

Dealing with Men on the Job

Presented by Mary Lowman

Air Dates: May 11-15, 2026

Day One

I'm examining a subject that is of interest to most women—men. In particular, the men in our working worlds. I think I speak for most women when I say life without men would be pretty dull. We're more than glad to have them around, but when we enter the working world, we face some new challenges in our relationships with men.

Frequently we're engaged with men as peers, as managers, as subordinates. I can still see large sales offices where I began my career, jammed with desks to accommodate about 40 sales people, and there I was the only female sales rep surrounded by men on every side. I discovered quite quickly relating to men on the job was a new ball game, for which I was not particularly well prepared.

I want to talk about the issues we face when we work closely with men on our jobs. For instance, is it alright to develop friendships with male co-workers? I think the answer is yes, with precautions! I worked with several nice men whom I considered good friends. They were married, so I was also friends with their wives.

I'm often asked if it looks improper to have a business luncheon alone with a man. The business luncheon has become a way of life, and it can be helpful. I don't believe it is improper, but I think the rule of thumb is, if in doubt, don't. If you have any doubts, bring a third party along.

I remember a young man telling me it seemed to bother his new wife when he had a business luncheon alone with a woman. My advice was if it bothered her, regardless of how innocent it might be, he should do everything possible to allay her fears. He might schedule those meetings in the office rather than at lunch.

I'm reminded of the Scripture that says we should avoid even the appearance of evil. That's a high standard, but we need to adhere to it particularly in our relationships with men on the job. People are watching us, and we represent Jesus Christ, so we must be ever aware of that responsibility.

Day Two

I'm examining the various complications Christian working women can face in dealing with men on their jobs. With more women now holding management positions, it is no longer uncommon to find women managers with men reporting to them. These female management positions can be difficult at times.

In trying to "get it right," I've known women in management who overreacted by trying to be too assertive and working too hard at establishing their authority. Don't let that feeling of insecurity cause you to overcompensate by being too rigid and demanding. On the other hand, I've also seen women who bend over too far backward to keep from intimidating male subordinates and to avoid coming on too strong, and this can cause weak managers who lack proper control.

We need to find that natural, happy medium that allows us to be ourselves, to manage effectively in our own style, without being overly aware of the fact that we are female and they are male. Remember, you

don't have to manage like a man in order to be an effective manager. You need to have a good basic understanding of effective management techniques and incorporate those into your style.

I've seen many women in the business world try to change their behavior to a tougher style, more like the men around them. It was obvious and frankly ineffective. As women, we should take advantage of our natural leadership and management abilities, instead of trying to manage like a man. The important thing is: Are you getting the job done well, using your people productively, and is the morale in good condition? If so, you're a good manager, even if your style is different from men.

Look at the women in Scripture who managed men: Deborah, Lydia, Priscilla, the Proverbs 31 woman, to mention a few. There was nothing tentative about their management style, but they managed as women. All were quite different from each other and different from male managers, as well.

Day Three

I want to examine a situation you may face, and that is managing or working with men who resent having a female manager or coworker. They may feel threatened by having a woman manager or peer, or their background could have prejudiced them against women in business. I was one of the first women in IBM sales; this goes back many years. There was an older salesman in my office who was totally against women in sales. He thought this was the worst move IBM had ever made.

The first year I was in that office, he hardly spoke to me. He figured I wasn't going to last; women couldn't make it in sales, he thought, so why bother with me. For one year he observed and noticed I was having pretty good success at selling, making my quotas, winning some awards, etc.

Then one day he watched me make a presentation to a prospect, and he was impressed. He began to ask me to make sales calls with him, and we became a very effective sales team. We became good friends and laughed about those early days. But it took time for him to change his attitude toward women in sales.

Often time is the key word, and many women don't want to give the men time to change. After all, we have our rights, don't we? After all, we deserve our opportunity! After all, we have lots of lost time to make up and the business world owes us something, right?! That's the world's attitude.

