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Godly Principles: Workplace Conduct Discussion Aids



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Godly Principles: Workplace Conduct Discussion Aids

What are Godly principles for the workplace?

Hundreds of books have been written about the workplace: management, relationships, ethics, environment, culture, communications, education, etc. However, very few are dedicated to the kinds of behavior which should be exhibited by Christians. Many of us will spend a majority of the day in our place of employment during the work week, and our conduct in this setting can have a huge impact on those we interact with, our families at home, and ourselves. The principles examined in these discussion aids are often in direct opposition to the workplace behavior principles commonly encouraged in today's society. Cut-throat competition, demanding bosses, continually changing cultures, acceptance of personal compromise, and the ever-present pressure toward upward mobility are all common in this environment. Standing in contrast to these mainstream workplace principles, Christ's call to all believers to be "servant leaders" provides a challenge and encouragement to remain constant to biblical principles.

Matthew 20:27, "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:"

By studying biblical principles around several key areas of workplace interaction, our hope is these discussion aids can be used to encourage us to be "above reproach" as asked of us in the Word. By living more fully in line with the Scriptures in this very public arena of the workplace, we have the opportunity to be a witness of God's principles to those around us.

Study method

These discussion aids are intended for small groups but can be used individually or in a mentoring relationship. The individual lessons have been designed to be used separately or in combination with others. Each lesson opens with one verse from Scripture which could be used as a memory verse. It is recommended each member of the group complete the lessons individually and then come to the group prepared to discuss the lesson. We suggest beginning and ending with a prayer offered by one of the attendees. It is our hope each participant may feel the blessings of God as they study. May God be glorified as we strive to live more closely aligned to His Word.

Lessons:

- 1) Integrity
- 2) Diligence
- 3) Respect and Submission
- 4) Communication
- 5) Maintaining Balance
- 6) Our Witness

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1. INTEGRITY

Psalm 25:21 "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee."

Integrity and character are woven together and have a tremendous impact on our witness to others. Integrity calls for consistent behaviors, values, and actions which are to be present in our lives at all times. It is an essential godly principle in the workplace.

1. As the introductory verse indicates, integrity “*preserves*” us. How would you define integrity in the workplace?

Proverbs 11:3 "The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them."

Proverbs 19:1 "Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool."

2. According to the verses above, what value does a life of integrity give?

3. Using the verses above and examples from your own experience, compare & contrast the consequences of living a life with or without integrity in the workplace.

James 2:1 "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons."

4. Review *James 2:1-9*. Define what it means to have “*respect of persons*.” Relate how this is an easy trap to fall into in the workplace environment. How does it ultimately affect our integrity and witness?

5. How do we guard against this practice?

Luke 16:10 "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

6. It has been said integrity is who we are when no one is around. How does the verse above correlate with this thought?

7. Evaluate how you can change your workplace behavior to better reflect this high calling of integrity. Make a plan to do so.

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2. DILIGENCE

Colossians 3:22-23 “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men”

Diligence in our work is a critical part of our behavior, but it is easy to compromise. We are called to be “*faithful*” as stewards of the work placed in front of us (*I Corinthians 4:2*). Being diligent in our calling is not an option for the believer.

1. This verse in *Colossians* above tells us we should obey our masters in “*singleness of heart*.” What does this personally look like for your workplace environment? Share thoughts as to how this differs from being “*menpleasers*.”

2. Share some experiences from your work history which demonstrate the danger of being “*menpleasers*?”

Proverbs 22:29 “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.”

Proverbs 13:4 “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.”

3. According to the verses above, what are generally some results of a diligent work ethic?

2 Corinthians 8:22 “And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent...”

4. The Apostle Paul is speaking here of Titus, a fellow laborer in the gospel. He had confidence in Titus because his diligence was proven. How can this example be applied to our calling in the workplace?

Matthew 25:14-15 “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.”

5. In this parable in *Matthew*, individuals are given talents and expected to be diligent in their stewardship of these talents. What lessons can we apply to our own lives from this parable?

6. What areas of your workplace can you be more diligent with what you have been given charge of? How will you stay accountable to this effort?

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3. RESPECT AND SUBMISSION

Ephesians 6:5 “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;”

The idea of respect and submission to authority is a difficult concept in today’s society. We often entertain the concept only if there seems to be a benefit to us in some way, not “unto Christ” as we are commanded in the verse above. Yet this principle reflects our relationship with our Father and is a critical piece of our witness to others.

