

A PERSONAL STORY OF TRANSFORMATION By Marty Hardell

Years ago, I worked with a professional engineer I will call Jim – a very religious man known for his stoic, professional demeanor. Initially wary of the beliefs of colleagues from different denominations, Jim found himself drawn into a discipleship relationship that would change his life forever.

Engaging in weekly lunchtime discussions with Jim, centered around the Bible, his heart softened, his faith deepened, and his perspective shifted. What began as cautious exploration blossomed into a vibrant journey of faith – marked by joy, growth, and a newfound passion for Christ. One day, as we gathered for our lunchtime study, the serious, ever-professional Jim exclaimed with childlike enthusiasm, "I think I'm becoming a Jesus freak!" In that moment, I saw Luke 24:45 come to life: "Then He [Jesus] opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures."

The Distraction of Work. When we step into the office or open our laptops, our primary focus often revolves around navigating the rapid currents of our business and professional lives. But during the demands of our work, how can we effectively steward the time entrusted to us by our companies or clients, while also fulfilling our biblical calling to be disciplinarians?

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus Christ lays out the ultimate mission, His Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." This command is not just for pastors or missionaries; it is for every follower of Christ, including those of us in the workplace.

The Power of Discipleship. Making disciples involves more than just communicating the Gospel; it is about guiding others in their journey of faith and teaching them to follow Jesus in every aspect of life. In the workplace, where success is often quantified by metrics and milestones, discipleship presents a different paradigm – one rooted in relationships, growth, and a higher calling.

Picture a workplace where leaders do not just manage tasks but invest in people; where colleagues do not just vie for position but collaborate; and where success is not measured solely by individual achievements but by the collective transformation of a community committed to growth.

Navigating Barriers with Grace. While the call to discipleship is clear, implementing it in the workplace can be daunting. Fears of overstepping boundaries and cultural sensitivities can pose challenges. Yet there is hope in the belief that where God calls, He equips. It starts with humility – willingness to learn, adapt, and grow. It involves environments where authenticity is prized, vulnerability welcomed, and relationships prioritized.

Initiating a Discipleship Relationship. Initiating a discipleship relationship in the workplace requires a simple act of faith – a gesture of friendship and genuine care. It may start with an invitation to grab coffee or lunch, an offer to pray together, or a shared interest in studying Scripture. Discipleship isn't about having all the answers but about walking alongside one

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another in faith, learning, and growing together. We see this summed up in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

© 2024. Marty Hardell is the Principal Advisor at Pinpoint Strategic Solutions. He specializes in transforming businesses into more scalable, profitable entities through tailored strategies, systems, and processes, optimizing teams by uncovering their Working Genius. Marty co-leads the Edmond North CBMC C3 Team.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Are you familiar with Jesus' Great Commission, as stated in Matthew 28:19-20? If so, how do you think it relates to the demands and stresses of today's marketplace? Or do you think it has relevance only to settings outside the working environment? Explain your answer.
2. What are some of the challenges in trying to communicate and discuss what the Bible teaches, especially in a workplace setting?
3. Have you ever seen a colleague or coworker experience true spiritual transformation through someone who is devoted to following Jesus Christ? Perhaps you have experienced this yourself. What difference has it made for that individual – or for you personally?
4. How is it possible to cultivate discipleship relationships in the workplace, while continuing to demonstrate excellence in our work and not overstepping boundaries or violating cultural sensitivities?

Challenge For This Week

Goals and objectives are important. So are profits and the company's bottom line. We need to earn a living. Ultimately, however, it is not solely about the tasks we accomplish or the titles we hold, but the lives we influence – the eternal impact we have for Jesus Christ.

As leaders, we should seriously consider the transformative power of workplace discipleship. Over the coming week, consider how you can start investing in the lives of those around you, helping them to discover their God-given potential and purpose. Pray that God will guide you to teachable people so you can assist them in their journey to a deeper, abiding relationship with Jesus Christ.

NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:
1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 4:8-9; Colossians 3:22-24

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