

SHOW ME HOW TO
SHARE CHRIST IN
THE WORKPLACE

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Welcome to the Family



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THE WORKPLACE

R. LARRY MOYER

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Show Me How to Share Christ in the Workplace

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*To those in the workplace who see
their jobs as a calling and want to use
them to influence non-Christians*

Contents

<i>Introduction: Welcome to Your Ministry</i>	9
Part 1: Pray as You Should	
1. What Does That Mean?	17
2. What Do We Pray For?	21
3. What Do Open Doors Look Like?	31
Part 2: Live as You Should	
4. What Does That Mean?	41
5. What Does This Look Like in the Workplace?	45
Part 3: Speak as You Should	
6. What Does That Mean?	53
7. How Do We Speak Properly?	57
Part 4: Know What's Essential	
8. What Is "Sin" and How Do We Explain It to a Non-Christian?	65
9. What Is Our Message for Non-Christians?	72
10. What Does the Bible Mean by "Believe"?	80
11. Where Does Repentance Fit In?	89
Part 5: Share What You Know	
12. How Do You Turn a Conversation to Spiritual Issues?	99
13. What Is an Effective Method for Explaining the Gospel?	106
14. How Do You Follow Up?	115

Part 6: Use Public Speaking Opportunities	
15. Can Anyone Learn Public Speaking in the Workplace?	133
16. What's Important in Speaking in the Workplace?	137
17. How to Use Your Testimony as an Evangelistic Message	143
18. Let's Look at a Sample Testimony	153
Part 7: Resources for Workplace Leaders	
19. How Can Workplace Leaders Learn Evangelistic Speaking?	159
20. Speaking Opportunities for Workplace Leaders	164
21. Let's Look at a Sample Message for Workplace Leaders	171
<i>Appendix: "May I Ask You a Question" Booklet</i>	179
<i>Notes</i>	187

Introduction

Welcome to Your Ministry

Two kinds of Christians go to work. One says, “I’m a Christian called to serve the Lord as a computer technician.” The other says, “I’m a computer technician who happens to be a Christian.” The first sees the workplace as his calling, and the second sees his faith and his work as coincidental. For the first person, his workplace is his ministry. For the second, his workplace is nothing more than a job.

Every committed Christian needs to recognize that he or she is in full-time ministry. The concept that professional, paid Christian workers such as pastors, associate pastors, music directors, and youth workers are the only ones in ministry could not be further from the truth. Exodus 31:1–3 says: “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ‘See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.’” Bezalel was a craftsman, not a preacher, who was filled with the Spirit of God. God recognized his ability and chose him to be the principal workman in the construction of the tabernacle. Each day, as Bezalel worked with metal, wood, and stone, he was also deeply committed to God. Bezalel was in full-time ministry.

CEOs who live for Christ in their leadership positions, CPAs who live out their faith within the firm, nurses who see the hospital

as a place of service, plumbers who see Christ as their employer—all are in full-time ministry. Just because they have not always been viewed as such does not change the truth. Author, radio speaker, and seminary professor Haddon Robinson once said, “If I were pastor of a church, I would ordain people to the workplace.”¹

When asked, “Which is the great commandment?” Jesus replied, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matt. 22:37–39). Loving our neighbors or co-workers through service for Christ is as spiritual as going to church. Therefore, any Christian committed to serving the Savior where he or she labors—being used of God to the fullest extent possible—is in full-time ministry. To not see ourselves as such is sadly shortsighted.

Please don’t misunderstand—I am fully aware that your employer is paying you to work, not witness. In Titus 2:9, Paul exhorted Timothy, “Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back.” Then he continues in verse 10, “not pilfering.” While being a bondservant in the first century is not exactly the same as being an employee in the twenty-first century, the principle is the same: don’t steal. Pilfering or stealing could involve something as minor as paper clips or as major as cash. It would also involve time. Time improperly handled could bring a fellow employee to Christ but drive a non-Christian employer further from Him because of a Christian’s misuse of work time. Being used of God in the workplace involves the use of your time in the most God-honoring way.

