

We serve an amazing God. The more we know and experience Him the more we want to make Him known. We can represent Christ and communicate our love for Christ at our workplace, in a way that honors our Lord and also honors those with whom we work.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Connect and pray as a group*

(Reminder: 'work' = workplace, volunteer work, homemaker, student)

1. Tell of a time you have seen God act through someone at the workplace?
2. Recall a time God's Spirit influenced you in your workplace.
3. Has anyone ever asked you at work about your faith? What was your response?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

Observation and Reflection

1. Pastor Henry outlined three ways to represent Christ in the workplace.
(Work with a Christ-like attitude; work to the best of your ability; be prepared to give an answer.) How do Colossians 3:22-4:6 and 1 Timothy 4:15 embody these principles in our work?
2. Randy Kilgore (VP Marketplace Network) asked "What are the key things you want from your co-workers who claim to be Christian?" The answers were: I wish my Christian co-workers knew more about their faith, what they believe and why; ...had more hope in hard times; ...were more curious about the hard questions of life; ...behaved more honorably...were more compassionate.
How does 1 Peter 3:15-16 speak to the above points?

Application

1. Read Acts 1:8. What challenges do you face in your workplace to 'be a witness'?
In what ways can you build credibility with your co-workers as an ambassador for Christ?
2. What will you do to improve your preparedness to give 'an answer for your faith'?
3. Pray for one another as you strive to represent Christ effectively in your 'work.'
4. Use the words of Colossians 4:2-6 as a personal prayer.

THE WORD (NIV)

Act 1:8

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Colossians 3:22-4:6

²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.²⁵Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism... **4** Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven. ² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

¹¹... and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you,¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

1 Timothy 4:15

¹⁵Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.

1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Work Matters: Part 3

Pastor Henry Schorr

Nov 30/Dec 1'13

In the first two parts of this series what we have learned about work is that . . .

Work originated with God, though sin made it a struggle. Jesus replaced the struggle with an eternal perspective.

God called us to join Him in His work, though sin and death made that work futile. Jesus replaced the futility with His call.

All work matters to God, though sin turned work into an idol. Jesus replaced this idol with His love and acceptance.

When you embrace Christ by faith and develop a close friendship with Him your perspective on everything changes including your attitude toward work. You are no longer working for your boss but for the Lord. Thus NO job is a nothing job, for the Lord can use your job to further His kingdom work. But how do I represent Christ in the workplace and express His love and life-changing power? And how do I introduce others to Jesus there while honoring both Him and our colleagues?

You represent Christ well when you do work with a Christ-like attitude (Acts 1:8, Col 3:22-23). 'Everything' does not mean we are to do something illegal or compromise our faith, but to have an attitude of respect and cooperation whether someone is in the room with us or not. 'Sincerity' reflects doing our work ethically, with integrity and honesty – being dependable. It is asking Jesus daily to help you see everyone you work with as He sees them. Jesus loves them and they matter to Him. They are His kids who have gone missing spiritually and He longs for them to come home. He wants to use you to show them His love and treat them the way He would.

You are where you are for a reason. Ask Him why you are in that place and what He wants you to learn there. One such reason is to be faithful and be the best worker you can be – to be salt and light to the people you work with. You may be the closest they ever get to seeing what Jesus is like. You may be the only Bible they ever read. Being a witness of God's reality and love is not just something a Christian says, but what a Christian does. Your life preaches all week. What message is your life and your attitude at work and elsewhere preaching?

You represent Christ well when you do your work to the best of your ability (Col 3:23, 1 Thess 4:11-12, 1 Tim 4:15-16). Statistically there is very little difference behaviorally between Christians and non-Christians on the job. Only 12% had any kind of positive influence on the job concerning spiritual life. The tendency of the other 88% was to either be mute about their faith or too aggressive. So too were the Thessalonians. In their belief that Jesus was coming soon, they were passionate about sharing their faith to the neglect of their jobs and family and were becoming a burden to others. Paul rebuked them saying they would gain no respect from people if they spent more time talking about Jesus than doing the work they were getting paid for. Paul tells them to work and trust that God will use the good and faithful work they do in their daily life to point people to the Lord. Then give an answer for their hope when the opportunity arose. It was true for them, and for us. Be conscientious and diligent in your work. Improve yourself and increase your value to your employer. Give your very best to those who employ you and be willing to do whatever needs to be done. If you want to be a greater influence for Christ in your workplace then focus on being the most diligent, effective and positive worker there. People listen to such workers – even their religious beliefs – because they see their credibility.

You represent Christ well when you are prepared to give an answer for the hope within (1 Pet 3:15-16). Keep in mind that Jesus is Lord and that He wants to see people come home to him even more than we do. As we pray, listen to Him and follow His lead then He is able to live His life through us and do what we could never do in our own strength. People will notice Jesus in us. Are you willing to do what many are not when the opportunity arises in the workplace – to talk about your faith and what Jesus means to you? Are you prepared to give an answer (with gentleness and respect) for the hope you have in Jesus? Many workers do want things from their Christian colleagues. They wish that they knew more about their faith (what they believe and why) and were more curious about the hard questions of life, and that they had more hope in hard times, behaved more honorably and were more compassionate (Research done by Randy Kilgore, VP of Marketplace Network). Note that the research did not say they wished Christians would keep their faith to themselves, or loosen up in their values. What they wanted was for Christians to be serious about their work, true to their faith and honest about their struggles, and be respectful of those who see things differently than they do. Christians are still the 'go to' people when things are tough, however those who ask them are often disappointed by the response. Are you prepared to give an answer for the hope you have in Christ? Do you know what you believe and why, and can you share your faith with gentleness and respect?