

Workday Meditations
Presented by Mary Lowman
Air Dates: December 4 - 8, 2023

Day One

I'm going to share some Workplace Meditations from a thirty-day devotional I wrote a few years ago. I think they'll give you encouragement—and something to ponder each day.

I want to talk about the power of "I'm sorry." A good friend of mine told me that the biggest difference between her and her co-workers who are not Christians is that she apologizes a lot more than they do! She struggles with things in her life, just like you and I do. But she is willing to say, "I'm sorry," and I'm convinced her apologies are witnesses to the power of Jesus.

Have you recently lost your temper with a co-worker, told a lie to your manager, or deceived a customer in some way? If so, your conscience probably hasn't stopped bothering you, and that's good. When our own sin doesn't bother us, we are in a very dangerous position. A prickling conscience is one way God prompts you to take advantage of his offer to forgive you and purify you; all you have to do is confess.

Maybe you're wondering how you could ever be a witness for Jesus since you know you've failed and others know you've failed and what's more, you may fail again. But everybody struggles with failure, and those who are not Christians have no good way to deal with the guilt that often accompanies failure. One of the best ways to witness is to own up to our own failures, make restitution where necessary, and share that God is a forgiving and restoring God.

I can remember when God used a specific failure on my part to help a struggling Christian co-worker understand that God would forgive and restore him when he failed. I really blew it in front of him, and I didn't want to go back in that office. But God clearly told me to go back and be very honest about my failure, which is what I did.

Obviously, it would have been better not to fail, but isn't it great that God uses even our shortcomings? Don't let some failure or fear of failure keep you from being a bold witness for Jesus. Remember, he can turn your ashes into beauty, if you will let him.

Day Two

I'm sharing some excerpts from a 30-day devotional I wrote a few years ago.

Our scripture for today is Isaiah 35:3-4:

"Encourage the exhausted and strengthen the feeble. Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not"" (Isaiah 35:3-4).

Have you noticed that discouragement seems to be at epidemic levels? Most working environments are flooded with discouragement, and many times our homes are full of discouraging words.

As Christians, being an encourager is not an option, it's a directive. Christians should be people who strengthen the feeble and exhausted with encouraging words.

Can you think of someone in the feeble and/or exhausted category right now? Maybe it's a co-worker or your manager. They may put on a face that says, "I have it all together and I don't need anyone." But don't let that fool you. Just like you and me, they need to hear encouraging words, words of hope and cheer—and they need to hear them from you.

We also need to encourage people who have failed. Barnabas was that kind of an encourager. When Mark had failed and the Apostle Paul didn't want to give him another chance, Barnabas insisted on allowing Mark to travel with them. So, when they could not agree, Paul went one way with Silas, and Barnabas and Mark went another way. Later on Paul asks Timothy to get Mark and bring him for "Mark is useful to me for service," he said.

You don't have to fill in too many blanks to see what happened. Barnabas had taken Mark, taught him, encouraged him, and Mark had become a profitable servant of Jesus Christ. Obviously, Paul recognized this, too, and I imagine Paul learned a valuable lesson from Barnabas. It is really important to encourage people at times of failure.

If you know someone who is struggling with failure, encourage them. They need to know that all is not lost, and they can go from where they are. My challenge to you is to encourage at least one feeble and exhausted person today.

Day Three

Have you ever been “passed over” for a promotion or raise that you knew you deserved? If that has ever happened to you, I don't have to tell you how discouraging it can be not to get credit for your contributions at work. And yet, these things happen all the time.

We live and work in a world that is neither fair nor kind. That's because the world is full of people who have a sin problem, including us! And that sin problem creates injustice of all sorts.

Injustice is one of my toughest hurdles. I always want to fight when I think my rights or someone else's rights are being violated. As you can imagine, this tendency has gotten me into some hot water and created not a few problems in my work life.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free” (Ephesians 6:7-8).

I have to remind myself that if I serve wholeheartedly as unto the Lord, the recognitions and rewards will come in due time.

As Christians, we pick up our paychecks at our place of work, but our real job is to please the Lord and work for him. Our reward is waiting for us in heaven—but we can reap the benefits now, too. Just imagine how your stress level will drop as thoughts of vengeance and discontent are replaced with calm satisfaction over a job well done, and knowing that Jesus is pleased with you!

So, my challenge to us all is to remember all day long that we report to Jesus, and he will reward his “good and faithful servants.”

Day Four

I'm offering some workday meditations this week. Short thoughts based on God's Word, to encourage you and challenge you to keep on living out your faith where you work.

Proverbs 24:17 tells us:

"Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice."

There was a time in my career when I worked for a very difficult man. I spent many unhappy days in that job because of the way he treated me and others. After about a year God revealed to me that I had great malice in my heart toward him.

I certainly had never thought of myself as a malicious person, but there it was all over my heart: dirty, ugly malice. I wanted bad things to happen to him. I dreamed about him making some gigantic mistake and being fired. I wished and hoped he would get his "comeuppance." That is malice.

Years later after we had both left that company, I heard of some stumbles he had made. I guess you could say he got what was coming to him. What goes around comes around, and all that. But, by God's grace, I had gotten rid of that malice toward him, and I was very saddened to hear that things were not going well for him. It brought no satisfaction or joy to learn that he had stumbled.

We should never gloat over someone else's misfortune, even if they brought it on themselves. First Corinthians 13 reminds us that love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. Dig deep in your heart today and see if there is any malice hiding there. If so, get it cleaned out fast and let God's love fill your heart instead. Just ask the Lord to reveal to you any attitude of malice or gloating and to keep you from rejoicing in evil, but rather give you a concerned heart for anyone who has stumbled.

Day Five

Are you a compassionate person? Jesus was.

We read in Matthew 9:36 that:

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

We're told that Jesus is touched with the feelings of our weaknesses because he was in all points tempted like we are (Hebrews 4:15). That continually comforts me, as I go to Jesus with my problems, knowing that he's walked this path before me, and he knows how I feel. That's how we become compassionate people—by putting ourselves in other people's shoes and feeling what they feel.

I remember a sermon where the minister challenged us to ask God to break our hearts with the things that broke his heart. Jesus' heart was broken when he saw harassed and helpless people, people who were without any purpose in life, people who had no compass for life, no meaning in life.

Do you have any of those people working around you? They may be people who irritate you a great deal and even cause you considerable trouble. But if you looked beyond their behavior and truly saw their condition, like Jesus did, you might be able to have compassion on them.

I've found that as soon as I can feel compassion for someone, as soon as I walk in their shoes even for a few minutes, my entire attitude changes. I respond very differently to someone for whom I feel compassion. I do things for someone for whom I have compassion that I wouldn't do otherwise. And in the process, I reduce my own stress immensely as I take the focus off myself and put it on the other person.

Maybe those harassed and helpless people are in your life for a reason. Perhaps they need your compassion today. Don't you think it would be a good idea to ask God to help you recognize the people in your life who need some compassion today?