



Igniting a Change

By Rich Preuss

A little friction creates a spark. Multiple sparks become flames. Flames shed light and turn people into igniters.

It is amazing to see what happens over time in our WorkLight Small Groups. The challenges we share are occasions for friction. To overcome our difficulties, effort needs to be exerted. Effort means friction. Add the spark of the Holy Spirit, and a flame ensues. If we are vulnerable enough to share our fears and anxieties in our Small Groups, and then act on the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the ensuing flame burns away the challenge.

Bob joined our group after a Challenge Weekend. An alcoholic who was in and out of jobs and the local homeless center, Bob soon shared his vulnerabilities with us. First, he dominated the conversation for two weeks. One brother was getting irritated and expressed his concern to me. The next week, the reflection in *The Flame* had to do with listening and not talking so much. Bob began the conversation telling us that message was for him. He

proceeded to talk for 10 minutes, then he stopped and said he needed to listen. He did that a few times in the course of the conversation. His total talking time went from 55 minutes in the prior two weeks to 15 minutes. From then on, Bob never dominated the conversation. That little spark changed Bob's life.

In our Small Group, we would often challenge each other not to tell people we would pray for them, but to pray with them. Jesus never told people he would pray for them; he prayed with them. This was challenging for Bob. One day, Bob came to the group and said that he had been approved for a knee replacement; however, the doctor saw a wound on his leg and said he couldn't do surgery until it healed. Bob told us he was diabetic, and the wound had been there for years. At the end of our group, we laid hands on Bob and prayed with him. The next week, Bob came to the meeting and reported that his wound was healed! After that, Bob started praying with people.

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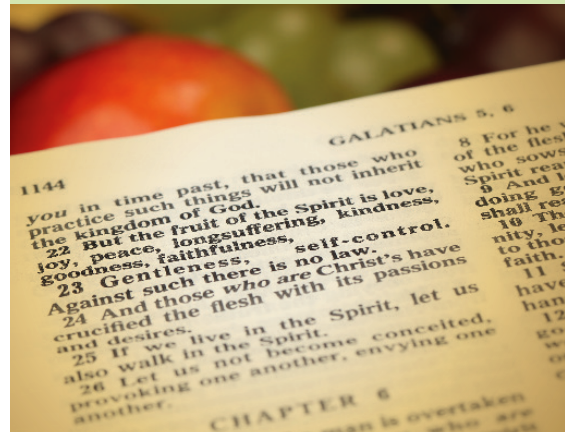
INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

Light in the Workplace

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. (John 18:12)

Why will we never walk in darkness? "We are like the morning sun, shining brighter and brighter till the full light of day." (Proverbs 4:18)

Standing in darkness, we don't turn off the darkness. We turn on the light! Good to keep in mind as we start a new year. The light of life we take into the world is the life of the Spirit in us. And so, Jesus declares we are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).



Working for our Father, we shine forth with the fruit of the Spirit. We love where others hate, we are joy-filled during challenges, we keep cool in conflicts and bring reconciliation, we persevere through difficulties, we're people of integrity, we are kind to all, big-hearted, calm, and in control of our passions.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

January Reflections: Pages 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

Overcome Evil With Good

By Jim Ganther

If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:20–21)

Max is a Russian immigrant and founder of a company that is a competitor of mine. I knew him by reputation before I ever met him in person.

Our first in-person encounter did not go well. We were both attending the same industry conference; both our companies exhibited. At his company's booth was a flashy four-color brochure that compared his company's offerings to my company's—identified by name.

I confronted him. In measured tones, I explained why his claims were demonstrably false and that as a compliance company, false advertising was probably not the best look. I requested that he throw the brochures in the nearest trash can which, to his credit, he did.

That was six years ago. Our paths continued to cross professionally. We often spoke at the same conferences, once sharing the stage on a panel presentation. I even made a couple guest appearances on a podcast for which he was a regular cast member. Over those six years, our relationship thawed, but never became warm.

