

Faith and Family Business: Steady Now

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Proverbs 12:22 is one of the many verses in Proverbs that, on first reading, have a kind of “ho-hum” character to them: “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight.” We agree with the sentiment, and then go back to work. But when we look more closely at the Hebrew word *emunah*, translated “faithfully,” a new world opens.

The first time the word appears in the Bible is in Exodus 17. The Israelites have just experienced the dramatic crossing of the Red Sea and now are engaged in battle with the Amalekites. But they find that their fortunes change based on whether Moses, who is standing on a nearby mountain watching the scene unfold before him, raises his arms or not. If he raises them, Israel wins. If he lowers them, Israel loses.

Moses gets tired, and his arms droop. So his two companions, Aaron and Hur, sit him on a stone and hold up his arms. The text says, “they hold his arms steady (*emunah*) until the sun went down” (17:12). Israel won. The “steady” arms of Moses were the key to victory.

This engaging story has a few lessons for families and family businesses. First, would you say that *your* arms are “steady” as you manage and deal with the variety of challenges you face? Or, do you get tired, let the arms droop and then succumb to the myriad forces that can “hold up your arms” or “steady” your arms when you get weary?

Thus, are *your* arms steady today? And, who is helping you hold them up? With this insight we can now retranslate our opening verse: “those who act with *steadiness* are his delight.” Now that is something worth remembering!