



Challenge Newsletter

Being Christ in the Workplace

Galatians
2:20

January, 2014

Christ in the Workplace

Fostering Curiosity, Creating Disciples

by: Terry Cassell

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them they should always pray and not give up. (Luke 18:1)

Many years ago before I was married, I was in Boston visiting friends. I hadn't seen many of them for some time, so I had driven up to be with them. I had recently been baptized in the Spirit.

My buddies and I were hanging out in a packed restaurant on a Friday night. "Cassell, you've changed," they said. "I'm curious, what happened to you?" Some of the comments included: "Are you in a cult?" "Are you on drugs?" The most creative question I was asked was, "Do you still like women?" Now, I had heard it all, but that last one was a shocker to me!

I heard those comments and questions quite a bit after I was baptized in the Spirit, mostly from my friends from high school and college.

I had created a curiosity factor among my friends. It's a big step to share about the love of the Lord and speak about our faith life to those who know us and are familiar with our past.

But that was then. Today many of those same friends are now turning to me for prayer and returning to church. I haven't given up praying for or with my old high school and college buddies.

We need to be personally and deeply rooted in prayer if we are to make disciples of people that the Lord puts in our midst. Jesus was in constant communion with the Father.

Prayer is meant to line us up in Christ and to conform us to him. It makes us willing and able to express praise, worship, seek forgiveness from God, become more sensitive, make petitions for one another, and love and help others.

Prayer is our lifeline and arms us to fight the battles of the devil, allowing us to bring the love of Jesus to others. Christian author Henri Nouwen states, "A disciplined and prayer-filled Christian life is one of solitude with God where a disciple of Jesus can carve out time to listen to God's 'still small voice'." Prayer is essential in order to be a disciple of Jesus.

As we come before the Lord each day, it should be with the intent of being Christ-like in all that we do. We need not only be a Christ-like example in how we behave and live out our lives, but we must be intentional in our words and strategic in our prayer to make disciples.

In her book, Forming Intentional Disciples, Sherry Weddell says this: "If our ultimate mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, our task is to arouse curiosity about Jesus Christ. To do that, we have to talk about Jesus."

Being intentional means having the mindset of, "How can I show the love of Jesus? How can I speak about the man called Jesus to those the Lord places in my life?"

Don't be overwhelmed with the plentiful amount of folks in your environment who may not know the Lord! Avoid concentrating on the one hundred and instead focus on the one or two you have a relationship or affinity with. Jesus tells us to pray and never give up.

Are those we relate to curious as to why we are different? They should be.

Terry Cassell is President of Christians in Commerce. He and his wife Alicia reside in Northern Virginia, along with their five children. Terry may be reached at cassell@cicintl.org.

Upcoming Events

Men's Weekends

Salinas Valley
January 31-February 2, 2014

Twin Cities
February 7-8, 2014
Palm Desert/palm Springs
March 21 -23 2014

Women's Weekends

WCIC-Phoenix
January 17-19, 2014
WCIC-Palm Desert
February 7-8, 2014
WCIC-Central Coast
April 11-13, 2014

Christians in Commerce News

Letter from Terry

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Life Pleasing to God

week 1

Avoiding Hints

by: Chris Bunn

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality or any kind of impurity or greed... Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking... but rather thanksgiving. (Ephesians 5:3-4)

I don't know any man that does not struggle with impurity and greed. Obscenities, foolish talk and coarse joking are a way of life for many. As Christians, we know all of these things are improper for God's people.

When reading these verses in Ephesians, I was challenged by the word "hint". Hints are the small, initial sins we indulge in - the first few inches of the door slowly opening to more prolonged sin and bondage. These hints plague me in many ways.

For example, my eyes sometimes wander where they should not. Although prosperous, I at times give in to greed and want more. Occasionally, obscene words flash through my mind when I do something stupid. I say foolish things and at times find myself smiling on the inside at a coarse joke.

Since the Holy Spirit took over my life I don't get away with any of these unholy deeds. I don't want to live with even a hint of these actions that grieve my Savior Jesus. I am so thankful that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be our guide. I also thank my wife, sons, church brothers and sisters and the men of CIC for watching for these hints in me.