Several weeks ago, we were at the same conference again, this time at Paris Las Vegas. It was the last night of the conference and my company had dinner reservations at the Eiffel Tower Restaurant to thank my staff and some clients for their good work and support. We had a group of seven people. It was a table for eight.

I saw Max at the closing reception, asked him if he had dinner plans, and subsequently invited him to join us. We wound up sitting next to each other at the end of the table. I considered what a Russian might enjoy and ordered caviar and vodka before dinner. Both went over quite well.

Over dinner we discussed Russian history and modern geopolitics. I learned a lot about Russia, and Max. By the end of the evening, we parted as friends. Max currently lives in Spain but made plans to fly back for my company's Christmas

party at our home. He remains a competitor, but now a friendly one. The light of Christ triumphed.

Jim Ganther is an attorney, entrepreneur, and captain of a competitive BBQ team. He and his wife, Melissa, have seven children. His other hobbies include car insurance, dry rubs, and tuition. Contact Jim at jganther@MosaicCS.com; ask for his brisket recipe.

PRAY

Lord, provide me with the wisdom to overcome evil with good, even when it is difficult in a competitive business environment.

REFLECT

Cold Wars exist not only between nations. Where can you let the light of Christ triumph over a darkened relationship?

DISCUSS

Can you recall a time when you tried to get to know an enemy better? How did that turn out?

Join Our Editorial Team

Help us reach out to our members to tell their stories in our Flame newsletter and Spark workday reflections. Join us in illustrating God at work by illuminating the light of Christ in our stories and insights.

If you love to write and would like to share your gift with WorkLight readers, contact us at communications@worklight.org.

“Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.” Matthew 5:15



REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

New Normal

By David Staloch

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

I am a very relational person, especially in my work. Like many, I was required to work from home during the first couple of years of the COVID pandemic, but the “virtual only” interaction with my coworkers left a void in me for connection and togetherness.

I was thrilled when the employees where I work were asked to return to the office and to connect with the hundreds of coworkers in my office building. But ... it has yet to materialize. Through all of the coaxing, free lunches, office amenities, and intention to be together for the sake of collaboration, only a few made the choice to “work from work.” “Work from home” has become the new normal.

Yet I am refreshed. Though my in-person interactions are limited, those fuel my desire to be in the office. I am relieved to be out of an empty household, but admittedly I am somewhat disappointed that the vast majority of my coworkers have chosen to continue to work remotely.

Rather than being discouraged, through prayer and through the patience that comes from allowing the Holy Spirit to guide my days, I have focused on empathy and understanding. Each person has unique circumstances that guide their decision on where to work. Why should I be angry or disappointed that the way we work has changed, perhaps not just for a chapter, but likely for the foreseeable future and beyond?

My role in this “new normal” is to reach out to my onsite and remote coworkers and to be intentional in connecting with all of them. I have been blessed to utilize the digital community to stay connected with my coworkers, especially my coworkers in Christ, and to leverage this capability to reach as many as I can.

darkness, we let the Spirit that God has placed in us light up the world.

In my home, we prayed for wisdom and knowledge that we would do what God wanted us to do during the pandemic. This wasn't new territory with God, for he has always guided us: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

We've discovered we can be a visible disciple and follow God's new plan. At the time, we didn't know what that meant; but we knew that his “people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.” (Titus 3:14) God has provided, and we are ready to turn this over to the next generation.

David Staloch is a technology leader in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and an ardent user of WorkLight content to equip and encourage Christians in the Salt and Light group at his company.

PRAY

Lord, please help me to focus on empathy and understanding for my coworkers to support their decisions on where to work.

REFLECT

How can you be a light to all of your coworkers, those co-located, and those who are remote?

DISCUSS

Share a time when you struggled to understand a decision made by a coworker. How did you find the wisdom to accept the “new normal” and embrace the change?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Be the Real Light

By Ric Glover

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:5)

Looking back over the past two years, we have been led by God through the darkness into new territory. Are we ready? God tells us: “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good.” (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21)

All WorkLight chapters were turned upside down during the pandemic. No longer could we meet in person, in comfortable and familiar quarters. We had to learn something for which we had little understanding, “the virtual world.”

