



My Moral Dilemma

By Ned Sickle

Finding creative ways to increase sales to meet a challenging budget has always been an important part of many businesses, including in the hotel industry. This process has sometimes created conflict for me.

As a Christian hotel manager, I struggled with selling movies to guests. On the one hand, we offered an array of action adventures, dramas, mysteries, comedies, and children's films. From a financial standpoint, however, almost all of movie revenue came from the sale of pornographic movies. Porn sells much better to hotel guests.

While I was not forcing guests to watch smut, I was making the choice an easy one for them and a profitable one for the hotel. Meeting a challenging budget by having a great year in pornographic movie sales was not a goal for me.

I discussed this struggle with one of the company's executive vice presidents, but it was clear that corporate policy was not going to change, nor were they going to create a different policy just for me. I had to reconcile how I was going to accept

the company's policy and balance that against my moral dilemma.

I took my struggle with pornographic movie sales in my hotel to my WorkLight Small Group. We discussed ethical and moral dilemmas faced by the participants in a work environment. Useful discussion points from my brothers emerged: "If a practice or work policy is legal, is it morally acceptable? How strongly did I feel about this issue? Was this a moral hill I was ready to stake my career on? If I could prompt a change, how should I define success? What was an appropriate next step for me?"

This discussion helped me to realize not every workplace conflict is a moral hill where it makes sense to stake one's career on. Sometimes it makes sense to do the best you can under difficult circumstances. In my case, I needed to identify and take advantage of other opportunities to foster a kingdom culture in my workplace.

I was encouraged by the conversation in my Small Group. My brothers prayed

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INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

Fostering a Kingdom Culture

"The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one ..." (Matthew 13:38)

Jesus' explanation of this parable illustrates the state we often find ourselves at work—wheat being choked by weeds. Yet, Jesus planted us there (Matthew 13:24–30). Like him, we now work for our Father. God is calling us to be Christ to those around us, including our coworkers.

We are no longer "of the world," we are of the Kingdom. The Holy Spirit transforms us to be in the world as Christ.



What's our work environment like? Is it more "weeds" than "wheat?" Are we active Kingdom workers? Or are we passively standing by?

Look around. What is good that we can encourage and build on? What is evil that we can help eliminate? What is not working that we can fix? What is missing that we can bring about? We are the good seed, let's get busy growing a Kingdom culture so the good wheat grows strong. The result? More wheat. Less weeds.

September Reflections: Pages 2–4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

Intersection of Career & Faith

By David Staloch

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters ... (Colossians 3:23)

As a new believer in my mid-40s, I started a new job with a greatly revised approach to my career. God had used my job transition as a material contributor to my faith journey. I felt his presence as never before, clearly seeing that his hands were guiding my path, both in my home and at my work.

When my manager provided me with a multi-page questionnaire related to career goals, I was at a loss to articulate my goals. The “old me” would have had all the usual common personal career objectives. The “new me” had much less passion for the type of goals I had set

in the past. After much deliberation, I simply answered the first question with “I want to be more like Jesus” and left the rest of the questionnaire blank.

When I met my manager to review the questionnaire, her first statement was: “I read your brief response and to be honest, I am not a religious person.” But she then went on to say, “Though we have only worked together briefly, I can see that you are committed to a goal of this nature, and I will do everything I can to help you.”

That conversation led to an opportunity for me to learn about and share with other leaders the value and importance of servant leadership. That was the avenue that opened the door for me to speak to a group of over 100 leaders about servant leadership. Today, I’ve reached over 1,000 leaders. This allowed me to reflect on my own leadership, to place a much higher value on the character traits that aligned with God’s plan for me, and to increase my impact as a leader.

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

PRAY

Lord, please help me to be a light in my workplace and share the importance of servant leadership with my coworkers.

REFLECT

How can your work goals and faith goals be combined in your workplace? Where can you find opportunities to build God’s Kingdom?

DISCUSS

Are your career objectives aligned with your faith life? How can you better promote a Kingdom culture in your workplace?

Keep Building God’s Kingdom

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Learn more about planned giving at WorkLight.org/Legacy



REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

Wheat Among the Weeds

By Jim Ganther

...“(W)hile you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them.”
(Matthew 13:29)

We all know the parable: Landowner plants good seeds. Enemy overseeds weeds among the wheat. Servants offer to pull the weeds. Landowner declines the offer and allows the weeds to grow alongside the wheat until harvest.