Once a CIC brother pointed out how my focus was on an idol. His discernment was very convicting and it helped me see that I was not loving God first and foremost. Another time, when one of my sons challenged me on my behavior, I regrettably did not respond immediately and suffered for it. My pride kept me from recognizing the hint of sin in my life. In addition, being attentive to my pastor's sermons has warned me of the dangers of following the world. These hints can become

habits and eventually get us into real trouble. Only because of God's grace can we be restored once we repent, seek his forgiveness, and change our ways.

We do not want another to stumble because of our hints of unholy behavior. As followers of Christ our witness is crucial. We continually need to ask the Holy Spirit to cut off our opportunities to slide down the slippery slope into the lifestyle of our culture. We must flee temptation. So many around us, even at church, think these actions and attitudes are acceptable. We must rise above what the world does and obey what the Word says. The hints can be warning signs and, if acknowledged as such, can save us from sin.

To be real men and women of God we need to trust and obey our loving Father. We may not like the challenge of this discipline, but that is the call in Christians in Commerce (Galatians 2:20). In Christ we are a new creation (2 Corinthians 6:17).

We are to be Christ in the marketplace. There is no hint of immorality in our Lord Jesus; thus, there should be no hint of immorality in us if we are to be Christ in the marketplace. Instead, our lives should be filled with thanksgiving in both word and deed. This can only be done through the power of the Holy Spirit in prayer and fasting. Let's do it! This indeed will be a life pleasing to God.

Chris Bunn has farmed vegetables in the Salinas Valley for most of his life. He has been supported by a wonderful wife of 40 plus years, and three fine sons and their wives. God has blessed him with 13 grandchildren whom he loves dearly. For several decades outside of his Lutheran church, CIC has been a regular part of Chris' life and spiritual growth. Chris can be reached at bunnybrand@redshift.com.

Pray: Lord, thank you for your Holy Spirit. Please help me not harden to his warnings as he points out the hints of sin and temptation in my life.

Reflect: Look at how you have lived the past few weeks and see if you recognize any "hints" in your behavior.

Discuss: How have I handled recent "hints" that were exposed in my life? Did I repent and change? If not, why? Did I grow in Christ through the process?

Men's January Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Dave Niswonger

Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. (Luke 22:31-32)

The workplace, as the whole world, is a battleground of good and evil forces, principalities and powers. Our office experienced a serious breakdown of relationships caused by mistrust, improper assumptions and misunderstandings, fueled by gossip. This resulted in loud emotional outbursts and confrontations. Relationships have been damaged, if not destroyed. Satan got the upper hand in the battle.

The seriousness of the situation caused an HR team to be brought in to mediate, resulting in the decision that our team should form a separate office. I was caught off guard and blindsided by this turn of events.

This experience has led me to pray more fervently for my coworkers, focusing on the healing of relationships, and has also thrust me into a leadership role as manager and principal of this new office. For a career on the sales and marketing side of the business, this new management responsibility has stretched me out of my comfort zone.

Over several weeks, I have come to see that God is calling me to greater responsibility for those in my charge, to be vigilant in forming and discerning their relating with one another, monitoring their interaction for signs of stress, as well as accomplishing excellent work on behalf of our clients.

Some days I am worried and anxious about implementing this change, from finding new office space and hiring new team members to transitioning our clients in the least disruptive manner, things I have not had to do before. Then the Lord reminds me that this is his work, and he is calling me to serve. I lay my concerns and tasks at his feet, and say, "Yes, Lord, I will follow. I will strengthen my brothers."

Pray: Lord, help me to see what you are calling me to do, and grant me the strength to accomplish it through your Holy Spirit.

Reflect: What areas of conflict or poor relating exist in my workplace? How shall I respond?

Discuss: What specific things can we do to bring Christ into problem areas of our workplaces?

week 3

Making a Difference in the Workplace

by: Dave Niswonger

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

In leading a new office, I wanted to do things right, "in the Lord", developing a new and holier way of relating. Human relationships are complex and baffling and can deteriorate into discord and disunity.

Fortunately, I was not alone in my efforts. The office was made up of about a dozen coworkers. Of these, four were my core-work team and each had a personal relationship with the Lord.

Together, we're seeking to bring healing to our frayed emotions and those of our coworkers, while also gently encouraging better modes of relating. I find myself speaking more openly of God, calling on the core team to live out our faith in the way we work and relate together, seek God's help, acknowledge his blessings and guidance, and share testimony of his work in our lives and office.