God provided what was needed for us to continue to praise him and build his Kingdom through the darkness and into this new “normal.” We did not stand in

Ric Glover is currently the president of the Scottsdale, Arizona, Chapter, and a member of the West Phoenix Men's Chapter. He and his wife Cathy are members of the West Phoenix Coed Chapter. He can be reached at ricglover@gmail.com.

PRAY

Lord, may we pray for wisdom and knowledge to help build your Kingdom with new tools for the new generation of believers.

REFLECT

Have I recognized all the tools God is providing and am I using them to make connections with our brothers and sisters in Christ?

DISCUSS

When faced with new challenges in my work or prayer life, do I “rejoice in all things,” so that I can continue to bring God's light into the world?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

A Break in the Clouds

By Annie D. Stutley

You are all children of the light and children of the day. (1 Thessalonians 5:5)

Recently, I attended two conferences. The first was one of those three-day, nonstop events in the basement of a convention center hotel, eating dry banquet chicken and food-court sushi between plenary sessions and networking breaks over stale coffee. At its conclusion when I finally emerged into the sunlight to catch my Uber to the airport, the sunlight literally blinded me. I fumbled for my sunglasses, realizing how quickly I had become accustomed to fluorescent light.

Fluorescent light has a bad reputation and overexposure can cause eye strain, migraines, double vision, and fatigue. Not to mention it's physically unflattering,

casting shadows in all the wrong places, and influences your mood. But step outside, and presto! After a brief readjustment, you're back to your old self.

My second conference was literally a breath of fresh air. We were at an indoor/outdoor convention center with natural light, landscaping, and vast patios for those pesky networking breaks. The coffee may still have been stale, but the company wasn't. Why? Because light, pure light, is energizing. It makes us feel alive. It brings both peace and the urge to get up and go.

The light of Christ is like that. When we experience his light in his word or in a powerful sermon, we bask in his glory and burst with otherworld energy. It's nearly inexplicable what his presence feels like.

Yet, in his teachings, we learn that we, too, are light, created to bring that Christ-like experience to others. Maybe it's in humility when we choose to ignore an insignificant mistake of a coworker. Perhaps it's in moments of grace when we see a discouraged coworker and choose empathy over arrogance. Or it's simply expressing sincere appreciation

for a job well done. After all, unexpected kindness is like a break in the clouds.

Annie D. Stutley is a member of the editorial team living in New Orleans, Louisiana. Find her at anniedstutley.com.

PRAY

God grant me the grace to be gracious to others. Please provide me with the will, words, and ways in which to be your light to the people whom you place in my life.

REFLECT

What do you experience when filled with God's light? How can you emulate that to others?

DISCUSS

What are three actions you can take today to refocus your God-given light in the workplace?



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Staying In The Game By John E. DeSanto

Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.” (Psalm 71:18)

I am a gray-haired, 76-year-old husband, father, grandfather, brother, and senior judge. By the grace and providence of our loving God, I continue to work for our Father in the courtrooms and courthouses of Minnesota. In fact, I have now worked 50 years in these courtrooms—35 as a prosecutor and the rest as a district court judge.

Many of my contemporaries question why I continue to “stay in the game.” Yet, I see my work in the courtroom over the past half century and into the future as a vocation from God, especially since my baptism in the Holy Spirit in the early 1980s. And as far as I am aware, working for the Father in the courtroom does not have a retirement option.

The Bible is filled with examples of men working for God as older men. Moses confronted Pharaoh when he was 80 (Acts Chapter 7); Noah built the ark at

God’s command when he was well over 100 years old (Genesis Chapter 6); Caleb was 85 years old when he answered God’s call to lead the tribe of Judah (Joshua Chapter 14); and 1 Kings 12:6 tells us that Solomon, the wisest man ever born, sought the expertise of older men who helped him make important decisions about the kingdom of Israel.

