

Living at the intersection of

WORK, WORSHIP & MINISTRY



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Mason Wing Walking Academy

Gary A. Williams

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Jesus' good news about the kingdom can be an effective guide for our lives only if we share his view of the world in which we live. To his eyes this is a God-bathed and God-permeated world. It is a world filled with a glorious reality, where every component is within the range of God's direct knowledge and control, though he obviously permits some of it, for good reasons, to be for a while otherwise than as he wishes.

*Dallas Willard,
The Divine Conspiracy*

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

-- Paul the Apostle, Ephesians 2:10

Some of us seem to know from an early age what we are meant to do with our lives, especially in terms of vocation or ministry. Our daughter, for instance, insisted she was going to be a teacher when she was still in grammar school. Now she’s been one for more than 20 years. Others of us struggle with career choices long into adulthood, often trying on several for size.

I fell into the struggler category, despite knowing Paul’s promise in Ephesians and growing up surrounded by Christian family and friends. The irony is that even though I didn’t know it during college and well into my career, the destination I was searching for was right in front of me all along, right at the intersection of work, worship and ministry.

Because my experience is common among Christ followers, I thought it might be helpful to share the lessons learned during my long quest to understand how God’s “good works,” this Christ follower’s vocation and worshiping with words and deeds all fit together.

The church kid heads for college

My earliest memory is of being taken into the church nursery at about age two. At nine, I asked to be baptized at Central Christian Church in Van Nuys, California. By the time I was a 16-year-old high school senior, we were living in northern California and I was a leader and frequent teacher of our church youth group.

Adults at church saw that interest, so when I was about to enter college several encouraged me to attend a local Bible college. At the same time, teachers at my high school had observed me writing for school and local newspapers from the age of 14. They expected me to choose journalism.

In reality, I didn’t have a clue which career to select; nor did I see how ministry and worship fit into my nascent plan. After years of church lessons and sermons based on a long list of do’s and don’ts that supposedly defined Christian behavior, my idea of how

to serve Christ was largely based on rules: Don't drink; don't smoke; don't dance; don't swear; but do attend church for Sunday school, morning service, youth group and evening service. And don't forget Wednesday night potlucks.

What I did not yet understand is that following Jesus is not about living by rules and regulations. Jesus gives us life-shaping principles rooted in love. Live by those and we don't need rules.

A rich young ruler

The Gospel of Mark tells of a wealthy young ruler who is very good at keeping religious do's and don'ts. He approaches Jesus and asks: "*What good thing must I do to get eternal life?*" Maybe he is expecting Jesus to recognize his righteousness. More likely, as a man focused on rules, he just wants to make sure he hasn't missed the one that will perfect his goodness. Whatever the reason for his question, Jesus acknowledges the man's good deeds, then asks for more. He asks for the man's whole life; his obedience, his riches, his heart. This is too much for the young ruler. He walks away. (Mark 10:17-22)

The same question comes up in Luke, when an expert in the law asks Jesus: "*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*" Jesus responds: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself*" (Luke 10:27). Here is the basis for everything a Christ follower does, be it at work, at home, in the community, or at church. No rules needed, just a commitment to love.

When we combine Paul's statement in Ephesians 2 -- we are created from the beginning to do good works -- with what Jesus tells us about love, we have the answer to who we are and why we're alive. We are God's creations, designed to love him, love our neighbors and do the good works God has prepared for each of us.

But knowing the verses does not mean that applying them is easy. When I was half-way to a university degree that would prepare me for my life's work, I couldn't decide which major to declare, let alone figure out which works God had waiting for me or how He wanted me to love people who weren't always lovable.

The summer before my junior year, I attempted to solve the

vocational dilemma by taking aptitude tests and working with guidance counselors. My advisors concluded that I was not ready to select a career. That was a big help!

The mystery of God's plan

Apparently, while God knew how He intended to use me, either He wasn't ready to let me in on the plan or I wasn't ready to hear it. I chose to work toward a degree in Public Relations, in the School of Journalism, simply to satisfy the need for a major.

