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Your Work Matters: A Life Of Influence At Work

Colossians 3:22-4:6

Your Work Matters Series

Pastor Mark Kremer

In the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life* Jimmy Stewart plays the part of George Bailey, this very generous, good man who does a lot of things for his community, but runs across some very difficult times. His life is falling apart; his business is falling apart and basically he feels like he's just ruined. And in his despair he thinks about ending it all—just calling it quits. And you remember the scene on the bridge, where he's contemplating jumping off the bridge and he says, "It would have been better if I'd never been born!" His thought was that somehow his life just really didn't count for much; it really didn't amount to anything. Of course Clarence, his guardian angel, comes along and seizes on that thought of *what if I'd never been born* and takes George back to be able to get a glimpse of what would be different about his community—about the world—if he had never been born. And George begins, as he goes back, to see how dark and different the place would be and, by the time you come to the end of the movie, he's come to the realization that he really has had a significant impact on his family, on his community, even on history, because he had saved his brother who became a war hero. And George concludes it really is a wonderful life that he has.

Not many of us have that opportunity to go back and sort of see how the world would be different if we hadn't been born. But I think deep down we all want to lead a life that has impact, that has influence, that makes a difference somewhere in this world. And we understand, at some level, that every person makes their mark on this world; every person has influence. Some of our influence is for good; some of our influence in the world is not so good—and we understand that at one level. But as a Christian, as a Christ follower, as someone who is created and re-made in the image of God, do we not have this sense that part of what God has called us to—in this new life we have in Him—is to be people of influence, to make a significant mark in this world? And deep down I think, because the Spirit of God lives within us, we want to be able to make a difference; we want to have influence.

As our first verse we memorized in this Work Life Series, from Ephesians 2:10 says:

> **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**

God created us in Christ to do good things that would draw people's attention to Christ. Though it would make this world a different place, it would help people experience the transforming power of God. And nowhere do we have more opportunity to really have influence than in our work life. It is for most of us our primary mission field. It's the place where we're *called,* as we talked about. We've been given a *calling* by God—a significant work to do—something that's unique to our talents, our passions, our abilities. For most of us, we spend sixty to sixty-five percent of our waking hours in this work environment. It's where we have the longest, almost ongoing, relationship with people over periods of time where we can have real impact, real influence in their lives. It is the mission field that you and I are called to live in. And that is where I think God wants to use us to have influence for His sake.

You know I have a vision and a dream, and I think we do as a church, that individually each of us would get up and live with mission and purpose every single day, that we would understand that we've been given this mission field—that we've been given this work to do—that we enter into that with a mind to have influence, to make a difference there. If we collectively are out about in this city, touching almost every business, every government agency, every school, every institution—I mean there are people that are Christians all over this city—that we should have a profound influence on the lives of people all around us. And it would be normal and natural that people would be coming to know Jesus and that our city—not only individual lives but our very city—would be being transformed because of the influence of God's people here.

What does it take for us to be people of real influence in the workplace? Let's ask Paul that question and see if he can help us out in Colossians 3 this morning. We're going to begin in Verse 22. Now we went through the book of Colossians a couple of years ago. The theme of this letter that Paul wrote is the sufficiency of Christ, that Jesus Christ is everything. He's forgiven us; He's redeemed us; He's called us. We have everything we need in Him and, because of who He is and what we have received from Him, Paul begins at the end of this letter then to say this is how that should make a difference in how you live. Chapters 3 and 4 are really devoted to that— of how the sufficiency of Christ gets played out in these various environments that you and I live in. For instance in Verse 18 of Chapter 3 he talks about how that would look in a marriage relationship. Then he talks in Verse 20 about how that looks in a parent-child relationship. Now he comes to Verse 22 and he's going to talk to us about what *being in Christ* looks like in the work place or in the work environment. We pick it up in Verse 22.

> **Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven**. (*NASB, Colossians 3:22-4:1)

We memorized a couple of those verses as part of this series. The primary thought here that Paul is conveying is that—because of the sufficiency of Christ and who Christ is—that ultimately He is our boss. He ultimately is our master and whatever work we're doing, we're doing it for Him. That doesn't matter whether you're the slave who was used to working for someone else, in this case a master, and you really had no choice—you were the slave—or whether you were the master who typically would lord your authority over others. But *in Christ* you understand that both the slave and the master have a master. They're both doing their work for God. God is looking down and wants them to be working for Him and, because we're working for God, we ought to change the way we work. We're not just doing it to get a paycheck; we're not just doing it so that someday we can retire. We're doing it because God's called us to do this work and we're working for Him every single day, no matter what our job is. No matter whether I'm the employee or the employer, we're working for God and that radically changes the way we go about our work. It gives that work new significance and meaning. It means that God wants to be and is involved in our work life. We've been talking about that over this last number of weeks.

