

THE CHRISTIAN BUSINESS NETWORK

Practicing Christian Community in the Marketplace

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Discover Eternal Value in the Daily Grind – Larry Peabody

Background to book:

Raised in strong Christian home and church. Memorized many key Scriptures by age 7.

Comment from Pastor's wife when I was 12. (What I heard: become missionary or pastor in full-time Christian service.)

Argument with God in college.

Church experience as young adult, now working for State.

1. Wonderful testimony—just a layman
2. Orchids for moms of pastors, missionaries

Anger: Could not write book until spirit right.

Years later, long after writing the book, I discovered I was not alone in feeling 2nd-class status:

- Ed Silvano: *Anointed for Business*. “Unfortunately many of these marketplace Christians feel like second-class citizens when compared to people who serve full-time in a church or missionary context.”
- Os Hillman: *The 9 – 5 Window*. “John Wigington . . . believed that his passion for Christ meant he was to become a pastor or a missionary. His pastor even encouraged this idea.”
- R. Paul Stevens: *Doing God's Business*. (quoting a believer) “I suppose if I'm really going to be committed as a Christian I need to go into full-time Christian service and become a pastor or missionary.”
- Doug Sherman and William Hendricks: *Your Work Matters to God*. “I knew of [Air Force] pilots whose faith made a noticeable difference in their performance, attitude and

lifestyle . . . Yet very few of the chaplains ever mentioned these men. Instead, they praised people who had left the service to become ministers and missionaries.”

- Darrell Cosden: *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*. “Clericalism, or the belief that those in vocational ministry have a higher status or spiritual value, is a foundational assumption in many churches. . . . Although a person’s work might be good, ‘going into the ministry,’ or at least doing spiritual ministry with the first-fruits of our energies—especially while at work—is better.”

Began to examine Scripture from the viewpoint of ordinary work:

- Joseph: his good works glorified God in prison and as Egyptian administrator
- Daniel: decades as a Babylonian bureaucrat, pagans praised God because of his faithful work; enemies could find no fault in his work.
- Paul (tentmaker): II Thess. 3:7-10. Paul worked at an ordinary job to set an example for other believers
- Paul’s words to slaves. Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25

Wrote book while working as a public information officer for the State of Washington. Spent about a year. Took one vacation of five weeks of half-days to concentrate on it.

As I wrote, I realized that in my experience, the values the evangelical tradition sees in an ordinary job are two:

1. To evangelize unbelievers.
2. To make money so you can give to the church and missions.

The heart of the book deals with providing Christians with biblical reasons for their going to work day-in and day-out. (We will cover each of these in depth in the seminar later this morning.)

Mirroring God: God is a working God. We are made in his image. We reflect his likeness through our work. *Matt. 5:16*. “. . . let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds [not hear your good words] and praise your Father in heaven.” Example: Daniel’s

enemies “could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.” Dan. 6:4-5. What a mirror-image of God’s character and way of working.

Becoming like Christ: We like to think we are there on the job to change others—to change non-believers into believers. God first wants to change us, and uses the stresses of our jobs to do just that. *Personal example: my desperate desire to escape state job because of unreasonable boss. Pressed to seek God and lay down my life in a whole new way.*

Building Up Other Believers. We easily restrict our service to fellow believers to just those in our church fellowship. But our denominational groupings shrink that circle. We spend more time with believers at work than with those in our church circles. In a church of 200, most of the one-another commands in the NT are impossible to carry out, but very possible in the workplace relationships. *Example: Janitor in St. Peter Hospital who “cross-pollinates” other believers with prayer concerns for each other (without names).*

Embodying Truth (witnessing by act and word). Our evangelical emphasis on witnessing as the main reason for being at work can turn us into high-pressure fire hoses or into waterless drinking fountains. Scripture pictures our relationships with unbelievers with words such as gentleness, respect, opportunity, holding forth the word of life, full of grace, seasoned with salt. Our witness is to be a light-filled combination of actions and words. *Example: State worker with unbeliever pinned between wall and Coke machine. Example: Elder who had worked with a man 30 years and never even identified himself as a believer.*

Maintaining God’s Earth. Even though God will transform this earth, he still has purposes for it in its present form. Our work, under God, contributes the upkeep of the earth, making it possible for life to go on. Use analogy of space station. Maintaining it takes a great deal of work.

Many theologians believe that God will preserve something of our work in the new earth.