So serving Christ in the workplace doesn’t mean slacking off on the job. How do we balance our obligations to our employer and our commitment to share Christ? The Bible tells us how to get to heaven. It also tells us how to take those in the workplace along with us. So when considering how to impact the workplace for Christ, the Bible is the place to start.

Sandwiched in five verses in Colossians 4:2–6 is sufficient guidance for anyone who wants to make an eternal impact on

those he or she rubs shoulders with every day. In this letter written by the apostle Paul to first-century believers in the Greek city of Colosse are a number of admonitions regarding work. In Colossians 3:22–4:1 Paul directly addressed a class of believers who were the most common workers of the day, bondservants or slaves:

Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Just because they were Christians wasn't an excuse for laziness or carelessness. It's not about trying to please the master when he's looking. It's about pleasing God who sees everything all the time. Whatever the position or task in which they were employed, Paul encourages them to do their work as if they were working for the Lord Himself.

Christian masters were admonished as well: don't misuse or abuse your servants. Do what is just and treat them fairly. You may be in charge now, but ultimately God has the final say as your boss. The master will answer to God on the basis of his treatment of his slaves.

As we've noted, the first-century world of slaves and servants wasn't the same as the modern-day workplace. Slaves couldn't change jobs, seek better working conditions, or rely on laws to protect their status in the workplace. Paul does, however, touch upon principles of work that apply even today. Our motivation for work should go beyond just doing the job. As Christians, what we do at work can bring about eternal benefit. Likewise for employers and supervisors—how we treat others is noticed by God. Justice and fairness are not optional.

Having set the stage for a discussion of work roles, Paul follows this section of his letter with three directives in Colossians 4:2–6 that apply to many areas but most importantly to the workplace. In the chapters that follow we'll examine each of these three imperatives in more detail. In our study of this passage we want to answer two basic questions: (1) What does this mean? and (2) How does it apply to the workplace?

Based on those answers, we want to further look at what we need to know to evangelize effectively in the workplace. Many Christians have a lot of credibility because they've lived the Christian life before others as they should. They may not, however, have examined carefully enough the message they are sharing with lost people. We ought not speak with confusion where God speaks with clarity. We'll explore how to turn conversations to spiritual things and present the gospel with clarity and simplicity. We'll also examine how to help new believers "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Then, having discussed those areas, we'll examine how what we have learned can be transferred into public speaking opportunities. Believers in a variety of workplaces may fail to see the public speaking opportunities available to them.

I have a friend who is active in the Marines. The good thing is, he's never found out he's in the Marines! By that I mean he sees himself as someone in full-time service for the Lord, stationed in the Marine Corp. He is outspoken about his trust in Christ, incorporates it into public speaking opportunities, and has regularly seen people come to know Jesus Christ. The full impact of how God has used him will only be seen when he is one day with the Lord. There is no question in my mind he'll be abundantly rewarded for how God has used him in full-time ministry in the military. Not every believer may have the same opportunities, but all believers have some opportunities.

Conclusion

Your workplace is not merely your job; it's your ministry. Let's discuss how we can use that job to populate heaven. In so doing, you

WELCOME TO YOUR MINISTRY

will have had the greatest ministry you could possibly have. Your workplace will not only be the means of meeting temporal needs like putting food on the table or providing funds for a vacation. It will also count for something eternal—introducing those you work with to the only One who can give them life that never ends.

Part I

Pray as You Should

*Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant
in it with thanksgiving.*

—COLOSSIANS 4:2

Chapter One

What Does That Mean?

Prayer is not where you end your ministry in the workplace. It's where your ministry begins. If anything of a spiritual nature is going to happen, God has to do it. Ministry in the workplace is God-sized. Christ's words in John 15:5 dare not be forgotten: "Without Me you can do nothing." Two things are essential.

Pray, and keep on praying.