It means here that one of the challenges that slaves often faced was this great injustice that they experienced at the hand of their masters. At times they became bitter; sometimes they'd want to run away because of the unfairness and the unjustness they experienced. But Paul reminds them here

that because God is ultimately their master, God's going to take care of that injustice and without partiality. Nobody can cut a deal with God to do wrong and then God's going to somehow overlook it or wipe it out. He says, "Slaves, you can trust God; you can live with trust and confidence in God even when you're being treated unfairly." Because God is ultimately the Master; God is ultimately Lord and he's going to see and he's going to judge impartially and make sure that everything is made right. That was important for the masters to hear and understand as well because they needed to understand that they too had a master and they were to treat people with fairness and with justice because they were working for God. And they should treat those who worked for them in the same sort of way.

Now many of us are both masters and employees or slaves. We serve in both those roles. We don't live in that world where you were either one or the other and had no chance probably of moving between the two. But we both serve under people and most of us have some people that report to us. So again this idea is that in all of our work we're working for God—that He's the one that we work for really every single day. That's a very significant and important thing to understand and really own if we're going to have influence for God in the workplace—that ultimately we work for Him and that changes everything about the way we work. It's to flow out of our heart. Really our work is an act of worship to God. I don't know but that may be exactly the point where you need to begin this morning if you'd like to see your influence grow—that you would see and understand that God is ultimately the master over your work life and that you would begin to do your work for Him from your heart. Every morning you get up and say, "You know I'm not going to work for such and such a company or such and such a school or such and such a hospital. I'm getting up this morning to go to work for God." That radically changes our whole thinking about work and suddenly we have this need and desire from within to do our work wholeheartedly because we understand who we're doing it for.

Now he goes on in Verse 2 of Chapter 4 to the next important thing if we're going to have a life of influence.

> **Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.** (Vs. 2-4)

Now it's interesting here that there are really two parts to this call to prayer. First he begins to talk about being **devoted** to prayer and I think it's clear that he's talking about: Pray about your life, your opportunities, your circumstances, your work. Devote yourself to prayer. In other words, if God is ultimately the master over my entire life including my work, then I would get my direction—prayer is my lifeline to the master—so I know exactly what to do each and every day. So I *devote* myself to prayer. It's a very strong word; it's not just casual. It's an intensity of devotion to prayer because that's how we know what God wants us to do. That's where we get our direction. And Paul says, "And while you're praying for yourself, pray also for me, the missionary, who's off trying to do the same thing you're trying to do in your life. I'm trying to find an opening for the word. I need you to pray that the door would be open so I could speak forth the mystery of Christ and **...that I might make it clear in the way I ought to speak.** In other words I think Paul is saying that the way that you pray for me as a missionary is that the door might me opened, that I could share Christ, that I might know *how* to speak, *when* to speak, that I might be effective as a proclaimer of the gospel. That's the same thing you ought to be praying for yourselves and for your work environment.

You know I think it's very, very interesting that we understand the need to pray for missionaries. I mean we put it in the *Loop* every single week. There's a flap and it gives one of our missionaries and their prayer requests and we understand how important it is to pray for them. And we *do* pray for them. We understand that people don't come to Christ unless somebody's praying. But there's a spiritual dimension that is beyond just the explanation of truth and somebody hearing it. Something has to happen in the heart and God has to be at work in that. And that prayer moves the hand of God and it moves people's hearts. I've never heard a person give their testimony without at least having a part of that be that somebody was praying for them. Somebody along the way was praying for them and then they responded and they recognized later that there were people all along that had been praying for them. We understand that when it comes to the mission field, and we pray for the missionaries and we pray for open doors.