Back then, all of my prayers for guidance approached the subjects of God's works, my vocation and loving others as separate issues. Based on what I'd heard in church at that point, I thought they were separate. I also thought there were only three basic ways to serve God: (1) be a missionary in a foreign land; (2) a church pastor; or (3) volunteer in church ministries. I was not interested in the first two and already doing the third. Serving God in a secular job was not even on the radar.

What I didn't know until much later is that God answered my prayers about vocation the summer I decided on Public Relations. Thanks to a classmate in the PR Department, in my junior year of college I landed a terrific part-time job with Memorex, one of the fastest growing technology companies in the area now known as Silicon Valley.

When graduation rolled around, Memorex offered me a full-time position in corporate communications, so I slid right into the workforce without a minute spent on job hunting. That running start led to a long career in business management, all enhanced by what I learned in PR about communicating with others.

Feeling grateful yet uncertain about the future

In those early years, I thanked God regularly for providing a job I loved so much that it was a pleasure to show up early every morning and leave late every evening. Missing a key bit of biblical understanding, however, I eventually began to feel out of touch with God's plan for my life.

The work he provided kept me so busy it seemed that weekends were the only times available for worship and ministry. The

problem was that I did not yet realize work, worship and ministry are not separate topics; they constantly intersect and overlap.

Moving into “full-time” Christian service

My education regarding the work-worship-ministry conundrum began to accelerate in the early 1970’s, after I moved to a management job in publishing and my wife Raelene and I bought a new home in San Jose’s Almaden Valley. There we began attending a church recommended by friends and soon became interested in a ministry our new pastor was developing. One of its goals was to help Christians learn to integrate faith and obedience into all areas of life. (Hmm, wonder how we ended up there?)

I thoroughly enjoyed serving as one of this new ministry’s first board of directors members, while also organizing workshops and seminars and helping publish a variety of resource materials on family issues, social concerns, small group Bible studies and many other subjects. Today the internet offers thousands of resources to anyone with a computer. In the late 1970’s, our humble ministry was at the forefront of the coming information explosion.

This new type of ministry seemed to fit me so perfectly that when our pastor left church to work full time in the new organization, I resigned from my secular job and joined him. The next four years were among the most challenging and exciting times of my life. I was, as friends pointed out, in “full-time Christian service.” I had arrived! This was the God-given career in ministry I longed for. Or so I thought.

Attitude adjustment needed?

In year four, the ministry was almost six months behind on our modest salary and organizational issues were creating tension. That’s when a management recruiter I knew from Memorex “just happened” to phone me. He had a corporate staff opening at Calma, a fast moving high tech company that fit me like glove. After much prayer, I left the ministry God had provided and moved back into secular work that I also believed was a gift from God. Why then did I feel like a failure at the ripe old age of 34?

My attitude was wrong, plain and simple. I should have looked at my job change as a new ministry opportunity. Instead, I slipped back into business mode. Once I readjusted to corporate life, I found that the new company was an exciting place to work. Recognition, promotions and money came quickly.

Within 18 months I was V.P. of Corporate Communications, with a large staff and heavy responsibilities. Immersed in the challenges of my new job and working long hours, I seldom had time to think about spiritual matters during the week. When I did, there was guilt that I was no longer in “full-time Christian service.” I had tasted “real” ministry and felt the loss keenly.

The people at work knew I was a Christian primarily because I went to church and didn’t drink, swear, or tell off-color stories. Instead of getting to know them on a personal level, as Jesus modeled, I did my job and then headed home to use after-work hours for family and church relationships. My “religion” became a wall that separated me from many of the people I spent the majority of my time with. It doesn’t take a psychologist to understand why I felt like a fish out of water at work and in the swim of things (sorry) when volunteering at church or in faith-based ministries.

During this time, my wife and I purchased her father’s one-person sign business. It wasn’t long before she began to add employees and develop it into a designer-builder of large corporate sign systems. She was having fun, but I was not. I was still internally conflicted, convinced God wanted me in some sort of special ministry, yet believing He was also directing me to challenging and lucrative secular work that fit my skills and experience.

Learning how to follow Jesus at work

By the mid 1980’s Raelene had grown our company to the point that it was large enough to support our family of four. My solution to the work-ministry dilemma was to again leave the corporate world, this time to work half-time in our business and half-time as an unpaid volunteer management consultant for two local ministries. As our business continued to expand, though, I once

again found myself working full time at our company and volunteering after hours.