My goal is to be Christ to my coworkers, the calm in the storm, sharing truth and life, encouraging love, forgiveness and healing.

I find myself drawn into prayer more frequently during the day. God is stretching and healing me as well as my coworkers. I have to remember that this is his work and my job is to cooperate with him. My wife, Vicki, has been an invaluable support to me prayerfully and emotionally during all of this.

I believe that our work team, coming from different faith experiences, is starting to see this as a walk in faith, called by our loving Father, led by the Son, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Pray: Father, lead us to a deeper walk with you as we step out in faith for whatever you have in store for us.

Reflect: To what areas of my workplace and family life is God calling me to bring healing, encouragement, and admonishment in the building of his kingdom?

Discuss: Share examples of how you have brought about peace and healing in your workplace or with others.

Men's January Reflections

(continued)

week 4

Holding Each Other Accountable

by: Dave Niswonger

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:8-10)

As our work team begins to heal from the emotional wounds of broken work relationships and we look ahead to our next challenge, how do we proceed?

1. Pray: I am encouraging my team to pray daily, not just about our work, but for our whole lives and relationships with God. Prayer is our foundation.
2. Forgiveness: One team member, deeply involved in the office difficulties, has committed to healing the relationships strained in the larger office, both by forgiving and seeking forgiveness.
3. Right relating: We are all focusing on building deeper trust and understanding among each other, living by the golden rule. We are discerning each person's natural strengths and working to have each team member's responsibilities lie within those strengths rather than assigning them tasks in areas they may struggle with, which can lead to stressful situations.

In other words, I'm called to help each work team individual live up to his or her best potential, to care about each other, and encourage them to excellence, so that they are a blessing to their coworkers, clients and family. Again, God is knitting all of this together for his purposes; we are but his servants seeking to do his will.

Dave and Vicki Niswonger live in Granger, IN. They have been married 35 years and have four children and ten grandchildren. Dave is a financial advisor and portfolio manager with Counsel Oak Financial of Raymond James & Associates, and has been involved with CIC since 1984. He can be reached at david.niswonger@raymondjames.com.

Great Christmas Present: Hope for the Workplace – Christ in You by Bill Dalgetty

Bill Dalgetty, former Christians in Commerce President and Chairman of the Board, draws from his extensive experience in business and ministry to examine the challenges faced by Christians seeking to live out their faith in today's workplace. Readers will discover practical tips for:

- Dealing with a difficult boss or colleague
- Maintaining integrity and ethics in business decisions
- Balancing family and career
- Seeking excellence in one's work
- Caring for co-workers

To purchase the book and receive a special CIC discount of 10%, use the code CIC10 when visiting the Zacchaeus Publications website at www.zacchaeuspublications.com.

* Bill has generously offered to donate all profits from the sales of this book to the ongoing ministry of Christians in Commerce.

Pray: Lord, help me discern your calling for my life. I seek to do your will, even when it stretches me out of my comfort zone.

Reflect: What is the Lord calling me to do in order to bring greater blessing to my workplace and family?

Discuss: What practical things can we do to bring more of God's kingdom into our workplaces and families?

Women's January Reflections

week 2

Personal Sacrifice

by: Pam Seale

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise... (Hebrews 13:15)

When is giving praise to God a real sacrifice? How much choice is involved in the word "offer"? I recently learned, or re-learned, the answers to these questions.

I have been told many times that I can choose what I think about and how I emot about my circumstances. Well, I say easier said than done! So, one day I found myself being distracted by thoughts of discontent. Where was that missing jacket? Who borrowed that book? Why didn't that conversation go better? That's how my day went.

Later that night another unwelcome event came about: insomnia. After only three hours of sleep, I awoke thinking about my mishaps again, knowing there was no chance of remedying them at that hour. How foolish I was being! And so, instead, I offered the time to God by reviewing my day and thanking him for his providence. It was a sacrifice not to continue with narrow self-centered thoughts.

As long as I'm alive I will have selfish thoughts. But I continued on, thanking the Father for sending his son to redeem the lost, of which I am one; thanking the Holy Spirit for dwelling within me and changing my life from futility to unity in Christ.