But here's the question: *Are we as devoted to praying about our work life?* —the people that we work with, our opportunities to share the gospel, that we're actually saying, "God, because You're my master and I'm going on Your behalf into my work environment, I'm going to devote myself to praying about my work circumstances and about the people I work with so I'm asking you to give me opportunity so that I could speak. I'm asking you to wake the people up around me that there might be spiritual interest where ultimately we could have a conversation that might lead people to Christ." He says, "Be alert in it; don't fall asleep; don't just sort of coast your way through." I think that's so easy when it comes to work because we do it every day—day after day, week after week, month after month. We really kind of just fall asleep over time and we fail to realize that this is a significant opportunity for us to have an impact. But there's a spiritual dimension and we need to be praying—**devoted to prayer**—that God would be able to work and move through us in our work environment. If we want to have influence, we'll have to be people who are of prayer.

The third thing he mentions is in Verse 5:

> **Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.**

Here he's speaking about the way that we live. He says basically, "Live skillfully." We've been talking about that over the previous weeks—that we live a life of integrity, that our character would be such that it would be different than what our life was like before we knew Christ, that our behavior would be a reflection of the fact that Jesus is present in us, that we would do our work skillfully, that we'd do it with excellence, that we would engage with our whole hearts in our work, that our conduct—the way we live—would be a reflection of the very presence of God within us. It would reflect His excellence and it would reflect His character. He says, **"Conduct yourself skillfully in that way with outsiders**. Here he's speaking about those who don't know Christ. Particularly we need to be careful how we live in front of those who don't know Christ. They're watching; they're looking to see how we react in all the various circumstances that come up in our work life. Every situation that you face at work is another opportunity to demonstrate by your behavior exactly the reality of Christ's presence in you. And believe me, as you all know, there are all kinds of opportunities for us to show a different way of reaction—a different way of behaving in our workplace. Everyday situations arise that challenge us, that stretch us, that cause us to have to know how to react and respond—all the more important why we'd be praying about our work life—because you just never know what's going to happen on a daily basis. But, for those who have an authentic faith that's integrated into their whole life, their conduct will be more and more a reflection of God's presence in their life. And he says, "**Make the most of every opportunity**." In other words, "*Seize the day; seize the moments of opportunity to live differently!"*

Now let me give just a couple of examples of ways that I think might be important and could make a very profound impact on the people at your workplace. One of those would be when you do the wrong thing—when you sin, when you blow it, when you make a mistake, when you react wrongly. None of us here is above that. There are times when each one of us does the wrong thing. Now here's the question: If Christ is present in us, how are we going to conduct ourselves when we've done wrong? I think one of the most powerful opportunities to show that we're different is when we are quick to acknowledge and confess that we have done the wrong thing and make it right. That's something that stands out from everything else that people around you will do because everybody wants to cover it, excuse it, blame somebody else for it. But when we own our sin and we acknowledge that we've done the wrong thing and we're quick to ask for forgiveness, it always leaves the impression that something is radically different about us.

Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on how you want to look at it, I've had the opportunity to do that again and again in my work life. And you know every time I wrestle with making something right, pride wants to say, *"Oh you're going to look bad. You know it's not going to be a good thing."* But every single time I do the right thing and make it right, the opportunity just grows; respect grows; something changes because they see something different.

I think there's a second opportunity to demonstrate a different kind of conduct and that is when we're going through really hard things. You know, when everything's going smoothly in our life and you have your Christian CD playing, your Bible sitting on your desk, or whatever, and people say, "Yeah, you know when life's good, of course they love Jesus." But when stuff gets tough, when the bottom drops out, when your health begins to fade or your financial condition changes or your children or family have challenges or issues, that's when people are watching to say, "Is there anything different?" That's where we have the opportunity to demonstrate our trust and confidence in God, that we're unwavering in our belief that God is able and sufficient to show up in our life and to take care of those things. That's where we can have a profound impact by our conduct—when we're not undone by the things that undo others. And conversely, when other people in our work environment are going through hard things, then we have the opportunity to love them and come along side of them and care for them and really enter into their pain and their difficulty. That says a lot about the reality of Christ in us. It really isn't all that complicated if we pay attention to the people around us and the things they're going through. That makes a profound difference; it has a profound influence on them; they see something is different.

