

Before the Lesson

Read the Scriptures and overview below before your LIFE Group meets next week.

Scripture passages: Colossians 3:22-4:1, 4:2-3, 17-18, 25-29, and Philippians 2:3-4, 8

Work really is all about two things: *Responsibilities and Relationships*. Believe it or not, the way we handle our work relationships determines how productive we will be. One of the greatest evidences of an authentic relationship with Jesus Christ is one's ability to properly maintain relationships and deal with multiple types of personalities in a godly way. This learning process begins at church, moves to the home, and should naturally flow into work.

But what about the jerks at work? How are we to handle them? Do we have to treat them with love, kindness, gentleness, and patience when they become unruly and downright offensive? Yes, in all cases (even with the jerks at work), the *Golden Rule* still applies ... You are to *do unto others as you would have them do unto you*.

So just as in the boardroom you have an agenda, our agenda this week will be a four-step plan that will help you better handle the battlefield and tame (or maintain) those stressful relationships with the not-so-fun jerks at work.

Group Discussion

- Take a few minutes and discuss the four-step action plan Pastor McKinley presented in his message and the passages you read in preparation for your group discussion. Notice that each step is something for you to do, not something for others to do.
 - Respect the authority over you
 - Resolve the hostility within you
 - Reflect humility to those around you
 - Represent joy in everything you do
- This type of plan calls for us to really make some changes from the inside out. From the time of our conversion until the day we reach Heaven, God is working in us to conform us to the likeness of His Son, Jesus. What is the first thing He does for believers? (See Ezekiel 36:26.)
- How does (or should) a “new spirit and heart” handle authority, hostility, and humility?
- Look up the following verses and discuss the benefits we receive the moment we are saved: 2 Peter 1:3, John 5:24, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 6:18, 23, John 10:10
- Read Romans 8:28-30. Remembering that God is over all things (Colossians 1:15-18), relate the Romans passage with conflicts that arise at work. Could God be using the “jerks at work” to conform you and glorify you? How does this understanding affect your attitude about your on-the-job conflicts?

- Do you ever get frustrated with yourself over your tendency to act in the flesh rather than the spirit? Paul wrote about this internal battle in Romans 7:15-21. Although we are no longer enslaved to sin, we are inhabitants of fleshly bodies awaiting our final deliverance to our eternal home in Heaven. Talk through some action steps you can take every morning to focus on walking in the Spirit rather than defaulting in the flesh.
- Can you share an example of a time when you were faced with a boss who was undeserving of your respect but received it because of your Christ-like example? Did it change his/her attitude or actions toward you?
- What helps you when you feel hostile or angry? Talk about some healthy ways to work through anger. (This could be anger on the job, at home, in the car, etc.)
- Read Philippians 2:3-8 and Romans 12:16-21. Discuss Christ's example of humility and the true marks of a Christian in the Romans passage. Give real-life examples of how you can apply these principles to your life.
- Office gossip can play a huge role in making the battlefield a full-blown "war zone." Thinking about the passages in the previous question, what do the Scriptures tell us about this kind of artillery? How can you be a catalyst for "good" and not "evil" in your workplace? (See Romans 12:21.)
- Do you prefer to work with others who grumble and complain or with those who whistle while they work? Read Philippians 2:14-16. What does it say about grumbling? Read Philippians 4:4. When does it say we are to rejoice?

Further Study

Take time this week to read the story of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37 and 39-46, and reflect on these questions:

- Joseph had every reason to be angry with his brothers, Potiphar's wife, the cupbearer, etc. Yet throughout this story, he does not show hostility toward them. What motivated Joseph to accept his unfavorable circumstances rather than become angry and bitter?
- Joseph went from being the favored son to a slave and prisoner. He had to learn how to submit to authority and find joy and satisfaction in his lowly position. How did he make such a change?
- Every job Joseph was given, he did to the best of his ability and without complaint. What were the results of his diligent perseverance?
- What other lessons do you learn from Joseph that you can apply to your job?