1. Read *Ephesians 6:5-9*. Outline the principles of submission present in these verses.
2. List some practical ways in which you can show respect for the authority you are under. How can you promote a culture of respect within your workplace?
3. Obviously, these principles are easier to apply when the authority we are under is godly. Do they lose their merit when the authority is ungodly (*1 Peter 2:18*)? What have you found to help in these cases?
4. Regardless if we are the highest leadership role at work, we still have an ultimate authority. How do these verses speak to the role of the “master?” If you find yourself in this position, what principles have you found which help you fulfill your responsibility to be a godly leader?

Colossians 4:1 “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”

5. What does this verse say about the responsibility of authority toward those who serve them? Give examples of how we can give “that which is just and equal” to our employees.
 6. Why is how we treat our employees such a critical aspect of our witness? What improvements can you make in this area?
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4. COMMUNICATION

Ephesians 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

Communication is very important in all areas of our lives, including the workplace. The godly principle of communication is that we should “*minister grace*” to those around us by the words we speak.

1. Share thoughts of how you can “*minister grace*” to those you work with.

James 1:19 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:”

2. This verse demonstrates a godly communication model. How important is effective listening (seeking to understand) in your workplace? Give examples.

Psalms 141:3 “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.”

Proverbs 10:19 “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.”

3. These verses tell us it is not only important when to speak or be quiet but also to monitor the content and quantity of our speech. Share thoughts about the speech at your workplace and whether you have been tempted to get caught up in inappropriate talk. How do you guard against this temptation?

Proverbs 15:1 “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”

Proverbs 16:23-24 “The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips. Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

4. Examine the verses above. Share examples when you used, or didn't use, pleasant words in the workplace environment and the result(s).

5. How do you control your anger in the more tense and demanding environment of the workplace?

6. Identify 1-2 ways in which you can improve your communication with others in the workplace. How will you stay accountable to this effort?
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5. MAINTAINING BALANCE

Luke 12:15 “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

Maintaining balance in our lives is often no small task. The pressure we feel to be successful at work, to love and serve our families, and to fulfill other obligations in our lives often leave little or no room for ourselves, our God, and any sense of margin. It is critical we examine and prayerfully think through the priorities in our life in order to maintain a godly balance and order.

Matthew 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

1. Describe how the priority of Matthew 6:33 should dictate all we do in the workplace and everywhere.

Luke 12:34 “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

2. How does this biblical truth help us evaluate right priorities?

3. Read the account of Mary and Martha in *Luke 10:38-42*. Jesus gently corrects Martha as she vents her frustration over Mary and indicates it actually is Mary who has her priorities in the right order. From your workplace experience, share examples of when exercising godly priorities paid big dividends or if the opposite was true.

4. Discuss how the role of Martha often seems like the right priority. How can you check yourself and maintain a better sense of balance in this regard?

5. If you examine your life, what are the first things that get “cut” when you seem crunched for time? Which of the principles which we have talked about are the most difficult to maintain? Analyze what your answers tell you about your priorities.

Mark 8:36 “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

6. List what you believe to be the top ten priorities in your life? What can you do to ensure that they remain in the appropriate order?

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6. OUR WITNESS

1 Timothy 4:12 "...but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

The power of our witness in the workplace is paramount. Throughout our working career, we will interact daily with multitudes of individuals, many of which may not know the gospel message. There is a high calling to be a light and example for Jesus to these individuals.

1. Paul lists several different aspects of our lives in the above verse. Evaluate how Christ-like you have been in each area. What improvements need to be made?

Mark 16:15 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

2. What does preaching the gospel to every creature look like in the workplace? What cautions and what encouragements can you share?
3. Why is this call to share with coworkers such a critical opportunity?

(Romans 12:1-2) "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

4. In order to be an effective witness, our lives should continually "be transformed by the renewing of our mind". Lay out some strategies to help make this happen in your own life.

Matthew 20:25-27, "But Jesus called them unto him and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:"

5. Examine the verses above. How can "servant leadership" prove to be such a powerful witness to today's workplace?

6. Identify a couple of areas in your life where you can better fulfill God's call to "servant leadership." Develop a plan to help you improve. Be sure to include who will keep you accountable to your efforts.
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