

Learning from the Master

By David Preuss



But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

Tom Dits & Sons is an exterior painting company that has serviced northern Indiana for over 30 years. The owner is a high school teacher and in the summers he employs small crews of his current and former students, enabling young men to not only get on their feet after high school with some spending money but giving them an opportunity to build confidence and to learn valuable leadership and teamwork skills. Starting as a high school sophomore, I have been blessed to work for him for the past seven years.

Knowing that a strong team dynamic is essential to quality service, Tom often emphasizes having positive energy on the crew. Each morning we start with a prayer, thanking God for giving us able bodies and minds to create beauty through our work to the glory of his name. We believe in

ourselves because we believe in both God and our boss.

One blessing of working with Tom is that he cares deeply for each of us. When talking with customers Tom often refers to his workers as his sons. At the same time, we consider him to be another father. We look to emulate the father, as much as he works to train the sons.

The crew runs well because of the strong respect we have for one another. When mistakes are made, as they are bound to with young workers during the course of the summer, we do not cast blame, belittle, or snap at each other. Instead, we often share a laugh and set to remedy the mistakes together as a crew. Tom inspires us to encourage rather than tear down.

He also mentors flexibility. When a worker has nonwork events such as a family vacation, summer classes, or even second jobs, Tom understands

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INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

Navigating the Gray Areas

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2)

Living as Christ takes courage, obedience, and humility. Jesus surrendered all in response to the call of the Father. The apostles did as well. We can expect no less.

Seeking God's will isn't about obtaining a detailed plan. God responds to what is happening around us. He doesn't always operate in a straight line.

Often, we're afraid of making a wrong turn, a bad choice, and being left out, missing the boat. It's more about trusting God and responding to the choices in front of us.



There's a lot of free will going on that we can't control. There's a lot happening behind the scenes we're not aware of. Remember God is bigger than our jobs, bigger than our worries, and bigger than our challenges.

Finding God's will is more about learning what God desires and pursuing that. If we do, our decisions are going to line up with his plans. And, we can trust the outcome to him

From the Working for Our Father Series

December Reflections: Pg 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

A Better Plan

By Danica Kerr

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

I’m someone who likes to plan, needs to plan. Plans give me comfort and a sense of control. During college, I planned to get married, get my masters degree in teaching, find my dream job, and start growing a family.

I was on track with my plans until my fiancé and I broke up. Looking back, what bothered me most was that it was not according to my plan. So instead I threw myself into my career plans.

I completed my masters program and continued with my job hunt in high spirits and, upon reflection, a bit of arrogance. Originally, I was picky about the schools I looked into for

teaching positions, but weeks went by without any follow ups. I applied to over 30 positions and only received two interviews—neither of which I enjoyed nor received an offer.

For months I scrolled through the same list of positions, some that were hours from my home, and stopped at the posting for Lakes International Language Academy. I felt an odd urge to apply, despite the request for second language experience, so I did. A couple days later I received a call for an interview. Despite having arrived at the wrong campus, running in flustered and late, I felt the interview had gone well. I left with a smile, thinking that even if I didn’t receive an offer, I was positively affected by the school and was thankful for the opportunity to share my passion with them.

They next day they offered me a job and I accepted it immediately. God has taught me time and time again that his plans are better than mine. He led me to my dream job, my wonderful husband, and our sweet baby girl. I wouldn’t have wanted God to have followed my plan.

Instead he continues to bless me in ways I never would have dreamed possible.

Danica Kerr lives in Saint Paul, MN, with her husband, Max, and 1-year-old daughter. She is a math teacher at Lakes International Language Academy and can be reached at max.danica.kerr@gmail.com

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for not listening to my plans, but leading me toward your own beautiful and perfect plans for my life.

REFLECT

Think back to a time when things didn’t go according to your plans. How was God’s plan better?

DISCUSS

Would you rather serve a God whose plans always line up with your plans, or who promises to work all things for your good?

WORKLIGHT™

Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. MATTHEW 5:16

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WORKLIGHT.ORG/SUPPORT-US/

- ▶ Using the power of personal stories of the Gospel being lived
- ▶ Providing practical, adaptable and on-demand resources
- ▶ Fostering small groups across traditions, occupations and positions

REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

Leading in Peace

By Zig Mazanowski

For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you and understanding will guard you. Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men whose words are perverse. (Proverbs 2:10-12)

Being a plant manager, I had a major goal to remain a non-union company. Having been through a winning election—I understood that the foreman plays an important role in keeping the peace and employees in the plant happy.

When people trust their foreman and believe things are done fairly at work, they will usually side with the company versus looking for a union. We had one foreman who did not work

this way. Although he was getting the work done, many employees brought forward concerns about how he was deceitful and played favorites. We talked to him about his behavior, but to no avail. Ultimately, we made the tough decision to let him go.