But as a Christian woman that is a totally anti-biblical attitude. We don't have rights because we've given our rights over to our Creator and our Savior. We are his servants.

That doesn't mean we allow people to walk all over us, but it does mean our attitude is one of servanthood, not trying to get what's coming to us. It means we have patience and compassion toward those men who are prejudiced toward women, even the ones who will never change. And that takes lots of prayer on our part.

I encourage you to use these situations as opportunities to demonstrate what God's love is all about. Go out of your way to understand them; ask God to help you see them through his eyes. Pray for their benefit and let God take care of the rest. That's the most important and effective way to deal with men who have the wrong attitude toward women in the workplace.

Day Four

It's not unusual for an attraction to develop between a man and a woman who work together. Spending hours side by side can naturally create a connection. I want to examine some of the pitfalls that can show up in those situations.

Most of us have seen relationships develop between coworkers—or maybe experienced that spark ourselves. What should a Christian woman do if she begins to feel attracted to a male coworker or senses he's attracted to her?

The first thing is to ask a very simple question: Are either of you married? If the answer is yes, then the path forward is actually very clear. That attraction is something you simply cannot encourage. No private conversations, lingering looks, or emotional sharing that crosses a line. You don't even have to pray about the decision—just pray you will obey God. That's it. Full stop. The wisest step is to create distance; marriages should always be protected.

Female attention from a man can feel flattering—especially if you're single or going through a lonely season. But many inappropriate relationships start in a very ordinary and innocent way: someone is a good listener. I've heard women say, "He didn't have anyone else to talk to. I was the only friend he had." But that kind of emotional closeness can quietly move into dangerous territory. You can find yourself in an emotional affair.

Now, if both of you are single, a relationship might be worth considering. But as a Christian woman, you'll want to look carefully at the bigger picture. It's important he share your faith in Jesus Christ—and your level of commitment to living it out.

Even then, relationships between coworkers can complicate the workplace. It's wise to move slowly and keep good boundaries. And if the relationship becomes serious, it may be best to find a way to separate your working lives.

In situations like this, the wisest choice is usually the one that protects hearts—yours and everyone else's. And it can save you from much hurt and regret later as you honor God through obedience.

Day Five

Let me present a hypothetical situation to you: Suppose you're a married woman, and you take a new job which puts you in a close working relationship with a single man. Your husband is not happy about this, but you don't want to give up the new job. How should a Christian woman handle this situation?

If I were talking with you, I would say first and foremost, don't lose sight of your priorities. A marriage is eternally significant; a job is not. Even if you feel your husband is overreacting because of a jealous nature, you may have to be willing to go that extra mile for the sake of your marriage.

If you are truly convinced your husband's fears are totally unfounded and you see no signs of trouble in your relationship with this new coworker, then you need to find ways to show your husband there is no threat to your marriage. You might invite the single man to have dinner with you and your husband, in your home if possible. That says a lot. It tells your husband and your coworker that your marriage is the most important thing to you, and it gives your husband an opportunity to get to know this man.

I would advise you be very open with your husband. Explain you really would like to keep the job, but if he is not comfortable with your working relationship with this man, you would be willing to give it up for the sake of your marriage. Make sure he understands you are first concerned about him and his feelings. But ask him to at least get to know this man before coming to a conclusion. Ask him to pray with you about the decision.

Make certain you are willing to put your marriage first, even if you feel your husband is over-reacting and unfair. Do it for the Lord and do it because of your marriage vows, which are sacred. Hopefully you'll be able to have a good dialogue with your husband and show him he has no need to worry. But if not, God will honor you for your commitment to your marriage, even if it means giving up the job.

Working relationships with those of the opposite sex can present us with some unique challenges. As believers, our strongest weapon is prayer. We can have some wonderful camaraderie with the men in our work worlds, but we must always be alert to the dangers that lurk.