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COUNSELING CHRISTIANS ON WORKPLACE CHALLENGES TO THEIR FAITH

The modern workplace can be a difficult environment for Christians. There are the age-old problems of temptation, peer pressure, and the desire to fit in, but now you can add anti-Christian bias, political correctness, and even persecution to the list of challenges Christians sometimes face at work. In recent years, the number of believers who have approached me for counseling concerning faith-related dilemmas at work has increased markedly. Here are just a few of the problems Christians have brought to me:

- Being required to remove framed Bible verses from office walls
- Having their job security threatened for refusing to go along with unethical practices
- Being lied to by coworkers, supervisors, and managers
- Being cheated by coworkers
- Being pressured to file false reports to make a manager's performance look better
- Being pressured to overlook blatant safety and health violations
- Being pressured to overcharge clients for work on their accounts

David L. Goetsch, Ed.D.



Clearly, the workplace can be a stormy sea for Christians to navigate. Regardless of the specifics surrounding the problems they are dealing with, Christian brothers and sisters who approach me for help are all struggling with the same dilemma: How can I excel at work without compromising my Christian principles? Answering this question is why I wrote my latest book, *Christians on the Job: Winning at Work without Compromising Your Faith* (Salem Books, an imprint of Regnery Publishing, 2019).

In counseling Christians who are facing workplace challenges to their principles, I always begin by making an important point: Your faith is going to be challenged in the workplace—count on it and do not be surprised when it happens. There was a time when Christian values were the norm in society and, in turn, the workplace. However, over the years there has been a steady erosion of those values. Secular humanism and moral relativism are now in the ascendency. They are fast becoming the norm in society and, in turn, the workplace; a pattern that is reinforced by the repressive demands of political correctness. Freedom of religion is morphing into freedom from religion or, at least, from the Christian religion... a fact that can make life difficult for Christians on the job.

Having made the point that their faith will be challenged in today's politically-correct workplace, I am quick to make a second and even more important point: Even in today's secular humanistic work environment, Christians can still excel without compromising their faith. Further, they can do this in ways that honor God. The key is to learn to effectively and consistently apply the lesson Christ taught the Apostles in Matthew 10:16. In this verse, Christ is sending His Apostles out into the world to spread the Gospel. Knowing they will be like sheep among wolves, He admonishes them to be both wise and innocent. Christ's advice to the Apostles is also good advice for Christians who work among people who sometimes behave like wolves.

I advise Christian brothers and sisters who are facing faith-related challenges at work to apply what I call the "First-Response Model" (FRM). The FRM consists of five specific steps Christians can take when their faith is challenged at work:

- **Step 1: Refuse to respond to faith-related challenges out of anger, fear or frustration.** Not only is it important for believers to say "no" to sin in the

workplace, but it is also imperative to do so in a Christlike manner. We lose twice if we become like those who tempt, reject or persecute us.

- **Step 2: Pray for guidance.** Believers should never confront faith-related trials without enlisting the help of God. Lay workplace dilemmas at the feet of Christ and ask Him what He would have you do. No matter how hopeless believers feel in these situations, they need to be reminded that all things are possible with God.
- **Step 3: Seek guidance in Scripture.** There is no situation believers will face at work that is not spoken to in Scripture. The Bible provides God's guidance concerning how His children should face adversity and solve problems, as well as how they can honor Him in doing so. Guiding believers who seek help to the right verses in Scripture and assisting them in understanding how these verses apply to their specific situations is a must.
- **Step 4: Seek the wise counsel of fellow believers.** The Bible is clear in its admonition that Christians are to seek the wise counsel of godly men and women. One of the benefits of being a member of the family of God is that believers have many brothers and sisters in Christ who may have faced dilemmas similar to the ones they are facing.

I advise Christians who approach me for help to seek out fellow believers and ask for their wise counsel concerning the challenges they are facing at work. In fact, whenever possible, I guide them to fellow believers who might be able to help.

- **Step 5: Translate scriptural guidance and wise counsel into practical action that is biblically-sound and workplace appropriate.** This is where Matthew 10:16 comes into play and where believers need the most help. How to translate scriptural guidance and wise counsel into practical, effective action will not always be obvious. Teaching this step to believers requires a great deal of content. This is why I wrote *Christians on the Job: Winning at Work without Compromising Your Faith*. It presents a 12-step plan for helping believers learn how to apply this fifth and critical step in the FRM. +



David L. Goetsch, Ed.D., is a professor of business who has maintained an active Christian counseling ministry for more than 30 years. He is the author of the new book, *Christians on the Job: Winning at Work without Compromising Your Faith*.

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