



# **The Christian Manager**

## **A Caring Career**

**By**

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Teaching Notes are Bible studies we taught before GraceLife Ministries began publishing articles online in 1995. Some were presented as sermons, others as group studies.

Our hope is that these older studies will be a blessing to you in your life and ministry. Please use them in any way God leads you.

These teaching notes are from a series about the opportunities to care for people as a Christian manager.

[These notes are from more than 35 years ago.]



- “My life is falling apart. Maybe suicide is the best way to. Do you think God will understand?”
- “I’m pregnant. I’m thinking about getting an abortion. Will I go to hell if I do?”
- “How can a loving God let people starve?”
- “Is there really a hell?”
- “What does the Bible say about homosexuality?”
- “What if we’re really just an experiment of beings from another planet?”
- “Will you pray for me? Things are really going bad at home.”

Pastors and Christian counselors deal with these kinds of questions and problems in churches and clinics every day; but that’s not where I heard them. Each one came from someone with whom I worked.

The work place is a phenomenal place of ministry for a Christian – especially a Christian manager. Think about it! We spend 40 or more hours with the same people every week of the year – year after year. We see people from all walks of life at their best and their worst. What we do with our influence as Christians in the workplace can make a great difference in the future of everyone we touch on the job.

I've managed on both sides of Christianity. I spent the first four years as an atheist, then I became a Christian enjoying the glorious grace of a loving God. I've seen lives go down in flames while all I cared about was getting ahead. For that, God forgave me. He gave me everlasting life and a new outlook on what's important. He placed His Holy Spirit in my heart and taught me to care about people.

That's what this is all about – caring for people. Let me tell you a few stories about how I've seen God work in people's lives. I want you to have some real-life examples of what God can do in the workplace. Because of the confidentiality I've had with these people through the years, I'll change names and some descriptions to protect their identity and privacy.

Many years ago a young woman approached me about a personal problem. I'll call her 'Sally.' I was a manager in the company and had shared biblical insights with her on a number of occasions. It was nothing formal – just some honest talk about how God was kind and loving and really cared about her.

Sally had just learned she was pregnant. The news had devastated her. She was seriously considering an abortion, but was afraid of what God would do to her if she allowed a doctor to abort her child. The first thing I did was to put her mind at ease about my personal feelings. I did not condone her becoming pregnant out of wedlock, but I also didn't judge her. I remember the words of the Apostle Paul who wrote to the Ephesians – “you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air...all of us also lived among them at one time gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts” (Ephesians 2:1-3).

When a co-worker brings us the problems, we need to remember God's patience and longsuffering toward us. I also remember the words of Paul in his letter to the Galatians –

*Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.*

*Galatians 6:1-5*

I reminded Sally that God is the Author of life. I told her how precious each life is to Him. I helped her think of her little unborn baby as a living being with a special future – not just a problem she needed to solve. I told her that God thought so much of her life and the life of her unborn child that He sent His One and Only Son, Jesus Christ, to make peace with God for them by dying on the cross for sin.



Sally listened carefully to what I said. She understood that we were discussing both a 'life-and-death' and 'eternal' matter. I was only able to talk with her for a short time because we were at work, so I told her I would pray for her that night and ask God to help her make the right decision. The next day Sally greeted me with a look that said she had found peace with God and would have the baby. She would raise the child to love God. Months later I looked into the eyes of a beautiful little child. I thanked God that He had placed me in a position to share His love with a co-worker in serious need. All glory to God!



'Tony' was a strong, macho-kind of man. He loved to party. He drank hard, played hard and slept around. He was a real ladies man. The Holy Spirit drew me to Tony. I knew there had to be an empty place in his life. There always is. I was a lot like Tony before I was saved.

I spent a lot of time with Tony at work. We became close friends. Other people didn't like his attitude, but I knew that beneath his 'bravado' attitude was a heart in desperate need of the Savior, Jesus Christ. The day finally came when something happened to Tony that caused his life to crumble. I could tell it when he came to work. I purposely assigned Tony work that would keep him inside the office after others had gone out on assignments. I wanted to have enough time for Tony to open up to me. After everyone else had gone, I asked Tony what was wrong. He grabbed me by the arm and led me to a private room. Tears fell from his face like rain from a burdened cloud. He was losing everything in his life.

