



Workplace Fishing

Stuff To Apply To Gain Lives For Christ's Kingdom

By Kurt von Schleicher

I feel that if you are a Christian worker with an earnest desire to reach others for Christ, you are to be commended! Hats off to you! Too many so called Christians are slothful.

Think about it though. What a blessing to be able to work for the Lord! And that desire and the longing to reach others with the Gospel in the business arena, didn't originate from you alone. The Holy Spirit has put that in your heart. He did that for a reason. You're on His mind; other people are on God's mind too. Employees matter! Thank you for looking into this type of personal evangelism and how it might pertain to you ...when hungry irreligious people show up at your place of business with questions. When so many are giving the Gospel a black eye at work, I at least want to thank you for praying hard and considering how you might approach this very important subject differently ...in a wise, tactful, ethical way that won't hurt the company or Kingdom that you represent.

Sadly, many Christians do not care much about witnessing (by life, word and deed) at work or anywhere for that matter. Us Christians don't witness, because we don't give a flip about people and where they will have their eternity. Sin! Many preachers don't witness because they are too busy and don't care ...unless it's about maintaining "their aquarium" or stealing other aquarium's fish for "their tank" so to speak. But God commanded us to follow Him as together we go fishing.

By necessity, I personally, at different times of my life, have been a tentmaker-fisherman, working side by side with different secular thinkers in the workplace. What a blessing! It's been a lot of fun too and most of the time it has been a great experience to learn how to make friends with unbelievers. I love to witness to open-sinners rather than closed ones. I pray for the closed ones. I love to learn what makes them tick, why they continue to look to their

array of odd gods to meet their needs (while all their deepest needs continue to go unmet ...long-term).

I believe that every pastor, preacher, evangelist really needs to work hard in a secular job for a time – maybe multiple times during their life – so they can be a down-to-earth kind of person and clearly understand how people out on the bricks if you will, sweat and think. It's too easy for us preachers to become irrelevant and lose our grasp of what it's really like out there. I like how one friend put it *"My pastor seems kind of like God to me. I don't see him all week long and I don't understand him on Sundays."* There needs to be more preacher-empathy, more relevance, more love and less exploiting of the business people "for God." I've known pastors who openly tell their staff that they will only set appointments with and spend time with the 'kings of the house' (meaning the heavy-hitter businessmen and donors that they made into church elders for selfish reasons). SIN!

If preachers only knew the value of a dollar—how hard-earned it was, and what that single working mother, or that blue-haired widow on social security, or the average nine-to-five tithing-commuter who is often surrounded by road-rage went through just to obtain their rent payment for the month. Dogs try to eat Christians who have convictions and principles out in a dog-eat-dog world! If pastors and para-church ministers could grasp and comprehend the sting of constant workplace mocking, unfairness, harassment and in some cases even persecution ...if they only knew what it took as church people toil outside the friendly church setting, surrounded by literal Christian-haters who seek to tear down what's left of any semblance of business ethics on the job, there would be more gratitude and far less fleecing of the flock for the sake of "Kingdom living." There'd be far less avarice, acquisitiveness, blatant word-faith, name-it-claim-it, blab-it-and-grab-it pressure, manipulation and gospel-greed. The Televangelist-scandals would evaporate, because the church would do a better job of stewarding and policing itself before the world would ever need to step in. If only every Christian and Christian leader had a supernatural, heart-felt concern (a spiritual burden) for the unbelieving coworkers out there in their horrific, ripped off plight (even for the ones who think they have it made in the shade)!

Child of God, the best kind of fishing starts at home on your knees ...but the prayers for these very valuable people in your work-a-day-world don't need to cease. They need to be offered up all day long, but not in some weird audio show or in a way that interferes with your own productivity at work. God has called you to be a great employee – the sharpest one, the best employee your employer employs. Therefore, please do pray that God will give you a sense of urgency, discernment, compassion and a strong desire to see the lost saved at work – no matter where you work! God cares about you and your friends at work! Don't hate, appreciate. Forgive the flaky underling or sinner-patron who

has let you down. It's Jesus in you they mock, so don't take it personal. There is an offense in the Gospel. If the sinner ever feels offended by you, just make sure it's because of Jesus in you ...living large and in charge of you as Lord, rather than due to anything else. Too many Christians offend sinners because they simply don't live like Jesus did. Understand that sinners sin because they are sinners. Admit it, if you were still unregenerate inside, you would be partying the night away and showing up late with a hangover too. That's how they try to assuage the pain, the hunger for significant, the emptiness and the feelings of guilt. That's how they try to fill that God-shaped void inside. Managers need to be objective and do the work of a manager, but we also need to love and feel for those who are bound for a real place called hell. Because they matter to God, they should matter to you!

