journey matters
Ten Commandments	Customer care	No ethical training	Father – Poor choices
Love God	Financial basis		Grandparents
Love others	No outside training		Truth matters
Moral Dilemma	COC Training		Karma
Christian values			Written on the heart
Biblical values			Empirical truth
Bipolar society			Evidence based truth
Marginalized truth			Corporate culture
Self-defined truth			Relationship
Pleasure			Active listening
Innate self-serving			Inside company only
P13 Codes	P14 Codes	P15 Codes	
Catholic Church	Family	Parents	
Ethics = church	Culture	Catholic Church	
Support and respect	Roman Catholic	Leadership	
Ethics class	Humanistic	HR	
	Profit	Right thing	
	No training	Coaching	

APPENDIX H: RQ2 CODES

P1 Codes	P2 Codes	P3 Codes	P4 Codes
Highly impactful	Leader specific	Move from Scripture	Underlying
Understanding	Believers	No tie to Scripture	Religious parents
Ethical society norms	Grounded	No higher order	Information Intent
Values of religion	Practice	Community rules	Interpretation
Framework	Better leader	Judgment	Out of context
Values	Serve others	Scriptural Truth	Scripture Undertone
Bible higher	Scripture guides	Acknowledgement	Embedded
Surprised	Scripture Backing	Quote Scripture	Family
Scripture Supportive	Science	Tune out	Good basis
	Corporate leader	Dispassionate	Context
	Non-believers	No work -> Scripture	Expectation
		Uncommon	Religious leaders
		Biblical quote	Direct quote
		Politically correct	
P5 Codes	P6 Codes	P7 Codes	P8 Codes
Parents	Semi important	Hugely impactful	Agnostic leadership
Christian	Scripture not crucial	Parental foundation.	Core values
Impactful	Foundation	Scripture foundation	Golden rule
Appreciate beliefs	Obligation	Ethics outside Scripture	Personality
Life setting	Different perspectives	Value other opinions.	Belief systems
Take Pause	Do not push religion	Foundational beliefs	Corporate
Process and think	Legal		Integrity
HR complaint	Separation church/state		No moral > Scripture
HR guidance	Scripture quote		Bible basics
Parallelism	Athlete quote		Personal > corporate
Uncomfortable	Jaded culture		
	Live and let live		

P9 Codes	P10 Codes	P11 Codes	P12 Codes
Scripture is crucial	Treating others	Legal drives COC	Ethical = subjective
Ten commandments	Ingrained	Christian beliefs	Impacts behavior
Morals = God's law	Golden rule	Politically correct	Understand both
Written on our hearts	Love each other		Life experience
Created/God's image	Values = Scripture		Truth
God's character	Without Scripture		Hurt feelings
God > sin	Parents		Listening
Sanctification	Written on heart		Know perspectives
God create morality	Uncomfortable		Intelligent discussion
God's morals	No Scripture at work		Diversity/inclusion
Courage			Equality
Isolated			Fair chance
Scripture in society			Respect
God's plan			Perspectives matter
Golden rule = love			
P13 Codes	P14 Codes	P15 Codes	
No Scripture in COC	Scripture = practices	Bible	
Broad spectrum	Broad sense	Catholic	
Ten commandments	Prayer	Scripture is important	
Respect	No Scripture needed	Family	
Written on hearts	Fairness	Close friends	
No religion discussion	Circumstance		
	Modern society		
	Belief systems		
	Constitution		