The foreman asked if he could talk with me. During our discussion he broke down and let me know that he feared that his wife would leave him for getting fired. I told him to bring his wife to the plant and that I would explain to her that he was a good worker and would fit better in a traditional environment. I would also make sure they both knew that I would give him a good recommendation.

Later that evening, he came back with his wife, we talked and prayed together for peace and finding a new job quickly. When they left they were seemingly at peace with the situation. I was happy that they accepted my invitation.

bed, I would finish grading papers and start responding to the never-ending list of emails. I was not upset, I did not have energy for that. I was just drained. Why would God let this happen? What happened to working for the good of those who love him?

I received an email from a colleague sharing with the whole staff that he would be starting a virtual prayer group for anyone interested. Our first group was over 30 people. We began with prayer requests. It wasn't long before half of us were crying. People requested prayers for sick family members, students who were struggling with mental health, and friends out of a job. But there were also prayers of gratitude for families spending more time together, successful surgeries and recoveries, and employment. My tears were still flowing, but out of pure thankfulness.

Every week I have found something more to be thankful for—more time at home with my daughter and

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PRAY

Lord, continually guide me through tough decisions and challenges. Help me be a light to others in the workplace.

REFLECT

Are there coworkers that you aren't particularly fond of or have bad attributes? How can you be a light to them in today's workplace?

DISCUSS

When making a tough decision that affects someone else, what steps can you take to bring Christ into the situation?

husband, more money without the expense of daycare, technology to stay connected. I had thought that God was being cruel and unfair because of my circumstances. I hadn't realized how hard he was working for me despite my circumstances.

PRAY

Lord, I thank and praise you for all of the blessings you pour out on me. Give me the wisdom to see the good in every situation.

REFLECT

Consider a time when things didn't necessarily go how you expected. Was your gut reaction to place blame on God or praise him?

DISCUSS

What are some things going on in your life that are challenging? How is God blessing you through those challenges?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Give Thanks

By Danica Kerr

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

I tentatively approached our school building—school was in session, but the parking lot was empty. I walked through the deserted hallways to my classroom where I saw papers on my desk, student work on the white boards in the back of the room, and on the front white board, the date—March 13, 2020.

When COVID-19 hit, my job as a teacher changed drastically. I found myself spending hours during the morning and afternoon taking videos of my lessons and reaching out to unresponsive students. After putting my daughter to

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

Making A Tough Decision

By Zig Mazanowski

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (James 1:5-6)

Being a new plant manager, I was surprised when a fire truck pulled up in the plant parking lot. I hadn't been informed of why they were there or what might be going on. I soon found out. I came into the plant and told all the employees to leave the plant safely, but promptly, because of a bomb threat that had been called into the fire department.

About an hour and a half later the "all clear" was announced and everybody came back into the plant. I was told

that this happened about once or twice a month. In these occurrences a bomb was never found. In fact, we have plant security guards at the gates as a matter of course. We learned and understood that it was likely an employee making the call.

Shortly after, I made a tough decision on what we would do next. I called the fire department and told them that we refused to be continuously unhinged and harassed by this caller. I explained that the firefighters did not need to come back if coming under those circumstances.

A week or two later, the fire department came back, and again under the same circumstances—a bomb threat. This time we refused entrance. They made it clear to me that if anything were to happen it would be my responsibility. I thanked them for their service, and told them they weren't needed that day.

After the first bomb threat occurred on my watch and I learned that it was a regular occurrence, we communicated to the plant that we would no longer be evacuating when a

bomb threat was made. We explained to everyone that whoever was doing this was jeopardizing the well-being of our entire work community, not just management. After that we never received another bomb threat.

PRAY

Father, we are only human, but you are the Almighty, we trust in you! Continue to guide and help us navigate through the challenges that this earthly world brings on.

REFLECT

Think of a time where you had to make a hard decision at work. How did you handle it? Did you invite the Lord into the decision process?

DISCUSS

How can I step up in my workplace to lead a good example to those around me? What opportunities might there be to create a more positive workplace?

*She will give birth to a son,
and you are to give him
the name*

*Jesus,
because he will save
his people from
their sins.*

Matthew 1:21



Uniting All Things in Christ

By David Mazanowski

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14)

Fifteen years ago, Tim and I were introduced and encouraged to work together. He was a property manager responsible for homeowner associations and I owned a commercial landscaping business. Tim was less than enthusiastic about our introduction, but gave it a try. That was when our business relationship was born.

A year later Tim opened up his own company and business exploded for both of us. We were joined at the hip. The growth was intoxicating and a day didn't go by that we didn't talk several times, attend sales presentations, play golf, and meet for breakfast and lunch. The relationship became even more intense as we decided to open up a new market in Naples, FL.

