
Faith and Family Business: An Enduring Acquisition

By [Dr. Bill Long](#)

One of the observations about America made by the French traveler and writer, de Tocqueville, early in the 19th century was that this new country was spurred by the twin motivations of enterprise and acquisitiveness. He saw the newly-constructed Erie Canal and the even more-recent invention called the railroad, and he felt that these twin engines, so to speak, might launch an economic boom hitherto unseen in human history.

Acquisitiveness and enterprise have entered into our cultural DNA and have become the twin poles around which many family business owners orient their activities. Yet I was struck recently by the way that Proverbs deals with the subject of acquisition or gain. Proverbs 18:15 says: “An intelligent mind acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” The verb translated “acquires” here is usually translated as “buy,” and so the sense would be that the intelligent person sets his or her heart on “acquiring” or “buying” knowledge, as opposed to material wants. Knowledge, then, is at the heart of the biblical quest for acquisition.

When the Scriptures speak about knowledge, however, they don’t simply point to acquisition of information. Scriptural knowledge might best be called a combination of wisdom, good judgment and practical skill. In Proverbs, knowledge and knowledge of God are used almost interchangeably. Most of all, for the Scriptures, knowledge is something that is the result of our earnest search.

Your family business must acquire material assets to operate and grow, but are you also inclined to this Biblical kind of acquisitiveness? How do your family business routines, reflections, leadership activities and conversations lead to knowledge of God? The benefits of such an acquisition will be felt well into the future.