As I continue to work, I am able to use the knowledge and experience I have from my 50 years in the courtroom. In addition, I can continue to develop relationships with younger judges, attorneys, litigants, and court clerks, which hopefully will manifest the gifts of the Holy Spirit and expand God’s Kingdom in a workplace where so many are desperately in need of Jesus.

The first video of our series Working for Our Father notes that “work is essential to our human nature. It’s in our DNA. Good work is satisfying and brings about good results ...

“Work is defined as using mental and physical effort to accomplish a result. It helps to describe work as being useful,

helpful, and productive, not just for our own needs, but also the well-being of everyone.”

Work is where I make myself useful to our Father to care for his creation and care for others. I pray and praise God that I can continue to work for him in court.

John E. DeSanto lives in Duluth, Minnesota, with his wife Lana. They have three children and five grandchildren. He has been a member of CIC, now WorkLight, since November 1984 when he attended his first Challenge Weekend with his twin brother, Will, and their father.

Igniting a Change *Continued from page 1*

Our group was cognizant of caring for the material needs of those we encountered who were in great need. Bob, himself, had been financially helped by us a few times. Soon, Bob began helping people he lived with at the homeless center with the meager means he had available. He became like the widow with two coins. He was a total inspiration to us.

Sadly, Bob died of a heart attack after being in our group for about a year. The transformation in him was amazing. WorkLight had saved Bob. But the light of Christ that began with a small spark in Bob had transformed us as much as it did him. Through Bob, I understood more deeply how important it was for us to meet and share our lives.

There are so many ways we can be better, but it will only happen if we can become vulnerable. This is why these Small Groups were originally called “Challenge Groups.”

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Authority & Faith

By Marty Anderson



Jesus was amazed by the faith of the Centurion. The soldier experienced authority every day as he took orders and gave orders. Authority, and reverence for it, was his way of life. He didn't have any doubt in Jesus' authority just as he had no doubt in his own. It was normal for him. He lived it.

Why is this not my way of life? Instead of obeying, I resist or go my own way. I try to skirt laws when they don't serve me. I challenge authority and I sometimes talk poorly about it. But what if that authority is holy? Do I have reverence for it then?

Sometimes I'm challenged to see Jesus as holy. I believe the Apostles had a similar experience. After Jesus died, they forgot all the authority he

demonstrated to them when he was alive. But then they saw Jesus as risen with a new body and changed. As Saul, Paul went around persecuting followers of Jesus until he was blinded and heard the risen Jesus speaking to him. He "saw" him differently and believed Jesus had complete authority.

How do I see Jesus?

For much of my life, I've thought of Jesus as a kind person who said and did amazing things. He was wise and caring, full of grace. But what about truth and the law? He came to fulfill those, too. He said harsh things about people going to Hell and that the road to Heaven is narrow. He embodied grace and truth.

But too often I just saw the grace part and not the truth part. The truth part means he has authority, both over my sin and also over my healing. He has authority to do great things ... if I would only believe. I believe that when I discount authority in culture or work, I have a tendency to discount it in my relationship with Jesus, too. I minimize it. I fail to have reverence for it.

Growing in pride denies the power that I can experience when I'm connected to Jesus. Going through life connected to Jesus provides me authority ... over evil, over death, over pain, over foolishness. Philippians 4:7 says that going through life connected to Jesus gives me peace beyond understanding. So going alone is a poor choice. Going through life with Jesus is to choose wisely. It's a moment-by-moment decision. Whose authority am I under? Will I choose faith?

Abba, Daddy, Heavenly Father, I choose you. I choose to believe. You alone have all authority. I believe you always have my best in mind. I trust you. In you, I enjoy peace. You are holy and because of your Son, I am holy. Today I meditate on this, so it changes how I see you and how I see others. Today I meditate on this, so it changes how I behave in the world. Amen.