Notice how Paul began his exhortation in Colossians 4:2: "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving." The idea behind words like "continue earnestly" and "being vigilant" is that prayer ought to come from our lips like water comes from a dripping faucet. Pray when you get up and pray an hour after you're up. Pray before breakfast and pray after breakfast. Pray on your way to work and pray on your way home. Pray before your sales appointment and pray afterward. Pray as you leave the warehouse and pray as you return. Pray as you open up your e-mails and pray as you press "send." Bottom line: make it a habit to engage in consistent prayer.

Paul's emphasis on prayer is like the boy who always wanted a baby brother. His dad told him, "The only way you can get anything is to ask God for it—so if you want a baby brother, you'll have to ask God for one." So morning, noon, and night the boy prayed. He

prayed before breakfast and after breakfast; on his way to school and on his way home; before soccer practice and after soccer practice. There was never an hour he didn't pray. After several weeks of praying, he still did not have a baby brother. So he thought, *This isn't doing any good*, and he stopped praying. Nine months later his father said, "Son, your mother is going to the hospital and I think when she comes home, she'll have God's answer to your prayers in her arms." Sure enough, when the mother came home, she not only had one new little brother in her arms, but two, beautiful twin boys. The father, wanting to drive his lesson home, said, "Son, aren't you glad you prayed the way you did?" To which the son answered, "I sure am, Dad, but aren't you glad I stopped when I did?"

Like that little boy, we should pray daily and hourly. But unlike him, our commitment to prayer shouldn't end after a few weeks of effort. Every day and every situation of that day presents us with opportunities to stay in communication with our Lord.

How does one pray as he sends an invoice, drives to his next sales job, or greets his next client? The answer is to live in an atmosphere of prayer. God hears the whispers of the heart, and a person can pray just as earnestly while changing the sparkplugs of a car as one does when participating in a prayer group at church. This doesn't mean that having a time and place each day when we regularly meet with the Lord isn't important. The point is, God is never more than a prayer breath away. We can bring everything to Him in prayer as it comes to us in life.

I've often been asked how a busy person keeps from being distracted as he prays. It's hard to pause and pray when you're facing a deadline on a project, or there's an appointment you have yet to prepare for. You may feel overwhelmed by concerns on the home front that you carry with you to work, or your work schedule seems to master you instead of you mastering it. What do we do to work effectively without losing focus?

The answer is twofold. First, speak to God about the distrac-

tions. God has no limits on what we can bring before Him. That means we can come to Him and say, “Help me when I talk to you not to get distracted.” This is another one of those areas in our lives where He can do “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20). Second, putting Him where He needs to be has a way of putting everything else where it needs to be. A businessman friend of mine said to me, “I’ve found something very interesting. When I take the time I need to spend with the Lord, everything I was concerned about getting done somehow gets done.”

That’s right—it’s a God thing! Putting Him in His rightful place in our priorities has a way of helping us get everything else in order. We can get done whatever needs to be done as He shows what is necessary and what can wait until another day. Perhaps that is what made Martin Luther say, “I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.”¹

Accompany prayer with thanks.

Prayer is not merely talking to God about doing something, but also thanking Him for what He’s already done. It should not surprise anyone that Paul also said, “with thanksgiving.”

“Thanksgiving” is not a P.S. attached to the end of a prayer. It’s a spirit in which our requests are made. We pray to a God of grace, One from whose hand we deserve nothing but the just punishment for our sins. Instead, He holds back from us what we rightly deserve so He might give us what we don’t deserve.

We’re thankful for who He is. The psalmist said, “Praise the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (Ps. 106:1). We’re thankful for who we are in Him. Paul exhorted the Colossians, “Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:12–14).

We’re thankful for everything good that comes from His

hand—the physical as well as the spiritual. Paul made that clear by rebuking those who set up rigid rules about the physical as if spiritual things were all that mattered. He wrote to his young protégé Timothy:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. (1 Tim. 4:1–5)

Prayer is all-inclusive. As Paul told the Thessalonians, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:18).

KEY POINTS

Two essentials that dare not be neglected are:

- Pray, and keep on praying.
- Accompany prayer with thanks.

These two alone can make a phenomenal difference as you begin ministry each day in the workplace. You’ll soon realize that what has happened through your nine-to-five day can only be attributed to the supernatural.