



Turning Lost Students into Christ-Centered Laborers

SHARING LIFE OR DESTRUCTION • Jim Rhodes

A few years ago, one of the students on the Hampton Beach Summer Project, named Dan, came to me obviously troubled, and said he was having a problem at work. As was the case with all of the students on the summer project, Dan had come to Hampton Beach desiring to know Christ better, and to learn how to share about his relationship with Christ more effectively. Realizing that his job would be the place that he spent many hours each week, Dan prayed long and hard as he searched for a job where he could earn the money he needed for college in the fall, and also have a maximum influence for Jesus. After a few days pounding the pavements of the beach community, Dan believed the Lord was leading him to accept a job at a local convenience store.

It was a few days later that Dan showed up at my door looking very troubled. He explained, “I like my job at the convenience store, but after I accepted the job, I discovered that they sell pornography from behind the counter, and they expect me to sell it to the customers as well. The Lord has shown me that I can’t be out sharing the Gospel of Christ with the Summer Project in the evenings, and then be helping to sell destruction to people on my job during the daytime.”

Over the next day or so, Dan really sought the Lord about what he should do. “Maybe I just didn’t hear the Lord correctly when I was looking for a job,” he thought. “Maybe I should just quit and go find another job that won’t require me to compromise my convictions.” The more he prayed, the more Dan became convinced that the Lord had indeed led him to this place of employment, and that dealing with this situation was part of the ministry that the Lord was calling him to. Like Daniel of the Old Testament, Dan didn’t ask to be in this situation, but he knew that his relationship with Christ was more important than this job, and he was determined to let His light shine in the midst of this darkness.

Feeling very inadequate for the task, Dan went ahead and made an appointment to speak privately with the owner of the store. He told the owner how much he enjoyed working in the store, and told him about the problem he was having selling the pornography. Then, he politely asked the owner to remove the magazines and not sell them any more. The owner was impressed with Dan’s convictions, and even explained that as a young man, he too, had held some high moral convictions. “But,” he told Dan, “when you get a little older like me, you will see that this is simply what you have to do to survive in business. If I don’t sell the magazines, then one of my competitors surely will, and I will lose the profit from the magazines, and, also, from the business they bring into the store.”

Undeterred, like the Daniel of old, Dan suggested a trial. “Take the magazines out, and I am sure that the Lord will honor your decision. I will pray and I am sure that business will actually increase,” Dan proposed. “Let’s try it for two weeks and see how it goes.”

The owner thought about Dan’s proposal but was still unwilling to trust that this God of Dan’s would in fact intervene on his behalf. The magazines were going to stay. Then, Dan asked him how much he was making from the sale of the magazines. The owner replied that he didn’t know exactly, but believed it to be substantial. Dan swallowed hard, and offered to allow the owner to deduct the profit the store was receiving from the sale of the magazines, from his own paycheck, if the owner removed them, and business suffered.



Startled by Dan's offer, the owner said, "It means that much to you?" Dan replied that it did. "Then, I will take the magazines out," he said. The owner took the magazines out that very day, and they didn't return.

Over the years since then, I have passed by that store many times. Each time, I am reminded of the difference Christians can make in the marketplace. We can define how business is conducted. We can be used by God to help change the society and world we live in.

In retrospect, it was just one store that never sold destruction again. It was just one store owner who learned again that God was very interested in him, and willing to get involved in his life and business. It may not seem like much, but what if we could reproduce that scenario again and again? I believe America would never be the same. And many who have been looking skeptically at Christians, and Christianity, would want to know how they can know this God of Daniel and Dan.

End 

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