It was a huge undertaking and it exposed both of our weaknesses personally and in our work. The exhilaration soon wore off. We both contributed to customer loss, and the financial strain was high and taking a big toll on my company's financial stability. Unbeknownst to Tim, I decided to systematically end our business relationship, trying to mitigate the damage over a year or two. Shocked alert, things ended poorly and our business and personal relationship faded into the Florida sunset.

Six months ago, Tim was a distant memory, when out of nowhere, I got a call from him. I saw the caller ID and thought to myself, “now that is a person I never want to talk to again.” I let the call go to voicemail with no intention of retrieving it, but I couldn't shake the Holy Spirit saying “listen to the message.” I eventually gave in and listened to the message. I was immediately struck by Tim's voice. It's Tim, but he sounds different. He shares that Jesus has opened his eyes and he is all in with Jesus. Deeply moved, I call Tim and share my excitement that he has given his life to Jesus and we arrange a breakfast meeting.

When we met we shared all God is doing with us and our lives. Our relationship was instantly restored in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. Tim joined our challenge group and is a believer in the mission of WorkLight. Since joining, his enthusiasm, transparency and drive to build God's kingdom has been contagious to our group. All things are made new in Christ.

My experience with Tim has opened me to actively seeking to restore relationships through forgiveness. He took the first step by humbly calling me and seeking to reconcile our relationship. He was and is Christ to me showing me the power of forgiveness. The act of seeking to reconcile is powerful and the Holy Spirit will always be present when we forgive one another.

The night before Jesus died, he prayed that we would all be one with him and the Father. It must have been important. This miraculous unity has the power to make the believers. We have a duty as brothers and sisters in Christ to preserve our unity and actively restore relationships when they get sideways so the world may know that Jesus is the true king of the world.

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Learning From the Master*

these commitments and allows for time off, no questions asked. Meanwhile, the rest of the crew picks up slack for the missing member.

Sacrifice is another common theme at the worksite. Our boss goes out of his way to bring us much-needed ice water in large 5-gallon jugs, morning coffee, sandwiches, or donuts to boost morale and encourage us. In a similar way, we buy each other coffee, spot each other money if someone forgets a lunch, or take on a harder job at work; knowing that the guys will have our back to do the same in the future. Tom's example helps us to believe in one another and sacrificial support.

A great example of the camaraderie and respect we have for one another is a dinner party that Tom throws every year. He cooks up a feast of meats, cheeses, breads, and assorted sides. We spend the evening laughing, telling stories, singing, wrestling in the grass, and enjoying each other's company.

Our favorite part of the evening is toasting. We honor each other with toasts, saluting our friendship, hard work, fellowship, love, and respect. Each man receives honor and honors others multiple times.

At the end of this annual event, it is hard to tell whether our stomachs or our hearts are more full. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to share in the hard work and sacrificial love required to do a collective job well, as part of a brotherly crew. Tom has mentored deep care, respect, positivity, and sacrifice which will be mirrored in my own work long after my painting days have ended.

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Be Nice

By Becki Lonquist

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

In life we're not always sure if our actions and words really make a difference in the lives of those around us. I was blessed to experience the light of someone who made a great impact in my life and on many others.

I had just left my first job out of college and decided to move back to my home state. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, but I wanted a change of pace. I started applying for random jobs, until I could figure out what I wanted. I interviewed for a position at a bank. It wasn't what I wanted long-term, but the hiring manager completely sold the organization. I left surprised, excited and thinking, "Wow, I think this could be a great place to work."

I got the job and that hiring manager became my boss, my friend, role model, and mentor. My desk was outside his office and I was able to listen in on the conversations he had with customers and colleagues. That was where the magic happened. He was approachable and treated people equally (even people I knew he didn't like). Customers of all ages,

backgrounds and races came in and chatted with him. He would often say he didn't know why people liked him so much, but I knew (I think he did too). He listened, and was genuinely respectful and concerned. He was "nice."

We had one customer who came in regularly asking for money or help with an overdrawn account. My boss would take the time to listen and talk with the customer, and by the end of the conversation, I was shocked, he actually gave his own money or offered help. He had a life motto and he truly lived by it, "be nice."

I was young when I started this new "banking career," so having a mentor like this was important and helpful for my professional and personal development and growth. He taught me a lot and helped me through many of my own struggles. An ongoing struggle for me was continuing work that didn't align with my degree.

I would regularly ask him for advice and tell him about how I didn't feel fulfilled. He would listen, ask me questions, and talk me through the struggle. One of the best pieces of advice he gave me was encouraging me to work hard, be nice and be the best at whatever position I was in, regardless of position or level in the organization. It was good advice.

