

週一嗎哪 午間查經分享祈禱會

MONDAY MANNA
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THE MINEFIELD OF MEDIOCRITY By Robert J. Tamasy

How do you feel when a server in a restaurant is friendly, seems genuinely interested in you, and is prompt in attending to your needs? Or a sales rep who demonstrates eagerness is doing more than earning a commission – who goes the extra mile whenever a problem arises that requires quick resolution? For one thing, you might feel shocked or surprised, because often people seem determined to put forth only minimal effort in performing their jobs.

Sadly, many people assume an attitude of “I like to get paid, but I hate to work.” Perhaps this is one reason that following the COVID-19 lockdowns, many employers struggled to find enough workers to fill positions while the marketplace began to return to a semblance of normalcy.

Of course, the pandemic did not spawn workplace complacency. “Doing just enough to get by” has long been a philosophy for many people. Yet another reason for substandard work and service could be the reluctance of some to try their very best, no matter what they are asked to do. As leadership consultant Tim Kight says, “The pursuit of mediocrity is rarely intentional, but it is always successful.”

I am grateful for the people who, early in my working career, set examples for pursuing excellence in their work. Theirs was an approach of, “If something is worth doing, it is worth doing well.” This mindset has inspired me to approach my own work in similar ways, choosing to do the best I possibly could rather than settling for something less. I might not have always succeeded, but that has been my goal.

When we think about it, if we are disciples of Jesus Christ, a commitment to workplace excellence is one of the most effective and visible ways of being a “witness” for Him. Toward the conclusion of His earthly ministry, He said, “you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The question was, how should they do this?

Jesus gave an answer while telling His followers about the importance of being “salt and light” to the world around them. He said, “...Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:13-16). When people around us observe our strong dedication to doing our work well, with enthusiasm and joy – even when the work becomes difficult and challenging – that can set us apart from people who lack such commitment.

Ultimately, we are performing for an “audience of One,” serving God with sincerity and integrity, even when no one is watching. The apostle Paul, addressing a culture in which many

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people had become bondservants to others, required to carry out mundane and even demeaning duties, gave this admonition:

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:22-24).

In a world in which so many people see little value in working with excellence, we can easily stand out in the crowd, “blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15).

© 2022. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A. Stoddard. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a recent example when you observed someone doing work “above the call of duty,” carrying out their responsibilities in such a way that you could not help but notice and appreciate? How did you respond?
2. Do you agree with the statement, “The pursuit of mediocrity is rarely intentional, but it is always successful”? Explain your answer.
3. How would you rate your own commitment to excellence in your work? Why do you think the path toward mediocrity is followed by so many? Do you think this has become more prevalent in recent years? Why or why not?
4. If you take seriously the admonition from Colossians 3:24, “it is the Lord Christ you are serving,” what difference could – or should – that make in how you approach the work you are assigned to perform each day?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 4:18, 10:4, 12:24, 14:23, 18:9, 22:29, 24:30-34; 1 Peter 3:15-17

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