Before I knew it, lying there wide-awake in bed, I was overwhelmed with gratitude and joy. The scriptures are true. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are worth so much more than my lost jacket or book. And I can try that conversation again, or choose to leave that loved one in the Father's hands to be loved in his time and in his way. I have done what I was given to do. Next time, I want to choose to offer a sacrifice of praise at the first sign of discontent. After all, I was made to praise God now and forever!

Pray: Oh, Lord, let us be quick to notice when our focus is drifting away from you. Give us your perspective on our lives at every moment of our days.

Reflect: Do I let the cares of this world blot out the joys of knowing God?

Discuss: Share a time when it was a real sacrifice to praise the Lord.

week 3

Redeeming Our Father's Creation

by: Pam Seale

... Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world ... I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. (Matthew 25: 34-36)

I walked into my first nursing home in 1970 to start my first job. It was my introduction to real suffering in the world. The residents in our nation's nursing homes hold in common the burden of multiple losses: loved ones, mobility, and independence, to mention a few. When I left my career in 2009, it didn't take long to figure out that I needed to continue relating to this population I'd come to love so dearly. I now visit a nursing home and, instead of bringing medicine, love, and prayer, I bring love, prayer, magazines, soda, crosses, yarn, music, and more. The love of God can look lots of ways if we listen with our hearts.

The Lord has been building my faith through these visits. One woman, Lillian, was done with her rehab sessions and was told she did not progress enough to live alone again. Lillian was despairing. She said she had no complaints about the nursing home. The staff had been good to her and she liked the food. Her room was decorated with memorabilia from her home. It was obvious that someone loved her. But Lillian said no one could have her live with them and her wish was to be with family.

Now, all my years of work told me Lillian was going to have to adjust. But this time, I felt the courage that comes from above and said, "Let's pray..."

Two weeks later on my next visit, Lillian was gone. I asked if she had passed away and was told, "No, a relative came and took her home." Our prayer had moved a family member's heart!

Pray: Lord, give us eyes to see you in all who are suffering and the courage to respond in faith.

Reflect: Where in my life am I responding to the Lord's request to go to the suffering?

Discuss: How can I increase my faith that prayer changes things?

Women's January Reflections

(Continued)

week 4

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters

by: Pam Seale

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. (1 John 4:7)

I live on a block of 16 houses. Four of them are homes for my Christian sisters and brothers so we can live a close life together in Christ. Recently, a horrible thing happened in one of the other homes. A man died. The police said he had been dead almost two weeks. His name was Melvin. I had never even spoken to him other than a wave and, "Hello". I saw him often, walking past or driving in and out of the alley. My husband had conversed with him, but neither of us ever saw him with others. We never saw anyone come in or out of his house. And neither of us noted that he hadn't passed by in the weeks after his death. This is not love.

Paul's exhortation to love is something more concrete than a warm feeling. In the week that Melvin lay dead in his home, I had been giving and receiving love. We started the days with household prayer and gathered again for the dinner hour. There had been borrowing of food, making of music, talking over coffee. One sister met me for lunch, one went with me to visit nursing home residents, one went grocery shopping with me, and all of my sisters put together a great evening of hospitality when my old friends came to town. I live daily among these generous, loving people. I know I am loved.

I hope the world is watching. I am convinced that living life close up and personal is an important part of representing Christ to the world. Love is something that ends isolation. It can be seen. I want to do much better at inviting those who do not yet know Christ into a loving relationship with him. I want Melvin to be my last neighbor who dies alone. For the sake of God's glory on earth, love must grow.

Pam Seale is a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Gerontology. At present, she is working with the People of Praise's Campus Division in Indianapolis and does private consulting. Pam can be reached at pseale@me.com.

CIC QRC Code

Attention, Smartphone users! On the back of this newsletter you will notice what looks like a barcode beneath our web address. Use this image to pull up the newsletter in our website by scanning it with your phone using a barcode scanning application. Then share it with your friends!

