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By Robert J. Tamasy

BEING READY ALWAYS TO GIVE AN ANSWER

“Why do you go to work?” There are many answers to this question. One reason, obviously, is to earn a living. Another, if you are fortunate enough, is to engage in a profession or craft that you enjoy and find rewarding. Our work can benefit others through the products and services we can provide. For some, work serves as an activity that fills the time between weekends.

We could think of other reasons for going to work. But how often do we start a workday with the attitude that we are there to represent Jesus Christ – even if we are not employed by a church, a non-profit Christian organization, or even work for a company owned by followers of Jesus?

This reason might not always be in the forefront of our minds, but it should be. *Colossians 3:23 states, “Whatever you do, do your work as for the Lord...”* We can demonstrate this by the diligence and quality with which we perform our jobs. But we also should recognize that through our work we can have opportunities to encounter people who might want to know more about Him. So, we need to be prepared.

My friend, Tom, is a general manager for a manufacturing company. Not long ago an important client from another country came for a business visit. He saw Tom distributing some tickets to workers at the plant and asked, “What is that?” Upon learning the tickets were for an event at Tom’s church, where a speaker would be talking about his faith in Jesus Christ, the client was filled with questions.

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One by one, Tom responded to the guest's questions with sensitivity and kindness. The client explained his wife was a follower of Christ, but in his home country most people embrace a different religion. As Tom provided answers, the visitor frequently expressed amazement, commenting, "No one ever told me anything like that!" or, "I never heard it explained that way." That led to more conversations over the following days.

When Tom told me this story, he admitted he had not been expecting this opportunity to talk about his faith in Jesus. But it was clear he understood his responsibility not only to serve his company and clients to the best of his ability, but also to serve and represent the Lord. He was following *2 Timothy 2:15, which instructs, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."* Tom also was applying two key principles for communicating one's faith to others:

Always be ready to respond. Opportunities to speak with others about Jesus Christ often come in surprising ways. So it helps to expect the unexpected. *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).*

Seek wisdom for responding properly. There is no "cookie-cutter" approach to personal evangelism. It requires wisdom – and trusting in God's direction – in what to say, and how to say it appropriately – to fit the specific situation. *"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone" (Colossians 4:5-6).*

© 2018. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Tufting Legacies*; coauthored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's website is www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com, and his biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

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Reflection/Discussion Question

1. Why do you go to work?
2. What do you think about the idea of consciously going to work with the recognition that one of our responsibilities is to serve and represent Jesus Christ?
3. How can we best “be ready” or “always be prepared” to tell others about what we believe when the opportunity presents itself?
4. One of the last things Jesus said to His followers was that they were to “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). How has the expansion of global commerce served to enhance our ability to carry out this “commission”?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Ecclesiastes 9:10; Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 3:17, 24; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 2:12

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