If you pray, wisely live the life and practice sharing your testimony along with quoting some corresponding Scriptures in a non-religious way, you will only get better and better at seed planting and witnessing. Jesus was the friend of the workplace-sinner. Remember Matt, Pete and Zacheaus? Jesus took time to be with them, to listen, to build a friendship, a bridge of trust and credibility. Do like He did! Your career matters to God. Their career matters to Him. Sinners want to hear you speak their language (minus the expletives) without preachy vibrato, back-breath and churchy-inflections. Sinners want to hear you say no sometimes. God will use you. Step out in faith!

As you allow Jesus to be Lord and allow the Spirit to guide you, fishing will come so naturally and there is nothing more exciting in this whole world! Lean on Christ, why lean on evangelism formulas and form prayers? Your spirit-man will be edified big time and you will grow spiritually as you obey God in this kind of workplace ministry. And this kind of witnessing joy will of course spill over into your neighborhood, into your hobbies and wherever you go so that we will turn this world upside down for Jesus Christ!

The Bible commands, *"Let your light shine."* It says, *"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy!"* (Psalm 107:2 NKJV). It doesn't say strive or struggle to shine or, *"Make it shine."* It doesn't say *"Live the life but never open your mouth at work due to fear that you will burn the bridge that you and the Lord so carefully constructed together ...as you implemented God's principles on a daily basis, earning the right to be heard."* Sure there are a lot of hypocrites out there who open their mouth too much. That's all the more reason for us to be real. It's about consistently glowing brightly, not glaring painfully. We want to preach long and loud wordlessly and when necessary add words of truth to our witnessing effort. We want to be a blessing to all people, but at the same time, we do not live for the approval of people. We want to tell the truth in love ...at the right time, living to please the Lord alone. Your coworkers are to see the light, not

just a spark or some lame flicker of a candle! Earn your PHD (pray hard daily) so you'll have victory and power in your walk.

So, don't ever brag about your walk with Jesus. Don't witness for the bragging-rights with your Christian buds, that you got "another scalp" at work! Let the light of Christ's fiercely holy, agape love shine in your actions and attitude. Second, be righteously UPBEAT! We, of all people have every reason to be! Relax, be yourself. Be real in Jesus, not pushy. Be prayed-up, rejoicing in the Lord! Never nag or whine like a baby. Hold you head up high, but not in a haughty way. The poorest Christian on earth is blessed as a citizen of God's heavenly city. Sinners don't need to hear all your woes and complaints. If you're always thumping the Bible, handing out a tract, or preaching down to somebody about your bad decisions or ill-chosen lifestyle, you aren't going to win anybody to Jesus. Read what the Word says in Colossians 4:5-6. Ask the Lord to salt your speech and season it with His loving grace.

Third, never, never, never lag behind in your work or be a workaholic for God. If we are too busy for Jesus, we are too busy. Live a balanced life, taking time to steal away and hear from God. One of the greatest testimonies a Christian can give, is a job well done, without compromise. Chuck Swindoll always says, *"If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right."* It's a sin for a believer to do less than his best. Read Ephesians 6:5-6 and Colossians 3:23 thoroughly! Don't check to see if your boss is looking before you start working smart and hard. Fourth, don't sag like an empty bag. Don't grow unhappy in your job, even if all the people you work around do. It's no accident that God has you there for such a time as this. There are people there He wants to save and He is the only one who can do that! You and I save no one spiritually! Stay full of the joy of Jesus and work with a thankful spirit. There are a lot of decent people out of work and looking diligently, fearful about how they will provide for their families and keep their babies off the streets. When you prayerfully bathe yourself in the Word of God, enjoying a quiet time each morning, you'll be shining with the light of the Lord on your face while everyone else is bellyaching and griping.

I cannot reach the people you work with and you probably can't reach the people that I work with ...unless you come spend some time where I work ...and get to meet them. But, you can win them at your workplace! Trust Christ for a harvest. Ask Him to help you with bait that appeals so they bite, Ask Him for the proper boldness, zeal, passion and then to fill your nets. Give the people you witness to on break time an opportunity to pray with you in a place that won't make them feel uncomfortable (or get you in trouble). Always attempt to draw the net if it won't hinder your performance, or make an appointment to take them out to lunch for this (be careful to avoid all appearance of evil if it's a person of the opposite sex and your are married. You could double date and witness to both of them). Sinners for the most part

have an unwritten rule—I never go to church unless I have to. Yes, many of them are not so much interested in going to heaven or to a service to lift their hands and praise the Lord out loud. They just want to be able to cope and hack it in the weekly grind, so they can make it to the next weekend, but when you lead a coworker to the Lord, all of a sudden their desires inside change completely. They love that which they use to loathe and loathe that which they used to love – the vices and habits that would destroy them. They are transformed and all of a sudden, they want to go to church to praise the Lord. And you can dive over and get them. You can help them get saved and then after they are saved, you can help them grow ...by your loyal friendship, listening, godly actions and words of encouragement. Why aim merely to get them to church so the preacher can preach and hopefully get them saved, when you can enjoy the process (that might even take a while) of prayer, seed planting, listening, watering, caring and reaping?

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