I reminded Tony that God loved him deeply, so much so that He had sent His Son Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for his sins and give him answers to life's toughest problems. Tony and I spent many weeks and months working through those problems. We talked about the spiritual side of Tony's needs as well as the emotional and financial needs. Tony had to rebuild his life from scratch.

Tony still hadn't prayed to receive Jesus as His personal Savior, but he knew that God cared for him. Though Tony and I don't work together any more, we stay in touch. I believe in my heart that the day will come when he will 'believe' on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

'Jake' is another story. He was proud of his agnosticism. He couldn't care less about God and Christianity. It was all a bunch of hogwash to him. Having been an atheist I understood. I felt strongly about witnessing to Jake. His antagonism towards God's truth was not a barrier to God's Spirit. I developed a relationship with Jake during a period of several months. I knew it would probably be a low process. I brought Christ and the Bible into as many personal conversations as possible without turning Jake away from our growing friendship.

I must admit I finally became a bit impatient with how long this was taking. I wanted so much to just present the Gospel and invite Jake to receive Christ. I prayed for several weeks that God would open up the opportunity for us to be alone for an extended period of time.

The day came when Jake had to go out of town on company business and I went with him. About an hour into the drive I said a silent prayer, then starting talking with Jake about what Jesus had done for him on the cross. I didn't more than a couple of minutes into my 'presentation' when Jame told me that he had prayed to receive Christ a week earlier. It was wonderful! He had read his Bible and come to a 'believing' faith in Jesus Christ. The months that followed were awesome times of sharing together about the great truths of Scripture.



The main thing that stands out to me is that my situation is not at all unusual or unique. I'm a manager who is a Christian. Most Christian managers in the secular workplace have the same opportunities. We need to seize those opportunities and use them for the glory of God!

One of the first objections I hear from some Christian managers is, 'hey, my boss will never allow me to witness on the job.' I understand the concern, but disagree that talking about God is not possible in the workplace. Your boss probably doesn't want you to 'preach' on the job, but I doubt they don't want you to 'care' about the people who work for the company.

I think that our fear of witnessing is in our own mind. Nobody's telling us we can't carry out the will of God in the workplace. Nobody's telling us we can't be models of hard and honest work. Nobody's telling us we can't show genuine concern for the problems of co-workers.



Here are two guiding principles for Christian managers –

1. Win the respect of your employees – saved and unsaved. You do that in three ways: live a peaceful and calm life, mind your own business, and work hard. Here's how Paul tells it: "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life (*hésuchazó* – a tranquility arising from within, causing no disturbance to others), to mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders..." (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)
2. Use your personal experience with God's love and grace to carry out a caring ministry with your employees. "... the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received of God." (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

So, how do we start a caring ministry with our staff? Begin with prayer. Ask God to give you a burden for the lost. Ask Him to help you “grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ ...” (Ephesians 3:18). Once you see people from God’s perspective you will go to work each day with a different hope and determination.

Next, ask God to make you the best manager you can be. It’s difficult to influence people who don’t respect your leadership. Demonstrate your own commitment to excellence and hard work. The more people respect you as a leader and fellow worker, the more open they will become to your advice on matters of personal importance to them.

Be honest and fair in your dealings with people – individually and as a group. Develop a deep feeling of trust with your employees. That trust opens doors of communication that can open hearts to hear about God’s love and grace.

Spend quality time with people. Don't be too busy. Keep up with what's going on in their lives. Stay in touch with their feelings, their pain, their joy. Developing those kinds of relationships will put you in a place to make a difference in their lives.

Deal with employees' problems quickly, wisely, and confidentially. When an employee opens up their life to you, treat it gently and with great care. Demonstrate God's love and forgiving grace. Treat them in the same way you'd like your boss to treat you.

One more thought – we Christian managers are human beings. That means we need to be as ready to forgive ourselves as we are to forgive others. We are not perfect and never will be while on earth. So, don't be so hard on yourself. If you mess up, forgive and move on. God's forgiven you. Your staff will forgive you. Forgive yourself. It's a wonderful testimony to the life of grace God has called us all to live,

I think Christian managers in the secular world are a precious resource in this day and time. Pray for me and I'll pray for you. Together, we will see the wonderful hand of God at work!

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