

Take the Gospel to the Frontlines at Work

When you think about it, being a Christian in the workplace is one of the greatest privileges afforded a person. To actually be in regular contact with people outside the church who are far from God puts feet to what happens on Sunday.

There was a point in my life that I looked around at all my friends and noted they were all Christians, either attending the church I attended or others in our community. These were wonderful people who all loved God. Problem—I had almost no friends who did not know God. This was particularly intense for me in that I worked for the church. My whole life was the church, to eat, sleep and breathe.

So one day I decided to take a step. My son was getting ready to head into second grade and my daughter would start kindergarten the following year so I talked to my wife about running for the school board. We agreed that it would be a good step for our family.

Although I had a keen interest in the education of my children, I also saw this as a real opportunity to develop significant friendships outside of the church world. I gained a mission field. You have your mission field across the hall, on the construction site, in the classroom and wherever else you earn that paycheck.

Let me make an observation that puts what we do as Christians in perspective. When you think about it, the church has all sorts of things in common with the world. We really do. The world has nice buildings and the church has nice buildings. The world has great stuff for kids and teenagers and so do we. The world has great music and so does the church.

The world has education and we have discipleship. And the list

goes on and on.

However, there is one thing the world does not have. It does not have the message of the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The church does. I would argue that without this message, we have no reason to exist. None! So, if this is the case, why do we cluster our relationships in the church with Jesus as the center? Why not find people who do not know Him and offer to them what they cannot get in the world? Hmmmmm ... maybe in the workplace? Bingo!

Let's think about this. What are some ways you can effectively live a life pleasing to the Lord in the workplace? If we really believe that there exists the life-changing message of the Gospel, how about if we intentionally think in terms of the following as ways to integrate it into our workplace relationships.

1. **Pray.** If you think you can do this deal on your own, forget it. Pray for those you work with as if they were your own family. God has given you the opportunity to work with them. Pray that they would contribute well to your company. Pray that you can relate to them in a way that says you care about them beyond their ability to produce. Pray for their spiritual wellbeing and that the Holy Spirit would draw them to himself. Most importantly, pray they would be open to hearing the Gospel and they would give their heart to Jesus.

2. **Walk Across the Room.** Bill Hybels, in his book *Just Walk Across the Room*, asks whether taking ten steps across a room and saying hello to another person, taking a genuine interest in them, could have an impact on his or her eternity. So why not walk across the office, classroom, construction site, wherever ... and talk. Extend yourself to that other person at a level different-and I would argue better than just interacting for work's sake.

3. **Barbecue First, Invite Second.** In Mark Mittleberg's book

Becoming a Contagious Christian, he admits that he was always up for inviting friends and neighbors to church for special Christmas and Easter events. It was like he was always trying to get another notch in his evangelism belt with God by inviting people to church. There was a problem. That was the only time he tried to engage in meaningful conversations with these people. Maybe he should have had them over for barbecue before he did the church-invitation thing. He learned that if you are going to extend an invitation to church you had better extend yourself to the person first by inviting them into your life and home. Barbecue first, invite second.

4. **Be Consistent and Authentic. Do what you say.** Be honest while on the job and while interacting off duty with those with whom you work. The people you work with see phoniness all around them. One of the things they will find refreshing is if you will carry yourself in an authentic manner. Be real. Do not put on a show or present an image that you want them to see. Whether it is a good day or not, work hard to be consistent. Simply be yourself. Assuming the self we are talking about is a person fully desiring to be more like Him every day, let that reality and genuineness show through.

5. **Speak Well of All People. Don't gossip.** This will be one of the ways you are set apart from many in the workplace. There is simply no place for a Christian to speak in a way that is not fully uplifting of others at work. Over time, your co-workers will notice the difference in the way you conduct your speech. This is not to say that those who serve as supervisors of others have to go soft in their leadership or correction of those who work for them. It does say, however, that what you do with those discussions needs to stay very tight. Always let your speech demonstrate your understanding of the dignity of others.

6. **Demonstrate God's Love in Tangible Ways.** When you become aware of personal circumstances in a co-workers life ask yourself, What would Jesus do? Would He hide in the paperwork

on your desk or would He “walk across the room”? Touch those around you with God’s love. You don’t wear this on your shirtsleeve but you demonstrate it by how you live. Your co-workers may not necessarily be able to describe how they feel as you demonstrate this love, but they will know when it happens.

7. Care for Them as Persons, not a part of your bottom line.

Most of us want those for whom we work to be successful. However, to see those around us as simply parts of some machine called “Your Company’s Bottom Line” and not see them as human beings for whom Christ died, is to miss the point of why God put you there. While doing all you can to be the best you can be for those who sign your paycheck, never overlook the very personal and human side of your co-workers who do not know Jesus. They contribute to your bottom line and they have a soul that is in need of a Savior.

In the final analysis you get to be salt and light in a dark world. A few of your co-workers might be difficult to deal with personally. They, like you, have quirks—some of them extremely annoying. They, like you, are in need of a Savior. They need someone to be willing to walk with them. They need time for opportunities to present themselves. They need you because you can point them to Jesus.

Being a Christian in the workplace puts you on the frontline of reaching people with the Gospel. Celebrate that privilege!