One of the guys here from our church entered into a new workplace a couple of years ago and said that in that work environment nobody ever really spoke to each other; nobody talked. In fact he said it was the strangest thing. People would go for a two-week vacation somewhere and when they came back nobody said, "How was your vacation? Good to see you back." Nobody ever acknowledged they'd been gone; nobody asked a personal question; nobody took any interest in anybody at work and he said it was the weirdest thing. This guy is a highly relational guy and I mean to tell you that workplace is profoundly different today. People are talking; people are sharing; people are engaged with each other; it's a happier, more joyful place. Why? Just because somebody conducted themselves in a way where they showed love and compassion and interest and there's a profound difference being made. "*Conduct yourself,"* he says, *"skillfully with those who do not yet know Christ, seizing every opportunity to demonstrate the reality of Christ in our life."*

Fourthly in verse 6:

> **Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.**

Here he's talking about the way we talk—not just our actions, but now our words—the conduct that we do allows for more opportunity, opens up opportunity for conversation, for dialogue, for interaction. And he says, "As you talk with the people in your work environment, it should be done with grace, always with grace." In other words that our speech, the way we dialogue with people, should be filled with the favor of God. It should be a reflection of what Jesus would say— how he would interact and speak with people. It would show favor towards the people we're talking to, that there would be a kindness, there would be genuineness, that there would be warmth, there would be an inviting conversation that would have the warmth and would reflect the grace of God.

You know the problem is that a lot of the people who most need to experience the grace of God in our work environment annoy us, right? I think it's so interesting that when we show a video here of a mission field and we put a little music to it, we all get teary about those poor pagans overseas somewhere. But put that person in the cubicle next to you and they're just annoying and we can't figure out why they don't act like a Christian—because they're not a Christian! Why are we surprised by that? And so we begin to kind of be annoyed and it comes out in the way we talk to people. Instead of exposing and sharing the grace of God and the favor of God in the way we communicate with people, we get short and snippy—annoyed. All the more reason why everyday we ought to be praying, "God, help me not only to conduct myself in a way that reflects your presence, but help me to speak in such a way that reflects your presence.

I love that...**seasoned with salt**. In other words, the way we communicate with people verbally ought to be tasty. It ought to make people want more. They ought to say, "Man, I enjoyed that conversation. I enjoy my conversations with my boss; I enjoy my conversations with that Christian person—with that fellow worker of mine. I enjoy that; it's interesting; it's engaging; they take an interest in me; they ask about me; it's full of grace and favor. It's a delight; it makes me want to come back for more; it's tasty! And that's what he's saying. The way we converse with the people around us ought to be tasty, inviting, engaging. Maybe that's the area, that if you want to have a greater influence in your work environment, you need to bring before God. "God, You need to change the way I talk, change the way I interact with people, that there'd be more reflection of Your presence in me, that I would speak like Jesus did to the people around him." And notice what he says at the end of verse six...**so that you will know how you should respond to each person.**

It's very important that as we go into the workplace, we don't have a formula; we don't have a set presentation we give. Every person is a unique person. They're a unique creation of God that's in a unique place today in their spiritual journey. They have unique questions and they have unique challenges and they have unique barriers and obstacles to them even entering into a relationship with Christ and they need to be treated as an individual...all the more reason why we need to pray and conduct ourselves wisely and speak with grace so we'll know how to respond to each person. But I think the implication is clear here that if we see God as our master and we're praying about our work life, we're looking for opportunities, we're living differently, we're speaking differently, there's going to be opportunity. There's going to be opportunity to go deeper with people and it most likely won't happen—shouldn't happen—in the workplace. We're not talking about taking the afternoon off to have some deep spiritual conversation with somebody. It most likely will be that the relationship will develop so that it carries on outside of the workplace and there you have the opportunity to continue to grow and build that relationship and ultimately have those deeper conversations where you can respond to their unique questions and challenges and be available to them—respond to them rightly.

I think God wants each and every one of us to really be influential in our workplace. It is your mission field and you will be as accountable to God for the mission field that you are on as any

missionary we support in any other place in the world. It is a place of profound opportunity to make a difference in people's lives. We come together here on the weekends and in our small groups and in our classes and the various things we do to be equipped, so that we can continually be growing and be more and more a reflection of the reality of Christ in our lives. There are many people sitting around you this morning that are tremendous examples of this kind of influence. If you want to know how to connect with somebody, because you don't know how to live that way, we'd be happy to help you do that. But I want you to just get a picture this morning of a story we shared a couple of years ago. But sometimes a picture's worth a thousand words and, to see what this really looks like in a work situation, take a look at this story. It's a real story from our church.