The difference this time is that Raelene and I did a lot of talking and praying about what our company should look like as both a vocation and a ministry. We knew from experience that organizations tend to reflect the personalities and styles of their most senior managers, be they presidents, CEOs or pastors. We wanted to reflect the character of Christ to clients, employees, suppliers and everyone else we met through the business. To do that we had to consciously make it our highest priority to serve God, even when such service conflicted with profit.

Because every business and work situation is different, there is no formula for turning work situations into ministry opportunities. The best advice we heard was to stay close to God and allow Him to bring the opportunities to us. It is our belief that God often gives us the gifts we need to do His work when we need them. Because of this we tend to give a higher priority to the needs we see around us than to figuring out how to use our perceived skills or gifts.

It is probably not a coincidence that the first chapter of Joshua has been stuck in my mind for several decades. In it, God instructs the newly appointed leader of the Jewish nation how to be successful: *“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”* (Joshua 1: 7-9)

To me, as a follower of Jesus, the Joshua passage means God wants me to spend regular time studying and meditating on his Word, praying (talking *and* listening) and making time to listen to and encourage other Christ followers. We had plenty of discouraging days, especially when our business fell to almost nothing for several months after 9/11 shocked the nation. What motivated us to be “strong and courageous” was God’s promise that He would never leave or forsake us.

Representing God at work ... and being represented by employees

The parallel between us representing God in the world and our employees representing us did not go unnoticed. How our employees behaved with customers, suppliers, business neighbors and each other reflected on us, just as our behavior reflected on God.

A scene from Mel Gibson's movie, *The Patriot*, illustrates the point. British General Cornwallis catches a subordinate officer acting badly and barks at the man: "You serve me and the manner in which you serve me reflects on me!"

How true! Our behavior reflects on the one we serve, whether it is God, an employer, or someone else. When we're the ones in leadership and, in a sense, being served, our behavior still reflects on God and sets a tone that ripples on down the line.

Desiring to serve God through our company shaped our management style and more. We took a hard look at workplace policies and practices, the character and skills of those we hired, how we shared profits with them, how we treated employees, suppliers and customers and every other aspect of our business. We did not ask about religious views when hiring; our goal was to employ the best people we could find, trusting a thorough vetting process undergirded with prayer.

Because maintaining a culture based on personal and corporate integrity was a priority, integrity was at the top of our list when hiring. And we didn't stop there. We wrote our philosophy into our employee handbook, talked about it when orienting new employees and reviewed it during regular employee meetings.

Actions speak louder than words

Even though the company culture was guided by Christian principles, we did not advertise our faith. If someone asked, we answered; otherwise, we let our lives do the talking. We designed, built and installed architectural sign systems for corporate clients, most of whom were over worked and over stressed in the go-go environment of Silicon Valley. Because a large percentage of our

clients were repeat buyers, we got to know them and our suppliers pretty well. As a result, we developed personal relationships with a lot of men and women who didn't know much about Jesus.

I think it's safe to say that the majority of them, if they thought about faith matters at all, liked Jesus the teacher, didn't see him as God and were thoroughly confused about the Good News he taught. It was also clear that these people had carefully tuned antennae and were constantly on the lookout for Christians whose practices did not match up with what they thought to be true about Christian beliefs and practices.

Over time, our suppliers, clients and employees began to comment that working with us was different ... in a good way. Some began to ask what motivated us or why we made certain decisions that surprised them. Their questions opened the door to sharing our faith as part of our regular interactions, when we were invited to speak and they were ready to listen.

Leaning on God

What we learned from our 20-plus years as business owners is that God wants us to lean on him, not our own abilities or resources. The economy will go up and down. People will say and do hurtful things. Jobs won't always go smoothly. Some clients will be more difficult to work with than others. Family members will get sick or injured. Loving the unlovable will continue to be a challenge. We will make mistakes, personally and professionally.

