

Why It Is Important to Be a Good Marketplace Christian

Everything we do is an act of worship. In the Bible it says, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col 3:17).

People in ministry heal the sick, cast out demons and spend countless hours in counseling sessions, prayer meetings and worship services. We minister to people constantly and make sure church services, conferences and retreats are all in order. We pray and fast in preparation for laying on of hands in healing room ministries and we seek the face of God to satisfy our spiritual hunger for more of Him. We worship Him in spirit and truth and get on our knees to give Him everything we have while in our Sunday churches services.

But how many of us worship Him in our marketplace, in our jobs, our careers and our factories?

Marketplace ministry is what we Christians usually call it. The Christians in today's world who hold down secular jobs while trying to share their faith with others are doing marketplace ministry. Not all Christians are called to be pastors, teachers, prophets or evangelists. Some are called to be doctors, lawyers, secretaries, waitresses and housekeepers. They feel a strong calling to what they do and love it, but they are not in ministry full time, or are they? They share their faith when approached by a client or customer, but gently and subtly, so as to not offend their employer.

The seeds they plant are invaluable and are much needed by those of us who do the harvesting. Their value, like intercessors, will go unknown until we stand before the throne and receive our crown.

There is another kind of marketplace Christian. They go to their job to complete the task at hand, never even contemplating sharing their testimony or that they are working for the kingdom of God. They just want to be good at their jobs. They go in and out, getting the work done, so they can spend time golfing or with their family. They never even considered sharing their faith because it would be unheard of or they are afraid of being asked questions they don't know the answer to.

There are other people who grumble about their work, get upset with customers who ask stupid questions and are often noticeably irritated by their boss. The thought of them doing their job as though they were serving the Lord never crossed their minds. They don't see how the two relate.

When you ask them about doing everything as doing it for the Lord, they think it refers to mowing their neighbors' lawns or bringing a new mother a hot meal. To think that packing 24 items into a carton and shipping it off to a foreign country was working for the Lord—no way, not these people, especially if it is a country that doesn't believe in Jesus as Lord. How would me packing 24 items have an impact on someone else? Well, maybe it doesn't, but it has an impact on your Lord.

He wants us to do everything we do with spiritual excellence and physical excellence. Whether we are working out, cooking dinner, packing boxes, serving communion or handing out bulletins, everything must be done as for the Lord. When we serve in any capacity with excellence, we are worshipping Him. And when we are not serving in excellence, our worship is sloppy and dishonoring.

That is the problem these days. If everyone took a deeper look into their lives and the lives of others, a lot could be told. The point is, when we do everything with excellence, no matter what it is, it's like worship, singing, dancing and praising. It is excellent to the Lord! It is an offering of sweet

incense going straight up to the heavenly throne room.

It is when we worship God in the marketplace that promotions come, raises come and we are rewarded for a job well-done. We don't do these things to seek a reward, but the reward will come naturally in the physical realm when we excel in the spiritual realm. We need to set our minds spiritually that we are going to serve our employers as if it were Jesus Himself we are serving.

What about that customer at our table in the restaurant? Imagine him being Jesus. If He complained about the food, you would rush back to find Him the best you could. You would tell Him when He ordered His food that the sour cream portion was small and He might want to order extra instead of letting His food arrive, have Him ask for it and then have to go back and get it while His food sat and got cold. You would go the extra mile to refill His drink.

If Jesus were sitting there, you would give Him a gentle smile and want to sit in the seat next to Him. We need to serve others as if they were Jesus. The Bible says, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Heb. 13:2). How do we know when we are or are not entertaining angels? We need to be prepared. We need to have a sense of urgency and excellence about us. It is when we serve others, we are rewarded.

As Jesus said, "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward" (Mark 9:41). When you do it to others, you do it to Jesus. We need to serve others as Jesus would have. "After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded" (John 13:5). A true act of service, a true act of worship. When we serve people in this capacity, we are serving the Lord. It is worship to Him.

We think of worship as singing, dancing, praising and everything else that accompanies a music ministry. However, worshipping Jesus is what we eat, how we dress, how we take care of our houses and how we serve others through our employment. Whether we are stuffing envelopes or sweeping up cigarette butts, we should do it all as if we are doing it for the Lord.

Our attitudes while we work should be an act of worship to the Lord. Picture the Lord doing your job with you, because He is. He is inside of you. If we walk by a piece of trash and don't pick it up and throw it away, we should. If everything is the Lord's, and it is, that means the floor at your work is the Lord's. Would you leave a piece of trash on the temple floor? I think not! Then you shouldn't allow it to go unnoticed at work.

We also need to be sharing God's love at work by being nice, by going that extra mile. Our emotional attitude should be one of love, grace and longsuffering. We need to be longsuffering with people, putting up with their inadequacies until they get free from the bondage they are in and serve the Lord like we do. When we do this, we are worshipping and honoring the Lord, because we are honoring His people. Everything we do should be an act of love and worship to our King and one way we worship our King is through kindness to people.

One gentle way to do marketplace ministry is by how you talk to people and answer their questions. A simple way to share Jesus when someone asks how you are doing, is to respond by saying, "I am blessed and highly favored." This, first of all, is claiming and decreeing that you are blessed and highly favored and it will make those blessings and favor come forth in your life. The second thing is that by responding with this phrase, it gets people to thinking, and occasionally, it will lead to a door being opened for a Christian conversation.

Find what is comfortable for you. Each of us ministers in a

different way. What is comfortable for one person may not be comfortable for another person. Find the way you feel comfortable and led to reach out with the love of God in the marketplace! {eoa}

Excerpted from A Worship Woven Life by Kathy DeGraw.

Kathy DeGraw is the founder of DeGraw Ministries, a prophetic ministry releasing the love and power of God, igniting people in the prophetic and releasing people from emotional bondage. She's passionate about teaching people the power of prayer through declaring. She speaks at conferences and travels hosting evangelistic love tours. She is the founder of Change into Colorless, an anti-racism corporation and co-pastors a church. Kathy is the author of Spiritual Warfare Declarations; Time to Set the Captives Free; and Flesh, Satan or God. Connect with Kathy at .