Video:

Paul: When I first met Chan I was in the middle of looking for a new job and it just seemed like right away we just kind of hit it off—very comfortable, very comfortable. You know, in talking to some of the guys that worked here, I'd come to find out, you know, where he went to church—that he went to Berean and I didn't know anything at that point in time about the Berean Church. In fact I'm almost thirty-seven and it had been, you know, almost eighteen years before I'd stepped foot in a church, other than when I'd got married.

Chan: I think it was pretty obvious when Paul began really searching and really finding out there was an emptiness there that only God could fill. He began to come into work you know—most of the time it was early in the morning he would come in. My time in the morning was very early and I would come in to get certain things done before anybody else comes. And in would walk Paul and he would fire these questions at me.

Paul: And since I knew he was religious I would kind of challenge him a little bit, thinking that I know—you know—I wanted to think that I knew more than he did. You know we'd just sit down and we'd talk about God, relationships and all that kind of stuff. And I think, after seeing how important his family was to him and seeing how he treated the guys that he worked with and the integrity that he had, you know it just started raising questions in me of what I thought.

Chan: Yeah, it was really interesting the way it was unfolding. It went real quick once it became real obvious that he was searching. We had these talks and, you know, those went on for weeks or maybe a few months. I began to develop this plan of how I thought it should go—the things that I should say, the things that I should be doing. I kind of kept track of this list and had this itinerary, if you will, of how I perceived Paul's progress—how it was going and where it was going. And I quickly came to my own conclusion that Paul was coming along, but he wasn't quite there yet. We needed to do *this* yet; we needed to check *this* off and I needed to do *this* and *this*. And that's when God just slapped me in the face again, because one Monday morning Paul walks into my office and says, "I really need to talk to you."

Paul: Growing up I knew about God but I never knew who Jesus was; I never truly knew who Jesus was, for whatever reason, you know? And I felt like I was a master at many faces—that I could change my personality to suit whoever I was around at any given time. And whether it was guys I was working with or my wife at home or the kids or whatever, I was constantly changing how I behaved and how I acted, how I talked. And when I started here, I started wrestling with that. I just felt like something was telling me, "That's not right." So, over the course of time with talking with Chan, I just kept going down that road and one day I realized I just couldn't do that anymore. I couldn't be---I didn't know who I was! I'd messed up so much at home. I didn't feel like a good father or a good husband. Then one day, when I was driving on Sunday—I'll never forget the

day—it was raining out and I just told God I needed Him and I couldn't do it myself anymore. I came in that next day and sat down with Chan and told him that I felt that God had brought him into my life so that He could save my life.

Chan: I was so thankful and I was so humbled by God to see that it wasn't about *my* timing at all; it was about God's timing. And here I didn't think Paul was even ready and here he was right there. I truly believe that I had a perception of what it was like to share Christ in the workplace. I have a completely different perception of what that looks like now. It became very obvious to me that it's a matter of getting involved in someone's life and pursuing them and them pursuing you and God really takes it from there. If I recognize that this is Him doing the work, then it takes all the pressure off of me.

(End of video)

If we understand the power of God in us, that story would not be an exception; it would be the rule. I want to challenge us this morning to live intentionally—*missionally* in our workplace. This challenge really came clear to me when we were in Madrid a couple of months ago with a few other folks from our church and we were walking through what our short cycle team will be doing there in Madrid. These ten individuals in Madrid, the six that are up in Gdansk, are going there intentionally praying and saying, "God, give us opportunity; help us to find relationships." They're looking every day to be intentional with every person they meet to create an opportunity, to come along side, to wait expectantly that God would give them opportunity to enter into a deeper relationship, to ultimately be able to talk about important things and ultimately share Jesus. And, at the end of that five years, we expect those ten people will leave behind a church where no church has existed before. One of the women who was with us—Jamie—who is in the service this morning said, "Why would we not live that intentionally back home? Why would our mission field—our mission—be any different? It's to live intentionally every single day in the environment where we are with the same expectancy, with the same prayerfulness, in the same sort of relational way, with the same level of focus and mission and purpose," and that's exactly right!

