

5 Keys to Discovering God's Calling at Your Job

If you hold a job outside your home, God has plans for you—and for your workplace.

It doesn't matter what kind of job you have or where you fit on the company totem pole. What matters is that you embrace your calling to transform your work environment by using the power that God has made available to you.

Perhaps you don't like your job. Maybe you can't wait to move up or move out. But don't let your current circumstances prevent you from seeing God's purpose for your life right where you are.

Everyone has to start somewhere. Joseph's starting point was the slave block in Egypt. Ultimately he ended up running the empire.

Daniel was enslaved and deported to a foreign land and then forcibly turned into a eunuch. Still he became the No. 1 person in Babylon in charge of all the affairs of state.

Changing the Spiritual Climate

Perhaps you feel underappreciated or overwhelmed. If so, take comfort in knowing there is someone who understands exactly how you feel: Jesus. At one point the Lord was so buffeted by discouragement that, in a rare moment of utter frustration, He demanded, "O unbelieving and perverse long shall I stay with you and put up with you?" (Luke 9:41, NIV).

The spiritual climate surrounding Jesus at that time was hostile—so much so that even John the Baptist's convictions were shaken. At one point Jesus' disciples became so angry with the circumstances that they wanted to call down fire upon

an unreceptive town.

Even the Father became exasperated and had to rebuke Peter, James and John from a cloud. I doubt that your worst day on the job could be as bad as the one these disciples experienced when they were reprimanded directly by God!

In the midst of this negative climate, Jesus took positive action. He recruited a batch of 70 disciples and gave them specific instructions for sharing the kingdom of God with others.

First they were to speak peace to the people they encountered and fellowship with them—"eating and drinking what they give you" (Luke 10:5, 7). Then they were to care for the people's needs—"heal the sick who are there"—and proclaim that the kingdom of God was near (vv. 9, 11).

Because these disciples carefully followed Jesus' instructions, the demons in the area lost their toehold. Even Satan lost his position of power over the region. The spiritual climate changed so dramatically that Jesus was able to rejoice and praise God for all the good things that were going on around Him (vv. 17-21).

Maybe the spiritual atmosphere in your workplace is as bad, or worse, than what Jesus experienced. But you can follow the same four steps that gave so much victory to the 70 disciples: blessing, fellowship, care and proclamation.

Let's take a look at the marketplace version of these four actions: joining the system, embracing it, improving it and bringing the kingdom of God to your job.

Joining the System

If you hold a job, you are already somewhere in the marketplace. It doesn't matter how undesirable your job is or how you got it. What is important is that you are in the

system because God has a purpose for you to fulfill there.

For this reason, you need to make peace with your job by accepting it as God's starting point for you. Speak peace to it. Thank God for it.

You will always find plenty of reasons to be upset, even angry, at the marketplace in general and at your job in particular. After all, you live in an imperfect world and work in a marketplace that is under the control of the evil one.

But don't let the odorous sin in your workplace prevent you from introducing the sweet aroma of grace. Take a positive posture.

Joseph, Daniel and Esther had to make peace and accept situations that were not what they would have chosen. Yet they did so because they wanted God to be able to reveal His purposes for them.

Joseph had to forgive his brothers and overcome the bitterness which, humanly speaking, he was entitled to hold because they had thrown him into a pit and sold him into slavery. Daniel had to come to grips with the fact that he had been taken away from his homeland and stripped of his manhood. Esther had to love a king she did not choose and who had no affection for her people.

All three recognized that no matter how much evil had been inflicted upon them, God would eventually use it for good. They held on to their conviction that God had a destiny for them that was greater and better than their present circumstances.

Because of that conviction, they were able to excel at jobs and assignments that, on the surface, were unappealing, even degrading. If they had quit because their tasks weren't enjoyable, they never would have fulfilled their destinies.

You need to be in the system before God can begin to transform it. God will not transform your workplace in order to put you in it. On the contrary, He has placed you in it to bring transformation to it.

You are the change agent! When you accept this assignment, you create a monumental problem for the devil because light—no matter how dim or small—has started to invade his kingdom.

Embracing the System

The next step is to embrace the system. God may eventually lead you to a different job; but until that time comes, you need to give everything you have to your current one. Doing so allows God to move you from victory to victory.

