

Making an Impact in the Workplace

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Part of the Living in High Definition Series

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Series About:

Faith In Life

How many Christians work in your office? Not sure? Maybe they've chosen to hide their true identity. Maybe your office is teeming with undercover Christians. Are you one of them?

In Matthew, chapter five, Jesus commands us to make our faith evident to everyone around us. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (NIV)."

Kind of Tricky

But did Jesus really mean at work? Living a high definition, transparent life in the secular workplace can get kind of tricky. It's not like you can begin each day leading the office in prayer, or reciting weekly Bible memory verses.

"Many of the tools we use at church just don't work in a secular environment," says C. Peter Wagner, author of, *The Church in the Workplace: How God's People Can Transform Society* (Regal). "Influence in the church is achieved through spirituality, in the workplace influence is achieved through success."

Wagner warns that although there are several opportunities for Christians to stand out in the workplace, it's important that it's not done in weird ways. "Learn how to draw the line. There are times to cut some slack and allow the system to operate. But you have to adapt before you have a chance to change them. Otherwise you isolate, and hide in a cubical with Bible verses pinned to your wall."

Plastic Image

Sometimes Christians unknowingly make themselves unapproachable by refusing to be transparent and thereby projecting a false, almost plastic, image. It leaves their co-workers believing that Christians live a perfect life. Perhaps believers fear that

sharing their struggles with other people at work reveal a lack of faith. On the contrary says Wagner, “It’s okay to talk about your struggles and then others will talk about their struggles with you. That’s when you gain influence.”

Wagner says it’s best when Christians take a missionary’s perspective when entering the workplace. “We live in two different cultures. Christians need to be like missionaries, taking their faith into a culture that is different than the church. Sometimes believers try to transfer the piety of the church into the workplace, and that doesn’t work. We have to adapt to the workplace culture.”

Being Adaptable

Adapting doesn’t mean compromising faith. After all there’s the story of Daniel, a biblical example of a man rising in power, while maintaining spiritual integrity. “Daniel had to become part of a whole group of soothsayers and seers, but eventually became their leader,” explains Wagner. “The spiritual principles Daniel was working with were a lot different than the principles the soothsayers were working with, and when it came to prayer, he drew the line. He couldn’t compromise on that one.”

Daniel isn’t the only one who openly lived out his faith in the workplace. It was Paul who befriended Aquila and Pricilla, co-workers in the tent-making business. And in Genesis 39 we read that Joseph, under Potiphar, rose to the top due to his excellent abilities. “The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.”

What is obvious in this passage is that Potiphar had no doubt as to where Joseph’s ability originated; it came from God. According to Wagner, giving credit to God is paramount to living a transparent life that can greatly impact the work environment. “The one thing you should not do is hide the fact that you follow Christ. When you succeed, they wonder if there’s a connection. People respect that.”

Living a transparent and authentic life means allowing your relationship with God to illuminate every environment you enter, even the workplace. Besides, says Wagner, “The place to workout your faith isn’t just at church. What people do in the workplace is their ministry, just as much as singing in the choir is at church.”

Are You Living a Transparent Life at Work?

- Do you fake happiness even when you are sad about something?
- Have you ever shared a personal concern with a co-worker?
- Have you openly spoken about how God helped you during a tough time?
- Do your actions at work reflect your Christian principles?

- Are you pursuing excellence, as working for the Lord, not for men?
- Do you have a vision for your workplace?

C. Peter Wagner says, “Christians need to have a vision. What they do in the workplace is paramount to bringing the kingdom of God here on earth as it is in heaven.”