



Walking in Newness of Life in the Workplace

Theme: "Just as Christ himself is the model administrator, who gave his own life to fulfill the purposes of God, so we in our works."

Bible Reading: Romans 6

Starting Questions: What does God say about our lives in our jobs? Is it merely a secular theme or is the spiritual life also immersed? How does it look walking in newness of life at work?

Romans 6:15-23

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

19 I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in[a] Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reflection Reading

What does it mean to be a "slave" of God's grace in our places of work? It means that we do not make decisions at work based on how things affect us, but about how they affect our master, God. We make decisions as God's stewards or agents. This is actually a familiar concept in both Christian faith and the secular workplace. In the Christian faith, Christ himself is the model steward, who gave up his own life in order to fulfill God's purposes. Similarly, many people in the workplace have a duty to serve the interests of others, rather than their own. Among them are attorneys, corporate officers, agents, trustees and boards of directors, judges, and many others. Not many workplace stewards or agents are as committed as Jesus

was—willing to give their lives to fulfill their duties—but the concept of agency is an everyday reality in the workplace.

The difference for Christians is that our duty ultimately is to God, not the state or shareholders or anyone else. Our overarching mission must be God's justice and reconciliation, not merely obeying the law, making a profit, or satisfying human expectations. Unlike Albert Carr's claim that business is just a game in which normal rules of ethics don't apply, walking in newness of life means integrating justice and reconciliation into our lives at work.

For instance, walking in newness of life for a high school teacher might mean repeatedly forgiving a rebellious and troublesome student, while also seeking new ways to reach that student in the classroom. For a politician, walking in newness of life might mean drafting new legislation that includes input from a number of different ideological perspectives. For a manager, it might mean asking the forgiveness of an employee in front of everyone who is aware of the manager's transgression against the employee.

Walking in newness of life requires us to look deeply into our patterns of work. Bakers or chefs might easily see how their work helps feed hungry people, which in itself is a form of justice. The same bakers and chefs might also need to look more deeply at their personal interactions in the kitchen. Do they treat people with dignity, help others succeed, bring glory to God? Walking in newness of life affects both the ends we try to accomplish and the means we use to do so.

Dynamic Reflection

1. What does Romans 6 tell us about being now slaves to Christ?

2. How do you think this is a good way to show that you have a new life in your job?

Application

1. How your mindset and actions changed after reflecting on this.

2. What can you do to practice this teaching in your work.