



CHALLENGERS TO THE GODLESS GRIND • Dave Sunde

Christians in the workplace: are they assets or liabilities? Without question, the answer should be that Christ-followers are definitely assets, because they have the highest motivation going for them. As St. Paul expressed it, “Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ (Colossians 3:23-24).”

Another reason why believers definitely are assets in the workplace is that the Lord Christ has given them a new heart. The great Apostle put it this way, “Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.” The potential for offering grace and understanding is immeasurable.

Jesus said that we would be like “salt” and “light” in the world. Both affect the workplace differently, but the effect of salt to season and preserve, means Christians do just that in a boring and dying world. The impact of the light is the beauty of its radiance in a workplace of darkness and gloom. These descriptions paint a beautiful picture of Christians in the workplace. Such motivated Christians are a wonderful witness, simply by the quality of their lives, and the quality and quantity of work they produce.

But such motivation assumes a certain Christian life maturity. Predictably, this worker has a daily Quiet Time with the Lord, likely before the workday has begun. This Christian worker has counted the cost of being a Christ-follower. In a word he/she is a disciple of Jesus Christ. This means that the Scriptures are now read with a new alertness to the changes its words can produce. Further, Christians who are assets to their business or company, are learning the value of a supportive network of believers, as a small group provides.

So why would we ever be liabilities in the workplace? One main reason could be that we are operating at a low level of Christian life experience. Quite obviously, we are not working as unto the Lord. Instead, we have settled for working for a paycheck, or to fill the days of a directionless life. Sadly, the liability factor reflects directly unto our Lord. Christians lacking His power and grace flowing through them, are a poor model of His great life within. Not only this, they have fallen to the lowest common denominator of productivity. The glory of work is reduced to a godless grind.

Meanwhile, in such workplaces, the motivated Christian really stands out. Because this believer is serving the Lord, his/her very energy and presence is offensive to the coworkers’ do-only-the-minimum work style. Then, if this Christian bridges to the Gospel, it can be a real turn-off. Not because of the message, but because of the messenger. So how are we going to approach evangelism in the workplace? I have some ideas.

[Evangelism in the Workplace: Do It Wisely](#)

Workplace evangelism is a step beyond workplace witness. In fact, it is built on the foundation of it. Evangelism isolated from the everyday relationships of the workplace, is not well received. The sharing of the Good News at work is most effective in the context of existing relationships. There are different rules for sharing Christ at work, than there are for an evangelistic blitzkrieg.



Even though the Christian worker may be tactful, and careful not to violate company rules, he/she still creates some tension. Most of the employers and owners I've talked to regarding these matters, are quick to say that evangelism in their firm or company makes them nervous. They have their reasons. One obvious one is talking about religion on company time. Another is that the boss flat out disagrees with the Gospel. Another fears backlash from the union or other workers. In nearly all cases it is a concern that nothing affect the productivity of the workplace. There is more. Most bosses are also deeply concerned to not violate the private space of the workers. Religion is usually construed to do just that. It enters the personal side. It confronts. It calls one to make sure they are on the right path. That can be unsettling. Bosses say, "Leave those matters for your own time; not here at work." For these reasons, I encourage business people to begin good workplace witness with the impact of their lives. Demonstrate a growing relationship with the Lord in your worklife. Trust the Lord to open doors for evangelism, being alert to the sensitivities of your coworkers.

It's True: Christians Aren't Perfect

The quality of your life becomes your workplace witness. However, beware of the thinking that creeps in saying you must be a perfect Christian to be effective. Granted, non-Christians have higher standards for us than even the Bible does, but hang on to reality. Fellow workers need to know that being a true Christian is unrelated to some perfection game. A true Christian simply has a relationship to God of right standing, because of faith in the work of Jesus Christ. It is the experience of spiritual re-birth. It is the gift of a new identity. Although becoming a Christian is a decision of a moment that affects eternity, it is a progressive, growing understanding of the will of God for one's life. The birth of new life is not followed by instant maturity. That is the discipline of a lifetime.

The reason I mention this, is because I sense that a lot of Christians in the workplace feel useless, or ineffective, as a witness. It may be that they are waiting for the day when they will be "mature," or fully trained. Or they have underestimated the interest and openness of their friends. In any event, they are waiting. Someday their light will shine brightly. My counsel in such cases is to encourage them to forget about perfection, and begin where they are now. The genuineness of your own pilgrimage is very attractive to someone searching for the Way.

What is a Workplace Witness?

What we mean by this term, is the influence a Christian has among his/her peers. It is the measure of the shadow cast by just being in the company or firm. In this sense, each Christian on the job has a workplace witness. Since each of us is an unique individual, the form of the witness will be a reflection of who we are.

What Does It Look Like?

For some, the witness is one of caring and concern for fellow workers. Christ is motivating this person with gifts of mercy, compassion, and sensitivity. Another Christian on the job has a witness of prayer among the workers. This person is motivated to pray for the needs and issues facing fellow workers. Workplace witness can take the form of being a cheerful, optimistic, and supportive friend. Or it may be skillful counsel or forecasting, relying on the Lord for wisdom.

All Christians hope to have a witness. Call it a "presence" in the company or business. It is a person who communicates an impression as being someone who is a good worker, is caring about others, is faithful, and has a buoyancy of spirit that is an encouragement to others. This may be a lot to expect, and the matter of temperaments must be factored in. But God helps us to be winsome representatives of Him. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses... (Acts 1:8)."

Where Do I Begin?

The important thing is to affirm yourself in the matters of who you are, and where you are, in the workplace. God can use us no matter where we are in our spiritual development and placement. Of course, there is a direct correlation between our maturity level, and the substance of our witness. But Jesus spoke in general terms of His followers being "salt" and "light" in the world. Therefore, that is how we should think of ourselves under His banner in the workplace. "You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot



be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16).”

The Gospel has always created opposition. Spiritual warfare is real. But the Gospel is also “the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith... (Romans 1:16).” Therefore let your coworkers see that you really care. Be real, but also be praying all the time that the Lord will open some doors for you. He’s been known to do that!

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