When we choose to follow Jesus daily, God doesn't take away all the hard parts of life. What He does is use the tough times to refine us. As He sweats out our impurities, we begin to change how we feel about -- and respond to -- life's challenges. It becomes easier to let go of hard feelings, let go of stress and rely on the unfathomably deep love of God to pull us through even the most difficult times.

Working worship into the mix

By the summer of 1993, 25 years after earning my degree, I was finally beginning to put the pieces together. I finally realized that my primary ministry occurs most naturally where I spend the

most time. When my time was spent in the workplace, there were plenty of opportunities to do “good works” for God.

Another piece of the puzzle came into focus after I led a brief study on worship to open an elders’ meeting. During our discussion, I noticed that our focus was almost exclusively on the type of worship that happens in church settings or in private. We all spoke of worship that touches our emotions and gives us the feeling of connecting to God, such as communion, singing, praying and praise. We were so zeroed in on how worship affects the worshiper, we completely overlooked that loving the people God brings into our lives is also a key element of worship.

The blunt words of James sink in

A few weeks later, this point was reinforced when re-reading the Book of James while preparing to speak on work and worship at a church men’s retreat. It was like being hit in the face with a bat. SMACK! Okay, I get it ... finally. When James writes about “true religion” in Chapter 1 he’s really describing “true worship.” How could I speak about worship at the retreat without including the type of worship that occurs at work?

Worshipping with our everyday behavior

God wants us to love him (an act of worship) and He wants us to love others (also an act of worship). If the latter were not true, James could not have written that true religion consists of controlling the tongue, assisting orphans and widows and keeping oneself unspotted from the world. What speaks to me from this text is that worship can’t be separated from everyday life.

James’ words mesh perfectly with what Paul writes in Romans 14:8: *“Everything we do is worship, so whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.”*

Here, thanks to James and Paul, is the key. Work, worship and ministry are not separate aspects of life that we somehow juggle to keep in balance while following Jesus and living in the world. In reality, work, worship and ministry are subtopics under this main heading: “Living for Christ.”

It's a form of worship when we choose to eliminate hurtful behavior such as cutting remarks, gossip or words designed to elevate us at the expense of others. It is worship when we choose to help those in need. Preaching and teaching can be acts of worship. Making tents to earn a living, as Paul did, can be worship. Doing our jobs well can be worship.

Jesus never belittled people or used them for personal gain. He didn't seek revenge. He didn't get caught up in choosing to make money at the expense of the Gospel. He didn't shy away from work that was beneath him (washing feet) or an assignment that was painful beyond our imagination (the cross).

He didn't use his power to elevate himself above others or to force others to do his will. On the contrary, his love for his Father and for all of humanity demonstrated what it means to be God's image bearer in the world, an assignment he passed on to us before rejoining his Father in Heaven.

Jesus doesn't want us to retreat from the world or hide our faith so we never run the risk of offending someone. He intends that we, his people, stand out in ways that reflect who he is and why he came to live on this earth. Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all plan that tells us how to represent him. The best way I know to imitate Jesus — or anyone else — is to study his words and behavior. In this case, that means spending quality time reading about, meditating on and talking with Jesus.

Representing Christ at work is a tough assignment

For some reason, following Jesus out of church and into the workplace is one of the more difficult things we are asked to do. Maybe there's an inner voice that tells us our work behavior isn't consistent with our faith. Maybe it's how we treat those who provide services to us or whose jobs are lower in the hierarchy than our own; how we behave around members of the opposite sex; or the decisions we make when workplace ethics conflict with our Christian ethics.

Another factor that makes it difficult to introduce Jesus into the workplace is fear of how we'll be judged against the perceptions and biases of those who don't share our faith. Our sense of self should

not be affected by how others view us or the jobs we hold, but ignoring what others think is easier said than done.

Richard Reeves, a nationally syndicated newspaper columnist, wrote this about work: “I work (for now, anyway), therefore I am ... More often than not, Americans meeting each other for the first time begin conversation by saying, ‘What do you do?’ – meaning, of course, what is your job, your work, your title, your identity? What do you answer if you have no work? I don’t mean that as an economic question. For Americans it’s a psychological, even spiritual question.”