Marty Anderson lives in Bloomington, Minnesota, with his wife Cecilia. He recently attended his first Challenge Weekend and has joined WorkLight.



More Insights, New Stories

Rediscover The Spark Email Reflections. Additional, new stories and insights expand on the month's theme every workday morning. Encourage others to signup.

bit.ly/WLTheSpark

NEWS

WHEN WAS YOUR LAST CHALLENGE WEEKEND?

Whether it was locally with your Chapter last month or with brothers and sisters from around the country last fall, there's never a better time to look forward to the next one. Talk to your Small Group or Chapter and begin praying about when you might gather to host a Challenge Weekend in 2023.

UPCOMING CHALLENGE WEEKENDS IN 2023

- January 27-29, April 28-30, and November 17-19 at Mission San Antonio De Padua in Jolon, California. Hosted by the Men's Chapter of Salinas.
- March 10-11 at Sacred Heart Church in Palm Desert, California. Co-hosted by the Men's and Women's Chapters of Palm Desert.

- April 28-30 at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Three Rivers, California. Hosted by the Women's Chapter of Fresno.

Check out these events and more at <https://worklight.org/events/>

COWORKER CHALLENGE

Too many men and women have felt the presence of the Holy Spirit on a Challenge Weekend only to return to a life without family and community in Christ. To support igniters from the mountaintop experience of the weekend into mentorship and relationship of WorkLight Chapters and Small Groups, we have created the Coworker Challenge. Let us come together in the name of Jesus to connect re-igniters and igniters in conversation and community over the two weeks that follow Challenge Weekends. Learn more at <https://worklight.org/coworkerchallenge>.

RE-IGNITERS + IGNITERS = COWORKERS IN CHRIST

Which one are you? Re-igniters are longtime members of CIC with life experience and community in Christ. Igniters are new to the ministry, generally mid-career, and looking to deepen their ability to build God's Kingdom in the workplace. If you're an igniter, we encourage you to be in a relationship with a re-igniter to learn more about how the Holy Spirit can transform your everyday life and work. If you're a re-igniter, we encourage you to lead these relationships by being the one to reach out, invite someone for coffee, and stay encouraged in the face of life's obstacles. Prayer is always a great place to start if you haven't yet found and begun walking with your Coworker in Christ.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



... A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. (Matthew 5:14-15)

Light on a Stand

Do you live in a town on an actual hill with an actively burning lamp on a physical stand in your home? If so, please share your story with us for a future article! Like many of you, I live in a big city with switches on the walls and ceiling lights. I would imagine that among everyone reading this article there are more people with LED light bulbs than actual lamps in their homes.

Did you know that 86% of the parables from the Synoptic Gospels are work related? In these stories Jesus refers to 22 different professional activities.* Since the time of Jesus the global economy may have changed, but our call to shine the light of Christ in the workplace remains the same.

What does this mean for us as disciples of Jesus? It means that we are invited to find new ways to share the Gospel and shine the light of Christ each and every day. Parables become metaphors in which we can find the Holy Spirit nudging us toward action.

"You are the light of the world." This is as true in 2023 as it was when it was first written in the Gospel of

Matthew. What is your "lamp" today, with which you share the love of the Father? Where is your "stand" this week, where the Holy Spirit shines faith in the face of doubt? How will you find your way this year to the "town on the hill" with your brothers and sisters in Christ?

With you in Christ,

Wes

*According to the Institute of Faith, Works, & Economics.

<https://tifwe.org/how-jesus-work-influenced-his-teaching>

2023
JANUARY

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

Galatians 2:20

**THE FLAME****WORKLIGHT PRAYER**

Father,

*Fill us with your Holy Spirit
that we may be made new
and bring the presence of Christ into all we do;
That we may grow in love for you, and for all;
That we may be humble and wise stewards of your creation;
That we may bring your light into our workplaces;
That we may lead all to unity in you;
Through Jesus, our 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 (DBA WorkLight) 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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