We all would sit here this morning and say, "Yes, God, help me be more influential," but what if this morning we said, "I'm going to be accountable that, in the next five years, I'm going to be as intentional, as focused, as missional, as relational as that short cycle team in Madrid and we're going to hold each other accountable?" They're going to hold me accountable to be as missional here as I'm expecting them to be there. We're doing the same thing; we're just in different environments. Do you know that if they had the opportunity to get a job in Madrid, they'd get a job because that's the mission field! In India, our next church planting strategy is to support guys who go out and get a job—because it opens up doors of opportunity. The church planting movement in India is going to be around people who are in the workplace just like you and I are everyday.

So I'm going to challenge us this morning to stand before God and say—if your desire of your heart this morning is to say—"I want to be missional; I want to be focused; I want to make my life count and have a life of influence. I'm going to dedicate myself every day, acknowledge God as my master, invite him into my workspace by praying. I'm going to seek to grow so that my conduct reflects the reality of His presence in my life and the speech that comes out of my mouth, the way I converse with people, is the reflection of the grace of Jesus Christ and I want to live that way."

If you want to live that way, as the band plays here in just a minute or two, I'm going to ask you just to stand right where you're at and just as your declaration before God say, "*God, I want to live that way. I want to be a person of influence for the Kingdom in the place where you have me planted."*

Ultimately I think what that's going to look like is this picture that we had created for us—made for us—that I think is a good picture of the church at work. You see God's written this incredible piece of music. He's the composer; He's the arranger. It's life; it's the abundant life and He wrote music to say this is what the abundant life is all about. And Jesus then calls us. He redeemed us and saved us to be a part of the band—to take up an instrument that's uniquely ours. Nobody plays the instrument exactly the way we do. It's our talents; it's our passions; it's our unique person and He calls us to be part of making music together. The Holy Spirit is the conductor and teacher and we either are in rhythm with Him and we're following His lead and we're letting Him guide us and lead us and make us sound better and better and better or we're not. But ultimately, as we play that music and we play it together and we play it in every place— including our workplace—then people get a glimpse, a taste of the sweetness, of the wonder of our God. And they're drawn and attracted to Him and ultimately God is glorified and smiles and says, "Now that's the way I created life to be. That's the music that I wrote and my people are playing it every day in every environment where they're at."

So, as the band comes and sort of illustrates this picture, I'm just going to invite you—if you're willing to commit yourself to live intentionally in your workplace—whether that's at home or in a business or in a school, wherever that is—if you say, "I want to live intentionally in my workplace for these next five years, just as intentionally as our short cycle team." And you are going to ask God to do something amazing to multiply the *Chan and Paul Story* hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times across this body and around this city and watch God work through us. If that's your desire, as they play, just stand where you are and then we'll have a closing prayer.

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WorkLIFE
your work matters

YOUR WORK MATTERS:
A Life of Influence at Work
Colossians 3:22-4:6

Pastor Mark Kremer

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REVIEW

- Humility means openly acknowledging our need for God's involvement in our work life.
- Humility is the key to working with people and succeeding in our work.
- Our prayer life is a reflection of our humility before God.
- Humility allows us to understand circumstances and people so we know what to do.
- Humility produces respect for people so we value them as God does.
- Humility allows us to act justly and fairly in the way we deal with people.
- Humility produces wisdom and courage to deal with difficult people (even enemies).

ENGAGE

Read Colossians 3:22 - 4:1. The Christian view of work in these verses is that God is ultimately our master (boss) and all work is to be done for Him and with Him. Does your work life align with this truth? What changes need to take place in order for this to be true of your work life?

Read Colossians 4:2-6. Why is prayer an important part of living a life of influence in the work place?

Do you see yourself as a messenger of Christ in your work place? Why or why not?

What are the unique challenges and opportunities of being Christ's messenger in the workplace?

What does it look like to "conduct yourself with wisdom toward outsiders" in your work environment?

What message do you think people in your workplace are receiving from the way you live your life?

How have you used your influence at work to help others know more about Jesus? Have you missed opportunities?

What can you do to be more prepared to influence others in your work environment?

How can the way we talk at work reflect the grace of God to others? In what ways can our words distort the grace of God?

What does it mean to have our words be "seasoned with salt"? What kinds of things can we say and do that will make people want to taste more of God?

What kinds of things can we say or do that kill others' appetite for God?

Are you prepared to respond appropriately to those who want to know more about "hope within you" (I Peter 3:15)? What can you do to be more prepared?

Do you genuinely love those whom God has placed within your circle of relationship at work? What can you do and say to show them how much God loves them?

What steps will you take to align your work life more closely with God's purposes and principles?