You can begin by making a list of all the good things your job has to offer and then affirming those things. Make a declaration that you wholeheartedly embrace your current employment.

Joseph took this step when he embraced the system of slavery. He could have chosen to work half-heartedly or begrudgingly, but instead he served his masters with extraordinary diligence.

Esther also took this step when she served her husband and his wicked guest, Haman, not once, but twice. It must have been difficult for her to embrace her job as a queen, knowing that Haman was evil and sought the destruction of her people. But she did not let this distract her from doing the best possible job.

So often Christians project a tremendous sense of rejection toward their workplace. They point to the flaws in the system and thus condemn it. But when the adulterous woman stood before Jesus, He did not focus on the sins that had ruined her but on the hope that lay ahead: “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11).

Be hopeful about your workplace. After all, when light and darkness meet, who wins? Greater is the One who is in us than the one who is in the world!

Improving the System

The next step is to improve the system. Just as the 70 were told to heal the sick in the homes of those with whom they had fellowship, you and I are instructed by the Lord to make things better at work—especially in those areas where things are not going so well.

When you take the first step and make peace with your job, you neutralize the evil elements that have created strife between you and your work. When you take the second step and embrace your job, you make it a part of your life. That opens the door to the third step, as God's blessings begin to extend into your workplace.

God bestowed blessings upon Egypt, Babylon and Persia on account of Joseph, Daniel and Esther. They were able to improve the system. In doing so, they proved to their kings that God cared for their nations.

Likewise, when you improve the system at work, you convey a deeply appreciated message to your boss, partner, associates or employees. You also point them toward God. Nothing points marketplace people toward the Lord better than seeing a miracle in the marketplace!

Bringing the Kingdom to Your Job

The final step is to declare that the kingdom of God has come to the place where you work. This is not an abstract declaration. You are the light of the world; therefore, you are able to bless your job, embrace it and bring to bear the power of God in the areas there that require miracles.

I know a Christian who became a high-ranking executive in a

large European telecommunications corporation. After a powerful encounter with the Lord, he came to the realization that God wanted him to be a shepherd to the employees who worked for him.

The next day he arrived at the office before anyone else and blessed the working space of every single employee in his department. He did this day after day, and before long the spiritual climate around him improved significantly. This became evident in black and white when sick leaves and conflict levels in his department were reported to be dramatically lower than in the rest of the company.

The man's boss—the CEO of the company—asked him for an explanation. "It's God!" the executive said, and he went on to explain how he had put a canopy of prayer over the department.

When the company decided to construct a new corporate headquarters, the Christian executive was put in charge of the project. He made sure that from the time the contractors started digging until the facilities were finished, everything was covered in prayer.

One day he was approached by some company accountants who were keeping record of the accidents that took place on the project. They were perplexed because the accident numbers were much lower than they would have expected for such a huge endeavor.

They had scrutinized the records to see if there had been underreporting. They checked to see if someone had been tampering with the books. But they found that everything was in complete order.

"It's God," the Christian executive explained, and he went on to give them the same speech he had given his boss.

Sometime later I tried to call this Christian businessman. I

could not reach him because he was at a celebration banquet.

Key executives in his company had gathered to celebrate the tangible evidence of the kingdom of God in the company's balance sheet. Five years earlier, this man's department had been \$13 million in the red. Now it was recording a surplus of \$1.3 million!

When asked how this was possible, the executive declared, "There is no way this could happen without the intervention of the Lord."

Improving the First Step

The ocean of blessings this company experienced began at the headwaters of a very tiny creek. The key, the origin, was simple obedience. It all began when this Christian executive decided to make blessing his workplace part of his job description.

If you work for an ungodly boss or a corporation where the spiritual climate is repressive, don't let that prevent you from moving forward to bring the kingdom of God to your job. I doubt that your boss or any of your associates are worse than the bosses of Daniel, Joseph or Esther. They served evil, pagan, idol-worshiping kings—but that didn't deter them from fulfilling their destinies.

You may say that your job is less than desirable. Daniel, Joseph and Esther could have said the same thing. Nevertheless, they took the jobs they were given and brought the kingdom of God to the very place where Satan was at work.

They succeeded—as the Christian executive did—because light always defeats darkness.

So take heart. Begin to implement these four steps. Your light will shine in your workplace with ever-increasing brightness, and awesome transformation will come.

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