A mid-life identity crisis

Could my work lead to an identity issue? As a follower of Jesus, I felt safe from this type of crisis until soon after leaving the corporate world to work in our company. When delivering a package of small office-door signs to the law firm of a friend, the receptionist asked: “Are you the sign messenger?” Her simple question stopped me cold. I wanted to say, “No, I own the company,” or “No, I’m a friend of your boss.”

Accustomed to thinking of myself as one who planned strategies and tactics and gave direction to others, the receptionist was seeing me as a courier. All at once I realized I was no longer a “suit,” as our employees used to call me. For a moment, I was lost for an answer; I didn’t know how to view myself. That instant is forever impressed on my memory. Belonging to the family of the Creator of the Universe should have been enough status but in that moment it wasn’t and the realization felt awful.

That day became a turning point for internalizing — moving from head to heart — all the scriptures I’d read that established my true identity as a follower of Jesus. From there on out, I was determined that another person’s perception of me would never again test my sense of identity as one who is first and foremost beloved by God.

Seeing others for who they really are

During the time when I was coming to grips with how to see

myself, I heard a recorded talk by Dr. Anthony Campolo. His insights moved me from thinking about my place in God's Kingdom, to considering how I interact with other people.

What grabbed my attention was Dr. Campolo's explanation of the judgment day parable found in Matthew 25. Referring to himself as the "Son of Man" and the "King," Jesus tells how some are welcomed into his presence at judgment day (the righteous) and others (the unrighteous) are sent to the "eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

When the Son of Man is asked by the righteous what they did that the unrighteous did not do, he tells them he was hungry and the righteous gave him food. He was thirsty and the righteous gave him drink. He was a stranger and the righteous welcomed him. He was naked and the righteous clothed him. He was sick and the righteous visited him. He was in prison and they came to him.

The righteous are stunned. They ask when they did these things for Jesus? He responds that whatever they did for others, they did for him. In other words, explains Dr. Campolo, every encounter with another human is an encounter with Jesus and an encounter with Jesus is an encounter with God.

"People are not God", says Dr. Campolo, "People are not Jesus. But the God who died on the cross is a God who comes at us through people. If you can't love Him in people, I contend that you can't love Him. 'As you do it unto the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you do it unto me.'"

In my own words, not those of Jesus or Dr. Campolo, this remarkable parable says that God experiences the love we show to our fellow humans as though we are loving Him directly. That's a mind boggling principle, especially as we are asked to apply it when surrounded by men and women with conflicting ethical and moral values, personal ambitions and cultural expectations. In other words, a typical work environment.

Seeing ourselves as God sees us

Our culture teaches us to pay close attention to our personal identities; how others see us and how we see ourselves. But the more important question is this: How does God see us?

When we choose to represent him through how we live, the Apostle Paul compares us to the aroma of a delightful fragrance that carries Christ to everyone who crosses our path: *“But thanks be to God, who in Christ ...spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing...”* (II Corinthians 2:14-16)

This description of who we are when standing in the intersection of work, worship and ministry is an identity I can embrace!

We love God during times of personal worship (singing, praying, communion, etc.) and we love him every time we love family members, neighbors, service providers, work associates and everyone else we encounter during the course of our daily activities. Living each day for Christ, we do the good works planned for us, spreading “the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.”

A contrasting perspective

The world’s viewpoint is quite different from that of a Christ follower. Those who reject Jesus as their Lord and Savior fail to realize that he is the key to understanding who they are and why they exist. As a result, they are forced to find their identities through what the world has to offer.

Those who are best at accumulating money, power and fame become public heroes and envy or lust often substitute for love. Consider the advertising messages that bombard us daily. Own this luxury car and you will be envied. Drink this beer and you’ll be popular. Wear this designer label and you’ll attract only the “best” people to you.

Paradoxically, while greed and selfishness are not seen as virtues by most people, regardless of their spiritual beliefs, the fruits born of such behavior are widely admired.

Even the language of social interaction and business run counter to Biblical teaching. In the world there are winners and losers, players, heavy hitters and lightweights. Money and power are ways of measuring the value of people, who in most work settings, become objects referred to as “human resources.”

In sports, athletes are referred to impersonally as “pieces” by those who buy and sell their services and by the adoring fans who would love to be them.

