**The 7:14 Process:**

2 Chronicles 7:14 includes a process for discerning God’s direction on every issue that comes before an elected body. This one verse in 2 Chronicles, supported by many others, forms the four-step process:

“If my people, who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

1. Humble
2. Pray
3. Seek
4. Turn from their wicked ways

**HUMBLE:** (seek to understand, be open, remove pride for the discussion)

The Bible says, “Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.” (Proverbs 3:7), “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.” (Isaiah 5:21), “Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise.” (1 Corinthians 3:18), “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5).

When we think we’re so smart that we can actually get what we want or what is best, by doing something that is against our beliefs – that’s when we’re just too smart for our own good. We should be humble.

In Saul Alinsky’s book, *Rules for Radicals*,14 he devotes an entire chapter to the topic of ends and means. The intellectual arguments are impressive, yet hollow. I don’t mean to appear simple-minded or naïve, but, in truth, you either believe in a God who expects you to do what is right every time or you believe in some perversion of the truth that allows you to pick and choose based on the circumstances. Saul believes the circumstances dictate the decision. I believe that God is much bigger than any circumstance and all decisions should be based on Biblical truth.

If you do believe in God and His Holy Word, then all that you are responsible for is the “means” and God will take care of the rest. And if we are faithful in the little things, then we can be trusted with larger responsibilities (Luke 16:10). Let’s remember that pride comes before a fall (Proverbs 16:18).

**PRAY:** (ensure alignment, ask for wisdom and direction and open doors)

Once you acknowledge that you don’t know everything, you’ve listened respectfully to people’s opinions and you know that God is in charge – you need to pray (again). Pray for wisdom (see Proverbs 9:10 and James 1:5) Here are some things to consider: (paraphrase verses, see how they apply to your prayers)

1. Focus - Are you praying about the temporal or the eternal? \* Product or People? (Luke 12:34) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Heart - Are you ready to pray? Are you right with God? \* Confessing sins one to another. (James 5:16) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Request - Are you ready to listen? \* Wisdom will not yell over the noise. (James 1:5) \_\_\_\_

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**SEEK:** (study God’s Word, seek His Kingdom first, engage wise counsel)

Once you’re in a place of humility and you’ve prayed, you’ll be ready to put some more visible action to your effort. Seek His face in addition to seeking Him in prayer:

1. Seek Him in His Word – what does the Bible say? (2 Timothy 3:16)

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1. Seek Him in His people – what does wise counsel tell you? (Proverbs 12:15)

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1. Seek Him in history – remember what He has done (Psalms 105:4)

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**TURN:** (stop action in the wrong direction and start action in the right direction based on understanding, prayer, and wise counsel)

You may not think you’re wicked, but wicked ways are simply any approach that is not following God’s way. (Matthew 12:30). Turn away from focusing on the earthly things. If re-election crosses your mind, turn away. If donations cross your mind, turn away. If ridicule crosses your mind, turn away. If polling results cross your mind, turn away. If opportunities for fame cross your mind, turn away.

No turn is ever successful unless you have the power of Christ to turn TO something else. Turn to God’s way. (See 1 Corinthians 9:24). Think of relationships. Think of God’s sphere of influence. Think of your witness. Think of your personal relationship with Christ. “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8)

In every situation, on every issue that will ever come before you – this 7:14 process will put you on the right path to serving the Lord in your position of authority, and most importantly – it will bring you closer to Christ.

Let’s apply the 7:14 process:

* + - 1. Humble yourself – listen carefully to the pros and cons as they are presented by each group. Listen for the underlying concerns and vision without taking a position. The biggest proponents focus on much-needed income for the City. The proponents talked about a reduction in traffic accidents, but the statistics were not conclusive. The biggest opponents focus on concerns of being falsely accused. The opponents talked about mismanagement of funds, but these issues were limited.
			2. Pray – God’s wisdom is not your own, the only way you can know it – is to ask for it. During prayer one City Council member recalls that she didn’t get a clear answer, but had a strong desire for more information.
			3. Seek God’s face – The Bible doesn’t speak to red-light cameras, but it does define a number of principles that might apply to this issue: a) This is within government’s role – to punish the evil (but there is that concern about ticketing the right person); b) Government should be funded to serve its purpose. Let’s also consider wise counsel: The councilwoman who related this story received strong counsel from pastors and respected friends who were uneasy with the idea of outsourcing law enforcement.
			4. Turn from your wicked ways – With the study information, community input and wise counsel, this council member still had a natural desire to go with the flow, take the easier road, raise money for the City and vote with the majority – but she turned from those “feelings” and voted against the ordinance. Although it passed the council in a 2-3 vote, a subsequent vote of the citizens repealed the ordinance by more than 80% of the voters.