

Owning my spiritual growth at work.

By Tom Zimmerman

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Ask your mentor – jot down a few follow-up questions or observations as you read. For example:

- How do I assess or calibrate my own Christian worldview?
- When is it appropriate to acknowledge my faith at work?
- How might I meet other people of faith at work?
- *For the mentor:* What would you have done differently in regard to growing your own faith as a young professional? More of...less of.... ?

Taking Ownership

We're all at a different stage of spiritual development. Maybe you first encountered God at a vacation bible school or youth group. It could be you joined – or led - a bible study in college. Wherever you are in your walk, "continue to grow in the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus" 2 Peter 3:15 Why does that matter for a young professional in particular? It has to do with our personal *worldview*.

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We each see the world through a lens shaped by our beliefs and experiences. For Christians you might say we have a *biblical worldview*. We see God's presence in all aspects of our lives. We've likely experienced mercy, forgiveness, and Grace as Godly realities. Our worldview informs our actions and decisions. Sure, you haven't figured out every nuance of biblical apologetics, but you're working on it. *Keep working on it, don't ever stop.*

"Will my faith fit in with my professional life?" You could ask that a different way, "How should my professional life fit in with my faith?" Answer: Our faith is our faith. It doesn't (shouldn't) change from home to office. What does that look like in practice? First, take hold of your personal faith basics:

Prayer: "I pray silently throughout the day; it doesn't matter where I happen to be." (1Thess 5:16-17). Include God in your career right from the start, asking Him in Jesus' name to intercede and support you in supernatural ways. Meld work-related challenges and colleagues onto your personal prayer list. Start a career journal of things prayed for and answered. It won't take long to marvel at God's wisdom and guidance!

Faith in action: Be purposeful and consistent in your work-life walk. Take time to literally make note of what you (with your biblical worldview) consider to be Godly behavior and decision making. We're often challenged to make "ethical" and "moral" decisions at work. Having a biblical foundation gives you a map and compass:

"I don't lie." Stand by that commandment at work. Be the person who says in a meeting, "we can't bend that messaging or short-cut those budget numbers because.... we don't lie". Part of *not lying* is to admit when we are wrong. Being wrong can hurt our credibility or cost us our next raise. But as a Christian professional, your response should be, "It was me; I made the error on that project..." Why did you admit that? Because...I don't lie. Make that to be true and others will be the first to agree – "you're right, I've never known that person to lie." You are a person of integrity, acting on truth.

I forgive people and ask forgiveness. Jesus didn't hold grudges. Air your disagreements and don't be timid. *Do* let people see that you've resolved and moved on (1John 1:9). You'll be surprised how quickly this builds trust and respect. Say "I'm sorry, I apologize. I hope you'll forgive me." When you're wrong, own up to it. Then let other people decide how they will respond. But Christians forgive and ask forgiveness. It's part of our worldview.

I don't use coarse or condescending language. It's not that Christian professionals are prudish or naïve. We've heard (perhaps used) salty language. The Apostle Paul said in part, "...be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle and to show perfect courtesy toward all people." Titus 3:1-2. It can be tough – people wanting to take advantage of your kindness and run right over your gentle (Godly) spirit. But in your biblical worldview you know that, "Before a downfall, the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor." Be firm and strong, also trust God to honor your humility in the face of haughtiness. Proverbs 18:12. Co-workers are more apt to trust and appreciate someone who does not erupt in the tension of constructive confrontation. You may even find co-workers toning down their own language and behavior in Light of yours. Ephesians 4:29

Faith in professional relationships: Today's young professionals have a wild mix of cultural challenges to navigate in the workplace. Taking ownership of your own faith means living it, as well as sharing or explaining it when appropriate. In the early church, it's said that people would silently draw a fish in the sand. It was an effective way to signal their faith and perhaps meet a fellow believer without drawing dangerous attention. How do you "draw a fish in the sand" on a Zoom call or on a coffee break? It's often easier than you think. Most people ask what you did over the weekend. "I went to church and met Baton Exchange

with my bible study,” or “I volunteered at the foodbank,” may sound dull...unless you’re the other person hoping to find a fish in the sand.

There are many other ways your worldview will open doors to new friends and relationships. And there are many “safe” conversation starters. As office acquaintances begin sharing personal insights, I like to ask, “Do you have a spiritual side?” or, “Do you have any thoughts on spiritual matters?” These are generic, non-threatening and easily waved off by indifferent colleagues. However, asking spiritual questions when the time is right – especially with sincere, respectful curiosity, often gives God the opportunity to connect new friends. I have many longtime friends now who were equally confident enough to answer, “I thought *you* might have a spiritual side too!” Of course, because God is present where we work.

Summary

The very fact that you believe in God will set you apart from most co-workers – in both positive and negative ways. Looking out through the lens of a Biblical worldview, you begin to see and recognize what is *not* in the Godly Light of that lens. Why is something about a work situation nagging at you, making you uneasy? Even if you are not able to resolve every work-related faith challenge, you can learn more clearly where you personally stand. With Jesus. And over the course of your career, you will find many who join you there. Many (most) large corporations have employee affinity groups. These rightly include HR-approved Christian employee groups. I attended prayer groups and bible studies throughout my career with hundreds of other believers. Conducted before work or during the lunch hour, these simple gatherings of fellowship are incredibly encouraging.

Grow and strengthen your daily faith. Pray, study, pursue discipleship at your local church. Add to and refine your biblical worldview. Let the love and truth of Jesus become who you are and how others see you. Take ownership of your faith as a young professional. Spend time thinking about your (biblical) worldview and how it informs your actions and decisions. May God bless and guide all that you do!

Go-Do

Assess the vitality of your biblical worldview as part of spiritual growth. Take a baseline now and personally review it each year at the same time you have an employee review at work. Rate yourself 1-10 with 10 meaning 100% accomplished. Ask a trusted friend to rate you too, then compare and discuss.

1. I have researched, thought through and updated what foundational beliefs contribute to the lens of a healthy biblical worldview. ____ 1-10
2. I have aligned with a biblical worldview to inform my actions and decisions this year. ____ 1-10
3. I’ve recognized evidence of personal spiritual growth related to work and career this year ____ 1-10

Further Conversation and Study

1. Ask colleagues and friends how they actively take ownership of their personal spiritual growth. How is it evidenced in day to day experiences and outcomes?
2. Respectfully seek out a corporate leader (your company or other) known for their biblical worldview. Ask how they have continued their active spiritual growth. How has that influenced their actions and decision making at work?

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Sources and Resources

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