In comparison to the world view, Paul exhorts Christ followers to live like this: *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.”* (Colossians 3:23)

And this: *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!”* (Philippians 2:3-8)

Inconsistencies between beliefs and practices

Over the years, I’ve run across many Christians who know the scriptures inside and out, yet still live as though work, worship and ministry are intended to be three separate categories that rarely, or never, meet.

Here’s an example: During a discussion at a church men’s group in California, we were asked to share how we would live differently if we were not Christians. One after another men said they would be the same good guys they’d always been. Like the rich young ruler, they already had the “good” part down. But Jesus doesn’t call us to be good. He calls us to be like him, willing servants who love others sacrificially and without reservation.

Once we commit to following Christ, I don’t think it is possible to see other men and women with the same eyes as before. That’s the point Jesus makes in Matthew 25. We can’t see another person in the same light as before if we look in their eyes and consider that it may be God who is looking back at us.

One foot in the Kingdom, one in the world

On another occasion, a Christian friend and I disagreed over a common industry practice. It is not at all unusual for a business

to agree to pay for goods and services within 30 days, knowing full well the company has no intention of paying for 45 days, 60 days, or longer. My friend was a senior manager at a high tech giant that had a policy of paying in 60 days, regardless of signing contracts requiring payment upon receipt or within 30 days.

He argued that breaking a contract to improve a company's cash flow is good business, even if doing so hurt another business. He didn't feel his work ethics were inconsistent with his faith because he saw work and worship as two separate worlds. In fact, he said I was naive to mix faith with business. As in the previous example, if we see God coming at us through other people, it becomes almost impossible to selfishly enrich ourselves at the expense of others.

The Book of Acts records that Jesus' first followers learned from him to live in the world without being corrupted by it. As a result of their new and revolutionary lifestyle, his first disciples enjoyed *"...the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."* (Acts 2) I wonder what history would say about these first Christians if they had tried to follow Jesus with one foot in the Kingdom and the other in the world?

Jesus didn't do do's and don'ts

I grew up guided by the do's and don'ts taught in a well-meaning but legalistic church. It took a long time to notice that Jesus did not hand down a list of rules and regulations to control us. Instead, he taught principles that effectively change the whole person from the inside out. This is in keeping with the promise of Hebrews 10:16: *"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time (the sacrifice of Jesus), says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."*

It wasn't until I turned my eyes away from church-taught do's and don'ts to focus on Jesus that my heart began to change. I found myself losing the desire to keep others at a distance. I became more aware of what was going on in the lives of people God placed in my path each day. I began to look for ways to be helpful and encouraging.

And I began viewing work as an environment filled with rich potential for ministry, instead of seeing "the daily grind" as a

necessary interruption to ministry. From my wife, I began to learn how to wait and watch for invitations to share my faith. Speaking less, I noticed more.

One of the most important lessons that finally sunk in is that God accepts me as I am and uses me to accomplish His will in spite of my shortcomings, of which there are plenty.

Throughout the Bible, and to this day, God always calls on flawed men and women to accomplish His good works. The Apostle Paul tells us why: *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23) It is encouraging to realize that when God plans works to do on His behalf, He already knows imperfect people such as me will be doing them. No longer do I feel that I can’t serve God unless I’ve got all the do’s and don’ts under control, nor do I expect others to be perfect, even as they serve Him.

Wrapping it up

It is impossible to accurately represent Jesus to the world if we have one pattern of speech for church and another for work, one style of humor on Sunday and another the rest of the week, or one set of moral standards for work and another for church. Jesus did not hire part-timers to represent him in the 1st century and he’s still asking for a full-time commitment in the 21st.

Popular author Eugene Peterson writes that the job of a pastor is to “speak God” to the people. That role also belongs to each of us who claims the name of Christ. When we approach each day as God intends — loving him and loving the people He puts in our path — we “speak God” with our lives. That’s a more powerful testimony than anything we can write or say. The result, I believe, is that we find ourselves living with Christ at the intersection of worship, work and ministry.

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“If the average church should suddenly take seriously the notion that every member - man or woman - is really a minister of Christ, we could have something like a revolution in a very short time.”

D. Elton Trueblood
Scholar, author

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