APPENDIX I: RQ3 CODES

P1 Codes	P2 Codes	P3 Codes	P4 Codes
High value	Very Beneficial	Presupposition	Directives
Shepherd	Bible	Frustration	Identical phrases
Higher standard	Define way of life	Empathetic	Belief quality
Stewardship	Good vs bad	Remove yourself	Positive
Relieve burden	Ethical principles	Other's perspective	Truthful
Humility	Relationship	Behavior = Scripture	Forthcoming
Opposite	Serve others	Pay it forward	Builds teams
Get ahead	Benefits	Partnership	Serve others
Positive environment	Trust	Acknowledgment	Embedded
Serve first	Learn	Respect	Do the right thing
Conflict	Positive image	Genuine	Comfortable
Peace keeper	Comfortable	Responsibility	Positive
Right thing	Outside process	Cooperation	Correct Decisions
High road	Not quoted	Golden Rule	Responsible
Self-worth	Scriptural language		Ownership
Core value hiring	Implement		Ethical
Arrogance < humility	Wordsmithing		No harm
P5 Codes	P6 Codes	P7 Codes	P8 Codes
Value	Fairness	Scriptural foundation	Parables
Scripture grounding	Individual Beliefs	Scripture = ethics	Servant leadership
Written on heart	Everyone matters	Serve others	Biblical inferences
Moral compass	Moral guideline	No integration	Ingrained
Servant leadership	Title doesn't matter	Dangerous	Background
Absolutely positive	Trust	Right vs wrong	Lead by example
Fairness	Personal connection		Compassion
Listening	Rewarding		Bible on the desk
Learned ethics	Personal decision		Opportunistic
Freedom	Personal journey		Know your audience
Right and wrong			
Wisdom			
P9 Codes	P10 Codes	P11 Codes	P12 Codes
Pluralistic society	Morals ≠ Scripture	Basic Understanding	No value in Scripture
Consequences	Ingrained	Positive policy	Negative experience
Materialism	Serving others	Serve others	Unhealthy experience
Do the right thing	Not include Scripture	Past experience	Altruistic

P9 Codes	P10 Codes	P11 Codes	P12 Codes
Companionship			Serve others
Discipleship			Friendship
Heartfelt			Alienate
Uncomfortableness			
P13 Codes	P14 Codes	P15 Codes	
Respect	No value in Scripture	Ingrained	
Ten commandments	No escaping beliefs	Written on my heart	
Promote others	Remove roadblocks		
Love others	Confused		
	Agnostic		
	Gratitude		
	Anxiety		
	Myopic view		
	Marginalizing		

APPENDIX J: RQ4 CODES

P1 Codes	P2 Codes	P3 Codes	P4 Codes
Friction	Leadership dependent	Secular world	Society
Religious context	Acknowledge	Acknowledged	Offended
Core values	Pride	Lack of Standards	Beliefs
Agreements	Listen	Detrimental	Demographics
Scripture = religion	Views and opinions	Controlling	Workplace policy
potential	Entitled	Social Morals	Animosity
Different beliefs	Different Faith	No moral standards	Mainstream Religion
Negative reaction	Christian	Golden rule	Christian
Feathers ruffled	Bible	Appreciate	Geography
Non offensive	Appreciate	Tolerant	Culture
Steer away	Interpretation Guide	Culture	Context
Honesty	Science	Positive response	Scripture problem
Value	Past experience	Negative response	Positive Experience
Excited	Happy ignorance	Audience specific	Denominations
	Judgment	Context	Knowledge
	Scripture = ethics	People environment	Ethical ladder
		God's character	Value
		Scripture/history	
		Common sense	
		Rights and wrongs	
P5 Codes	P6 Codes	P7 Codes	P8 Codes
Encompass Scripture	Scripture appropriate	Diversity & Inclusion	Desensitized
Professional setting	Individual level	Wildly appropriate	Frog, boiling water
Resistance	Inspirational	Foundational beliefs	Faith
Negativity - Scripture	Positive	Right & wrong	Validate Scripture
Know your audience	Not pushing beliefs	Culture	
	Hard to take on faith	Scripture may offend	
	Healthy debate	Scripture/foundation	
	No pushback	Respect everyone	
	Relationship	Value opinions	
	Comfortable		
P9 Codes	P10 Codes	P11 Codes	P12 Codes
Love	Different beliefs	Company rules	Common ground
Acceptance	Alienating people	Circumstantial	Speak the truth
Grace		Diversity	Better version

P13 Codes	P14 Codes	P15 Codes
Team approach	Respect	Culture
Situationally based		Careful
Not negative		Offend
		Diversity