

Faith at Work
Presented by Lauren Stibgen
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Day One

Faith can feel very personal, especially when it comes to thinking about faith at work. Maybe like I used to you are overthinking the concept of faith at work. What we will talk about this week isn't about starting a bible study, quoting scripture, or offering to pray for a colleague. It is a little different. I consider it faith at work 2.0!

Colossians 3:23 implores us to *work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...*

Let's look at different ways to show your faith through your work rooted in Colossians 3:23.

First, let's consider time.

What do you do when the boss isn't around? Are you a remote worker or even hybrid? According to a recent McKinsey report, 5% of remote workers are working two full time jobs! While I am sure there are talented people out there, as a leader, I would not want to get ½ of someone I think I am employing full time.

Have you stopped to think about how you spend your work time? Perhaps you aren't in this 5%. But whether you work remotely or head into an office, the reality is how you spend the time your employer expects you to be working matters. From signing in to work or showing up for a meeting on time, to being focused on your work during the day, you can show your faith by being a good steward of your time.

Ephesians 5:15-16 tells us to *be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

Perhaps it isn't being on time that is your issue, but the temptations of social media, a long lunch, or online shopping that take you away from your work. Are you prone to gossip or make personal calls during your day?

Being consistent and faithful with your time shows respect both for your employer and for your colleagues. I am sure like me, you have sat looking at yourself on zoom, waiting for someone to join, or maybe you have a colleague or boss that is always late. How does that feel? Maybe there is someone who scrolls through their phone during a meeting or misses a question because they are distracted. While there are sometimes good reasons for being a few minutes behind or being distracted, be aware so this doesn't become a pattern in how you spend your time at work.

God has entrusted you with the time you spend at work. How you spend this time is a direct reflection of how you take Colossians 3:23 to heart and live out your faith through your work.

Day Two

I am sure you have heard the phrase, dollars and cents add up! As we look at showing our faith through our work, I want to remind us of Colossians 3:23, *work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.*

Luke 16:10 states, *whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.*

How you steward the financial resources entrusted to you at work can be one way to show your faith at work. You don't need to be managing a budget or working in accounting to impact your company's financial wellbeing. We don't often stop and think of the implications of small actions or seemingly unrelated things that truly add up for our company. How are you faithful in the small things?

First, let's consider the ways we interact with the financial resources of work.

Maybe you are in a support capacity for your office. Let's think of something as simple as sending a package in advance of a meeting. While sometimes you may not be in complete control of all the materials, sending this package a week ahead versus a day ahead will mean lower shipping costs for your company. I have personally seen the difference in shipping be greater than \$50! Maybe you are only rushing a package once, but what if this becomes a weekly occurrence? If we just consider the \$50, this will equal an added \$2,600 annually for your company. Again, \$2,600 may sound small, but what if everyone on your team was managing this way? You can imagine the math could add up well into the six figures depending on the size of your organization.

Are you in a customer facing position? Whether you are in customer service or sales, the relationships you have with your clients have financial implications for your organization. Being responsive and solving the customer's concerns can both retain sales for your company or even add sales. What are the implications of having a poor client relationship? Lost sales?

Maybe you are fulfilling orders in a warehouse. Getting the orders fulfilled on time and with accuracy matters. Impact on shipping costs or having to replace an order because it was incorrect all add costs for your organization.

Maybe my examples seem small, but reflect on Luke 16 again, *he who is faithful in very little...* Don't discount the little things you can do to be a good financial steward for your company. Whether it is time, relationships, or accuracy, your faithful actions can truly add up and make a difference!

Day Three

As we continue to explore how we show our faith through our work, thinking about our relationships with our colleagues, superiors, subordinates, and clients is key. Remember, we are thinking about Colossians 3:23, *work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...*

So, what does God have to say about our relationships? Well, if you study the bible, you know he says a lot! However, if we are to take a wide lens view of what the word says about our relationships, it is summed up well in the greatest command. While this command is found throughout the gospels, Luke 10:27 says we need to *love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.*

Love your neighbor as yourself. Those that we encounter at work today are our neighbors. How can we show them love?

We have already covered one way to show love to others and that is through our time. Let's take this one step further and think about being present. Mary recently talked to us about the ministry of

presence. Truly being in the moment and present for someone is a way to show our faith and love for God. When you meet with someone, think about leaving your phone behind or silencing notifications. How is your eye contact? Are you actively listening to what they are saying?

Think about how you connect with others at work. Are your connections authentic or surface? How are you getting to know more about them, beyond their position in your workplace? Knowing more about their favorite past times and even their family time can help build authentic community at work. Maybe you can ask about a child's birthday, an important sporting event or buy them a gift card to their favorite restaurant for a special occasion. You won't know if you don't take the time to connect.

