

Ethical Relationships at the Workplace

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Workplace as a Community

Fundamental to our understanding of the workplace is the simple but essential assumption that the workplace is a Community. If it is indeed a Community, then the Community must be defined in FIVE dimensions:

1. The Culture – the rules of engagement and attitudes common to a body of people.
2. The Language – the manner in which communication occurs within a body of people.
3. The Conscience – the intrinsic issues that drive the laws and the principles of a body of people.
4. The History – the stories that form the foundation of the attitude and beliefs of a body of people.
5. The Ethics – the code of conduct, written or unwritten, that guide the behavior of a body of people.

The challenge of Christian behavior is in the clash of ethics between the Community of the Workplace and the Community of the Kingdom.

Kingdom in the Workplace

So the question needs to be clearly settled:

Do we know or understand the code of conduct set out by the King as we live in the Community of the Workplace? (Titus 2:11-12)

The lesson of saying “No” is the lesson of creating Kingdom-oriented boundaries that are sufficient and appropriate for Workplace needs. A boundary is a statement of limits for the protection of values. Kingdom Boundaries guard Kingdom Values and Kingdom Values guide Kingdom Ethics.

The success of Kingdom Ethics in the Community of the Workplace depends on THREE diagnostics of the heart:

1. What do I value?
2. Am I willing to say, “NO”?
3. Am I willing to stay with it?

Power in the Workplace

Case #1: Office Politics

The struggle for Power is typified in the arena of Workplace Politics.

Office Politics falls into three categories:

1. Misinformation – power over what people know;

2. Bullying – power over others through fear and intimidation;
3. Positioning – divisive power-play, competitive strategies, secret agendas.

Kingdom Response: Peace

Peace is the fundamental characteristic that identifies the Kingdom Christian in the dog-eat-dog politics of this world (Matthew 5:9).

If we are to formulate a Kingdom response to Office Politics, we must first respect the Kingdom Principles of Peace to produce a Result of Righteousness (James 3:18)

Establish the boundary that says, “You may choose to war against me, but I will choose the way of peace.” (Romans 12:17-21)

Peace does not mean Ignorance. We must be wise in the things of God, but shrewd to the ways of the world (Romans 16:19; Matthew 10:16)

In your ways at work, value peace, work for peace and be committed to peace. It is only in a focus on peace that politics may be resolved.

Workplace & Moral Conduct

Case #2: Resisting Moral Temptation

The test of Morality is not in the theory of the classroom but in the reality of relationships.

More than any other area, Morality in Relationships tests what I truly value, my willingness to say, “NO” in the face of temptation, and keep doing so.

Paul says that all other sin affects what’s outside us. Sin against the moral precepts of the body affects what’s inside us – closer to home.

Why is moral temptation so strong at the Workplace?

1. It is a Community in denial;
2. It often absorbs the greatest amount of hours of our waking life;
3. It makes intense relationships seem normal when the workplace has a general sense of intensity.
4. We often mistaken work-life balance with work-life separation, and separation creates alienation between work and life.

How do I hold to my standards of Kingdom ethics in work relationships?

1. Ensure that you create strong social and emotional boundaries;
2. Strengthen your relationship of value;
3. Be honest with your temptations with a person to whom you’re spiritually accountable;
4. If necessary, LEAVE.

Workplace Righteousness

Case#: Doing Right

Understand that Righteousness is not always a construct of Workplace Ethics.

(Diagram: Legal, Moral, Ethical constructs are not mutually exclusive or inclusive)

Righteousness is doing right in God's eyes regardless of the consequences. The difficult of living Righteously is not as much in understanding righteousness but in learning how to stand up under the consequences of righteous living.

Three principles of righteous living:

Principle 1: Righteousness is about how we live it, not about judging others (Micah 6:8)

Principle 2: The rewards of Righteousness are not necessarily of the Workplace, but they are certain (Psalm 37:25; 1 Peter 3:12)

Principle 3: Righteousness is impossible without the crucifixion of worldly desires (1 Peter 2:24)

What are the principles of Ethical Relationships?

- Live in Peace with all
- Value God above all
- Choose Righteousness at all times