Eventually, I was offered another role with the bank, and though I had a new manager, we made sure to check-in.

Shortly after starting the new position, one of my coworkers, who was a close friend of my mentor, informed me that he (my mentor) had been diagnosed with colon cancer. It was difficult to accept and I had a lot of faith and hope that he would pull through.

He fought cancer hard and updated friends and family through CaringBridge. I found out more about him, and realized that he was an incredible writer and continually gave advice to others and told everyone to "be nice." The next year he passed away on Christmas Eve.

After he died, an outpouring of people at work spoke about him and how he positively impacted their lives. Even colleagues hired after he took his leave of absence, knew of him and his wonderful leadership and his motto, "be nice." The bank began an internal "Be Nice" movement in his memory that focused on creating a workplace culture around kindness and doing good.

His words are also embedded in all of those whose lives he touched. He helped me to see that we can all make an impact in the workplace and in the lives of those around us. We can be a light to others and we can "be nice."

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NEWS

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP & OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

There is an array of organizations that seek, in some way, shape or form, to build God's Kingdom in the workplace, WorkLight being one of them. As we look into this ecosystem of workplace ministries and organizations, it is amazing to get a glimpse of how God is using us in relation to one another—even if we don't recognize it.

As WorkLight moves toward expanding our mission, living out our vision, and reaching out to the younger generations of today's workforce, we have identified that strategic partnerships will be essential to that growth. WorkLight leaders have been identifying and meeting with various organizations that are similar to our own, but also unique in their offerings to Christians and building the Kingdom of God. There have also been efforts to identify and establish possible employers or employee resource groups to work with and begin working toward providing customizable solutions to support these organizations.

Partnerships and these relationships can look very different from one another. For one group we may provide resources to start a small group or Working for Our Father event, for another it might look like us supplying a business with story resources, like The Flame or Spark reflections.

We can feel the Holy Spirit moving! Please pray for WorkLight and that God guides us and brings us into the right relationship with other organizations. If you know of any organization that WorkLight should consider talking to, please reach out to ignite@worklight.org.

BE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST: NEXT STEPS

1. Visit worklight.org and sign up to receive our free encouraging emails and valuable newsletter.
2. Check out our Small Group page to learn about, join, or even start, a small group in your community.
3. Attend an event or workshop near you or join one online.
4. Customize a solution for your community. Contact us at ignite@worklight.org to learn more about how to easily adapt our offerings for you and your team.

Visit us online at WORKLIGHT.ORG/START-SOMETHING

This graphic is an example of next steps WorkLight has created for possible partners and employers.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4)

What a year 2020 has been. The phrase "2020" is often used to describe perfect vision, and perhaps this year has made it more clear than ever that our truth, hope, and salvation lie in Christ alone. The epistle of James provides a timeless reminder to pray

for joy in facing trials with faith and perseverance. Come Holy Spirit!

Our God is an awesome God, and he has used both adversity and opportunity to transform Christians in Commerce to WorkLight over the past year. Coronavirus pushed staff to bring elements of our ministry online as fast as possible in the form of Working for Our Father and WorkLight StoryNights. Protests and politics called us to pray together on national calls and in small groups across the country—and even around the world. Throughout and in between so many blessings and challenges we seek to answer the call to serve the Lord with joy.

This newsletter might be the first you've heard of WorkLight or perhaps you were on the first Challenge Weekend in 1983. You might be an occasional reader in Asia or a Chapter President here in the USA. Whether you are just getting to know us or you are one of the generous donors who makes this work possible—we give thanks to God that you are a part of this movement of the Spirit.

May the good Lord be with you in this final month of our first year together as WorkLight. Merry Christmas! Glory!

God bless,
Wesley Farrow

2020

DECEMBER

*"I have been crucified
with Christ and I no
longer live, but Christ
lives in me."*

Galatians 2:20

THE FLAME

CHRISTIANS IN COMMERCE PRAYER

Father,
You are my Lord and Creator.
You entrust me with a place of stewardship in your creation.
Fill me with your Holy Spirit:
That he may teach me to pray and live in Christ and as Christ;
That he may teach me love for family, friends and all people.
A love that is selfless, humble, and wise;
That he may teach me stewardship of the talents, time, money and
possessions you have given me.
A stewardship that serves, is generous, and brings honor to your name;
That he may teach me faithfulness to your call to Christians in Commerce.
A call that unites us and builds your Kingdom in the marketplace.
Through Jesus Christ who is Lord.
Amen

VISION Being Christ in the workplace

MISSION To encourage and equip Christians to be God's presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence

VALUES Christians in Commerce is an ecumenical organization committed to:

- Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
- Manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
- Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives

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