Jesus addressed this parable to farmers. They likely identified with the servants in the story. Those servants knew the difference between wheat and weed. If they didn't, they would never have offered to pull the weeds in the first place! And pulling the weeds, while tedious, was the right thing to do. Allowing weeds to grow alongside the

wheat deprives the wheat of nutrients and water, thus reducing the ultimate harvest. In short, the servants looked wise and industrious, while the landowner looked clueless.

Unless Jesus was making another point altogether. For this parable to make sense at all, it must be possible for the weeds to become wheat along the way. If it were so, then the harvest would be larger after all.

And so, it is. Unlike literal weeds, people can change and some of us need every second of our lifespan to do so. The greatest sinner among us could become the greatest saint; the obnoxious atheist in the breakroom could convert at his last breath. Our Father wants everyone to have that chance. So, we, as his faithful servants, must provide the same water and fertilizer (love and patience) equally to all. If we are to have our Father's heart, we need to see every human soul as wheat waiting to manifest rather than a weed to be judged and uprooted.

Jim Ganther is an attorney, entrepreneur, and captain of a competitive BBQ team. He and his wife, Melissa, have seven children and three Big Green Eggs. His other hobbies include car insurance, dry rubs, and tuition. If you need help smoking ribs, contact Jim at jganther@MosaicCS.com.

PRAY

Loving Father, pour forth your grace that we may see others as you see them, that mercy might become our instinct, and our hearts become like unto thine.

REFLECT

Read Matthew 13:24–30 carefully. Who plants the good seed? Who tends it while it grows? What is Jesus saying here?

DISCUSS

Who is the biggest “weed” in your life? How can you help that person grow into wheat?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Family Resemblance

By Jim Ingram

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

My Small Group meets each week at Panera. Since we get there when it opens, the place is not crowded, and it's not too hard to spot the other Christians who are also meeting there.

Recently, I talked with a small business owner I saw reading his Bible. He was juggling a busy schedule and an Apologetic essay for his church. He was able to join our group one morning and heartily joined in on the Reflection discussion.

Afterwards he and I had a stimulating conversation about the Trinity. We both

had the same understanding of the Trinity: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. He did most of the talking and I witnessed how he was being led by the Spirit in his scripture study, being Christ to his employees, and building God's Kingdom.

Another time, a pastor of a small ministry stopped by to talk with us after he finished a pastoral meeting. He shared an interesting story of how the Lord led him to bring his family to Minnesota from the East Coast to start his ministry for college students, which has grown to include families. He reminded me of my younger self, back 45 years ago, when the Holy Spirit led me to leave Seattle and move to Minnesota to join a Christian community. I left my family, friends, car, and all that I'd grown up with. We both had something in common—leaving everything to follow the Lord.

I'm always delighted to share with other Christians in the body of Christ especially when we share what we have in common—God's Kingdom.

Jim Ingram lives in Burnsville, Minnesota, with his wife Brenda. In addition to WorkLight, Jim leads students on service projects in Minneapolis and goes wherever someone needs help.

PRAY

Lord, lead us to find opportunities to share in the body of Christ in our everyday lives so that we can build your Kingdom.

REFLECT

Where can we find opportunities to expand God's Kingdom in our workplaces, neighborhoods, and community?

DISCUSS

Do others see the “family resemblance” in you?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

Comfort in Trouble

By Steve Lieser

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

I was stunned when I learned that one of our star performers was being let go as the result of a poor decision that violated company policy and was being instructed to leave that day.

Since I had a strong connection with him after several years of working closely together, I was moved to speak with him because I expected he would be distraught, and more importantly, I wanted to be there to comfort him. So,

I asked if he would mind chatting with me. When we met, I gave him a hug. He immediately broke down.

He was embarrassed and regretted the poor choice he made. He wanted to discuss his fear of the unknowns that lay ahead. We talked for a while, and I finished by assuring him I would be here for him whenever he needed to visit. That evening he sent me a text thanking me for talking to him. I intend to check in with him periodically so that he knows someone is there to walk alongside him. Reflecting on this interaction, I feel convinced that God is calling me to go forth and bring his love and encouragement to those in need.