2013 Year-End Tax Deadlines

If receiving a 2013 charitable income tax deduction is important to you, the following guidelines must be followed in order to obtain the required documentation from Christians in Commerce:

1. Check by Mail: Gifts must be mailed (postmarked) by December 31, 2013. Please complete and include our Member Commitment Form, which is on our website.
2. Credit Card Donations: Make your donation online. All credit card donations must be entered by midnight on December 31, 2013. Go to www.christiansincommerce.org and click "Support Christians in Commerce".
3. Donations of Stock: Please contact our CIC offices (703-205-5600) and also work with your financial advisor to ensure that donated stock is in our CIC account by the last business day of the year, December 31st.

Pray: Lord, in your infinite mercy and goodness, welcome Melvin into your tender care. Surround him with the love he didn't experience while here on earth.

Reflect: Where do I see love happening around me?

Discuss: How can I reach out in love to people who are different and whom I see in my daily life?

Christians in Commerce NEWS

Christians in Commerce
Prayer

Dear Christians in Commerce Members and Friends,

There is much excitement within our Christians in Commerce community as we enter into 2014! As we end our 30th year, I'm very encouraged and blessed by the commitment of all of you brothers and sisters who have served and sustained our ministry through the years. **Thank You!**

In Matthew 25:14-30 (The Parable of the Talents) Jesus shows us ways to discover how our Father uses our gifts and talents and how he delights in putting them into action. Reflect and ask yourself what motivates you and feeds your passion. Consider what you really enjoy doing, and do well. This answer may very well identify your God-given gifts.

As we enter 2014, I encourage you to recognize your gifts and talents and use them for the good of kingdom-building and service to others. Jesus tells us in this parable not to hide your gifts and talents; don't bury them where they can't impact anyone else like the fearful third servant did.

In the past year, we have had so much to be thankful for. Here are just a few of your accomplishments: <http://www.christiansincommerce.org/presidents-update-january-2014>

Establishment of WCIC Board

Our newly-created WCIC Board was announced at the 2013 Annual Conference on October 18, 2013. The WCIC Board members are Caren Demetre, Sheri Donaldson, Pat Drechsler, Cathy Glover, Joan Mangino and Diane McGinty.

Launch of Bill Dalgetty's book *Hope for the Workplace – Christ in You*

2013 Annual Conference – Go! Be Bold! Be Bright!

We established scholarships to support over 30 participants at the 2013 Annual Conference, with the total participants numbering 170.

Success on College Campus

Our work on the ASU Campus in Tempe, AZ and support of the Christian Professional's Club has been fruitful for our young adults.

Introduction and Production of New Materials

- New CIC introductory and informational brochures
- New Challenge Weekend Participant's Manuals
- New CIC Leadership Institute Participant's Guide
- New Addendum for New Chapter President Training

Introduction and Launch of Mentoring Program

Enhancements to CIC Website

Introduction of New Membership Database

I look forward to your comments and suggestions at any time. You can reach me via email at cassell@cicintl.org or 703.205.5600.

I would like to express my thanks again for your ongoing prayer support and contributions that enable us to fulfill this great mission to be Kingdom Builders by being Christ to all.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)

Have a blessed 2014,

Terry Cassell
President
Christians in Commerce

Father,

You are my Lord and Creator.

You entrust me with a place of stewardship in your creation.

Fill me with your Holy Spirit:

That he may teach me to pray and live in Christ and as Christ;

That he may teach me love for family, friends and all people. A love that is selfless, humble, and wise;

That he may teach me stewardship of the talents, time, money and possessions you have given me. A stewardship that serves, is generous and brings honor to your name;

That he may teach me faithfulness to your call to Christians in Commerce. A call that unites us and builds your Kingdom in the marketplace.

Through Jesus Christ who is Lord.

Amen

Vision

Expanding the Kingdom by being Christ in the workplace.

Mission

We encourage and equip Christians to live the life of Christ by releasing the power of the Holy Spirit that is in them. We challenge them to be Christ to the people and circumstances in their workplaces by bringing his truth, love, healing, justice and excellence to the marketplace.

Values

As Christians in Commerce, we are an ecumenical organization united with the body of Christ to:

- Know, love and serve God and others
- Embrace the beliefs of the Nicene Creed
- Release the power of the Holy Spirit in worship and work
- Share the time, talents and resources God has entrusted to us
- Enrich member participation in prayer, scripture, family and church life



Christ
ALIVE!

Galatians 2:20
“...I no longer live, but
Christ lives in me.”

www.christiansincommerce.org



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