Being in a leadership role makes your relationships even more important. As part of my role as a leader in our organization, I am responsible for reviewing team performance and ensuring goals are set for the upcoming year. With a few new team members this year, I was surprised to learn two of them had never had managers who asked about their goals. In fact, one told me her goals were always the goals of her manager. Now, while part of this is true of any position, it was clear no one had shown an interest in her talents, strengths, and goals. Simply asking the question made her feel valued.

Most importantly, spread the love! Don't silo yourself to your team. Building cross-departmental relationships is both good for you and for your organization! Be the builder!

Day Four

We have all been there. You feel the fiery flames of the enemy sting at work. We all face trials at work, but how we handle them is another way we can reflect our faith through our work and express a Colossians 3:23 attitude.

James 1:2-3 tells us to *consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.*

When trials hit you at work, we may find joy very difficult, but how we handle the trial will also speak volumes to those we work with.

No matter what position you hold for work, receiving constructive feedback about your performance, being the subject of gossip, or being passed for a promotion can be some of the most personally difficult things you go through.

Maybe the trial isn't about you personally, but you are carrying the burden of knowing your company might be considering layoffs or even a pay cut.

Feelings well up. We feel anger, frustration, less than, anxious, eager to retaliate or gossip in return, disengaged in general. These are all natural but not how the Lord calls us to respond. In fact, God uses these trials to draw us closer to and more reliant upon him.

In, Exodus 14:13-14, *Moses answered the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.'*

It takes time to process emotion during a trial. Those feelings, they want to spill out, but if we want to show our faith through our work, expressing our anger, frustration, anxiety, or harmful words don't show our faith at all.

What would happen if in the moment of difficult feedback, gossip, or disappointment, you chose to be silent and not react, to stand firm in your faith knowing the Lord will work for you? You don't need to do anything in that moment, but remember the Lord fights our battles and walks with us in our trials.

Taking this approach allows you to process a different response—a biblical and faithful one. After all, constructive feedback may be hard to hear but can help you grow. Not receiving that promotion may mean God has something better ahead. Flying above the gossip targeted at you and remembering what a reward you have in Christ can refresh your attitude. God even calls us to repay our enemies with kindness!

I have personally experienced everything I spoke of here today. Yet, holding fast to the Word has helped me learn not to react but to lean on the Lord.

Day Five

How we manage our time, the finances of our company, our relationships, and trials we experience are all ways we can show our faith at work. I would argue one of the most difficult tests of our faith comes when we are asked to do something that is questionable or become aware of someone else's conduct that may be questionable. How we uphold our company's code of ethics can show us as faithful stewards of the work God has placed before us.

It is in these times Colossians 3:23 becomes even more important. After all, you are working for the Lord and not for man.

Your colleague says, "Hey, I am running late, clock me in. If I am late again this week, I will lose my job."

"Let's sell this old inventory on marketplace. They are throwing it out anyways."

Your colleague is drinking on the job and operating machinery.

Your boss is secretly providing insider information to a competitor of the company about a new product.

A coworker is using the petty cash to buy tickets for a sports event in town.

You overhear a manager using derogatory language about someone of a different ethnicity.

I was shocked to learn 75% of companies lose money each year from "buddy punching." 20% of every dollar earned by U.S. companies is lost to employee time theft.

The U.S. Department of Labor reported 65% of workplace job accidents are caused by drug and alcohol use.

Intellectual property theft costs the U.S. up to \$600 billion annually.

Some of these issues seem less egregious than others, but how you respond can make all the difference as you consider God is watching your work.

God doesn't take kindly to dishonesty at work. Let's recall Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. While they sold their land to give the proceeds to the early church, they lied about the profits. Both were struck dead on the spot.

Beyond these statistics, the behaviors noted above are not only financially damaging to companies, but they make the workplace difficult.

It can be tempting to help your coworker or to earn a few extra dollars when you think your company won't miss a product. It can be hard to consider reporting a colleague for drinking on the job, and

especially hard to report your superiors for misconduct. Making yourself aware of the expectations of your organization for reporting is one way to start. Most companies have an anonymous hotline you can call to report such incidents.

If you find yourself amid any of these troubling circumstances, finding a trusted believer to pray with can help you discern the best steps to take. We are walking in a fallen world and cannot expect work to be easy, but surrounding yourself with community that supports your faith walk can make things a little easier.

Maybe you are even questioning something you did at work; remember, God knows we aren't perfect—this is why he sent Jesus. James 5:16 calls you to *confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*