Now more than ever, people in our workplaces, and the world more broadly, are feeling anxious, depressed, and lonely and we have an opportunity to shower them with the love of Christ and care for them when love and comfort is needed most. This situation revealed how a simple conversation can make such a positive impact on someone's life.

Steve Lieser has been part of a Minneapolis/St. Paul WorkLight Small Group for over five years. He leads the Hilltop Small Group and together they are hosting a Challenge Weekend in October.

PRAY

Lord, reveal to me those who are troubled and give me the grace needed to encourage and comfort them.

REFLECT

Who needs encouragement in my life? How can I bring them comfort in the midst of their troubles?

DISCUSS

What actions can you take in the workplace to bring the love and comfort of God to your coworkers?

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit ... (Romans 14:17)

Kingdom Spirit

Growing up, my Dad had a saying when me and my siblings left the house. He would say, "Be good, do good." This was good advice for avoiding sin. But I've learned that it takes more than goodness to be a follower of Jesus.

What does living a spiritually Christian life mean to you? I must confess my effort to be a "good" spiritual Christian for many years. Pray at meals. Daily appointment with God. Active in my church. Kind to others.

Generous to those in need. Career of service instead of seeking financial gain. But somehow all my actions and activities left me falling short of experiencing a transformative relationship with Jesus.

Why didn't doing the right thing get me to where God wants me? Because our actions don't make us followers of Jesus. It's not about the things we do. It's about the ways we do them. To eat or drink abundantly can fill (and sometimes overfill) our bellies. But to eat and drink with prayer, gratitude, and care for the temple of our bodies does more than fulfill earthly desires. It connects the moments of our life to Jesus.

I spent decades wrestling with my faith alongside trying to do the right thing. By the grace of God, about 10 years ago, I felt a call to wrestle with

faith more seriously. Doing so didn't prevent me from doing the right thing. It certainly didn't lead me to do the wrong thing. It did help me see how much larger the one true God is than anything anyone can do.

It's not about the "what." It's about the "how" and the "why." Being a follower of Jesus isn't easy, but the difficulties are rarely overcome by effort. Sure, it's a good thing to donate to charity, share with those in need, and help the proverbial old lady across the street. But it's a far greater thing to do all this and more through the power of the Holy Spirit, as a sibling of Jesus, for the glory of our God the Father.

With you in Christ,
Wes



Samantha Alcoseba with stepfather, Stuart Adelson, and mother, Christy Conanan, work with their Chapter to prepare and serve a meal at Terry's House.

Growing With God

By Samantha Alcoseba

As a young millennial woman, finding a connection with my faith has been a tremendous feat.

Growing up, I felt like I had to negotiate my commitment with the Lord to please my devout Catholic mother. I didn't want to be ostracized by my peers or in direct conflict with the values of the secular world. I wanted a relationship with God but how could I find it when there was conflict within me and all around me?

As a teenage girl, I struggled with physical and mental health issues that required surgeries, procedures, strong medications, and special programs that kept me somewhat isolated and caused me to feel different from everyone else. Confiding in my mom was never comforting enough. With the best of intentions, she would remedy the situation by telling me to pray more, go to church more, and by giving me many religious books, scriptures, and devotionals.

Looking back, I wondered if I was fearful of connecting with God. What I really needed was spiritual support without judgment. I thought to myself, "does that even exist?" Then my mother introduced me to Christians in Commence.

The prospect of joining CIC/WorkLight was a bit intimidating for a 24-year-old. Many members were much older. How can they connect with me? I'm not like them ... I'm broken. I felt inadequate because I did not have a clear career pathway and I had little direction and low self-esteem. But as I built my own relationships with my sisters, they responded with love, friendship, and support. I realized that I was exactly where I needed to be, and I started to reach out to my sisters. I prayed fervently and I found the space to grow with God, to be receptive, and to accept the Holy Spirit.

As a result, I have been blessed to receive my own spiritual gifts and to share them with others. Listening actively to those in need and working together to find common ground, we explore ways to choose righteousness over conformity. Most importantly, the Holy Spirit has taught me to ask God for discernment and clarity.

Getting involved with activities and events that promote wellness for the underserved has brought me many blessings and much joy. Our chapter recently prepared and served a meal to the residents of Terry's House, a nonprofit organization that provides lodging and meals to the

families of critical care patients in the neighboring hospital.

Now at 32, my relationship with God has given me the ability to surrender my life to him. I ask God to align my actions to his divine will so that the outcome will unfold according to God's plan, not mine. As I have discovered since my youth as a girl struggling with mental and physical health issues, I should always go to the Lord not in fear, but in faith.

Samantha Alcoseba is a salon artist, educator, dog lover, WorkLight member of the Fresno Women's Chapter, and an active member in her parish church.

My Moral Dilemma

Continued from page 1

for me and helped me put my trust in God as I navigated through this issue. For men, this is especially important because we don't easily open up and it takes time to develop relationships. The Small Group offers a forum to learn, share, and grow in one's Christian faith, and by sharing our personal struggles related to work, relationships, or life's challenges, we grow together.

I have always believed that life experiences are not designed to be navigated alone. I often learn that the problems or issues I am struggling with are not unique to me. While specific circumstances are unique, others can share learnings (or battle scars that are sometimes fresh) that are beneficial. Being vulnerable and open with a Small Group has allowed me to learn and grow in my Christian faith.

Ned Sickle is a WorkLight board member and lives in Scottsdale, Arizona, with his wife, Laura, and his bernedoodle, Bo. Having recently retired from the hotel industry, he owns and manages rental homes. He can be reached at ebsickle@aol.com.

'Mentoring' That Works

By Steve Becker

God brought George into my life at a very critical moment. He recently passed away on Father's Day, which was appropriate because he was like a father to me for years. My father died when I was 18. In my early 30s, I was in George's Christians in Commerce Small Group while raising four children as my career was taking off.

"(The righteous) will bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.'" (Psalm 92:14,15)

Now in my 70s, I'm in a WorkLight Small Group with eight other men, most in their 30s and in similar situations as I was then. Everything I've learned about walking alongside young men was what I experienced with George. While George may have been mentoring me, it felt more like friendship and being pastorally cared for.

Proof it's working in our Small Group is they invite other men their age to

join us. All are hungry for support in being responsible in God's call to steward their families, careers, spiritual growth, and relationships.

Re-igniters, we have a legacy to pass on. Here's three keys to "mentoring" that I experienced with George.

First, ask more questions than give answers. George's questions made me think and reflect. They usually led to more probing questions, which helped me understand what I needed to know. The Spirit used these questions to lead me to better answers. We're more open to what we're discovering than what we're being told to do.

Secondly, be in it for the long haul. Whatever unfolded, he would be at my side throughout. George was patient and not as "stressed" as I tended to be. His "this is going to work out" reassurance was always encouraging because whatever "worked out" he'd be at my side.

Finally, tell stories. George shared his own stories about raising his kids and his own difficulties (his own father had died when he was 9). He never went to college yet managed a large real estate firm. He was transparent and loved to illustrate his own mistakes which I could relate to. God had consistently proven his faithfulness to George through the years. When I was unsure, I could "piggy-back" on his proof.

WorkLight Small Groups provide a unique setting for "mentoring" younger Christians. Together we can encourage and reinforce each other's identity, talents, and the "good work" God has in store for us. (Ephesians 2:10). I'm glad I have another "re-igniter" (Bruce) to share stories and insights. It's also fantastic to hear the young men support and encourage each other.

Bruce and I delight in this new generation and the friendships that are formed in our co-equal, shared relationship as Christ. We're working for the same goals and focused on the same mission. Being Christ in the world around us.

Our group has entered a new phase. They're conducting their first Challenge Weekend next month with the goal to ignite other men in their generation. Men that they will be walking alongside for years to come. George's legacy was passed to me, I'm passing mine on to them.

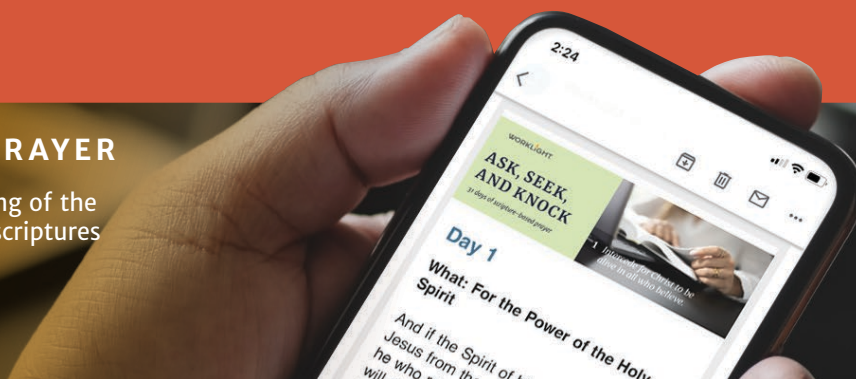
Steve Becker volunteers as the managing editor of The Flame newsletter and the Spark workday emails. He and his wife, Carolyn, live in Burnsville, Minnesota.

Let's Pray for Our Work

31 DAYS OF SCRIPTURE-BASED PRAYER

Using the power of Scripture intercede for the coming of the Kingdom in our workday world. Daily emails select scriptures and provide prayers in five critical areas.

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NEWS

500 BY 2025 UPDATE

As we all pray for 500 igniters on Challenge Weekends by 2025, local volunteers and Coworkers in Christ are hard at work. With 60 first-time Challenge Weekend attendees in 2023, we are on our way to surpassing the goal of 75. Where will the next 15 new igniters attend their first Challenge Weekend? Will you be one of their coworkers on their walk to Emmaus and beyond?

OPTIONS FOR 2023 NATIONAL CONFERENCE GATHERINGS

The past few years WorkLight has explored new approaches to gatherings at a National Conference. This year we are encouraging longtime members to consider one or more of the following options:

1. Attend the National Spotlight Challenge Weekend at Mission San Antonio from November 17–19. Learn more and register here – worklight.org/spotlightweekend
2. Come together at the Transform Our World Global Conference in Santa Clara from October 26–28. Learn more and register here – transformourworld.org/events/global-conference/ Use code GROUP2023 for discounted registration. Remote/virtual options available. Looking for a payment

plan? Other questions? Contact Stephanie@transformourworld.org for support.

NEW VIDEO TESTIMONIES

By the grace of God and a generous in-kind donation by DKY (dkyinc.com) we now have sharable bite-sized stories of how Challenge Weekends and Small Groups transform lives. Hear from Edward, Josh, Gianni, and more at youtube.com/@WorkLight.

DID YOU KNOW?

While we work nationally to support igniters on Challenge Weekends and into their roles within WorkLight, there are countless movements of the Holy Spirit at work locally. Sometimes local leaders get together to act on the national level. One of the more widely known historical examples came to be when a group of CIC men came together to ride bicycles from coast-to-coast across the entire USA. In what year did that cross-country Prayer Tour take place?

Last month's answer: The 2023 Fresno Women's weekend included five coworker pairs of reigniter mothers and their adult igniter daughters.

'HE'S A TEACHER AND A TRAINER'

Rave reviews continue flowing for Dan Clites' work with Chapters and

UPCOMING CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

Santa Cruz Men's Chapter

- September 29 – October 1 at Villa Maria del Mar Retreat Center, Santa Cruz, California

Minneapolis' Hilltop Small Group

- October 20–22 at lake cabins near Clear Lake, Minnesota

Fresno Men's Chapter

- October 21–22 at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Three Rivers, California

Orange County and Mission Viejo Men's Chapter

- October 27–28 at St. Kilian Catholic Church in Mission Viejo, California

Salinas and Santa Cruz Men's Chapters

- November 17–19 at Mission San Antonio De Padua, Jolon, California. *This is our Spotlight Men's weekend for 2023. If you're looking to travel for a weekend, we hope to see you!*

Check out these events and more at worklight.org/events/.

Small Groups. Looking for more focus? Praying for more enthusiasm? Seeking a renewed sense of purpose? Reach out to dan@worklight.org for support with local leadership, culture, and growth.

WORKLIGHT

CHALLENGE WEEKEND

*Awake
the Dawn.*

*Host a
Weekend.*

Free from pandemic restrictions, 2023 is our year for Challenge Weekends. Our National Conference introduced a new look and new resources. Schedule a weekend now so a new generation in your area can experience its power.

Learn more at WorkLight.org/Challenge-Weekends

"The night is over, the day is almost here." Romans 13:12



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

Galatians 2:20

SEPTEMBER 2023

WorkLight.org

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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