

Lighting the Darkness

By Luke Cahill

Of my team of 15, few are practicing Christians, yet all are seeking to find meaning and purpose in their lives. Therapy, limiting external stressors, leveraging relationships, exercise, healthy eating, book clubs, and more are tactics used to cope with the ups and downs of life.

Personally, I could do better at incorporating some of these beneficial practices, but I have found other behaviors indispensable in navigating life. More specifically, I rely on prayer and the strength that comes from knowing my identity as a son of God, and my purpose to serve him in the communities and environments he has placed me.

Being a light that can shine for others requires being filled with the light yourself. Spending time with Jesus and in his Word has served as a source of inspiration, peace, and guidance.

Asking for more of the Holy Spirit to fill me is the secret sauce that makes it possible to show up at work and be Christ to others. Like many, prayer consistency is an ongoing struggle, but buoyed by support and accountability from my Small Group and Challenge Weekends, I am getting better at committing to it.

Being equipped to be a light for my team is necessary because God has placed them in my care. This is my mission field.

This year has been unusual because caring for my team has meant letting go several employees who were no longer the fit we needed. I have wrestled with the idea of letting employees go and how it aligns to God's view of work. I also worry that being a Christian that fires them

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INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

Be a Light

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

To be a light, we must first receive the light. Light is not found in our work, our homes, our spouses, or ourselves. It is only found in Jesus.

It is by following Jesus we walk in the light. Satan wants to deceive us into believing there is light in the "things" of this world, and that we don't need Jesus. Satan is a liar.

Jesus promises if we follow him, we will have the very light of life that will cast out the darkness.



Daily we must make a choice. Will we chase the things of this dark world, or will we follow the light of Jesus? There is no "some" when it comes to Jesus. Our light is either lit or it's dark. There is no dimmer!

Let's all be a bright light and follow Jesus!

February Reflections: Pages 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

Feel The Light

By Laurie Primavera

A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
(Proverbs 11:25)

As a healthcare professional, I often rely on my skills to help others who are suffering. But in my role as a Stephen minister with my church, I rely on God to relieve the suffering of others and to help me bring Christ's light and love into the world by listening, encouraging, praying, and offering support to those in need.

Currently, I provide care for a mother with an alcoholic son. We have prayed and talked together for three years, hoping he will enter a rehab program. He continues to drink and manages to escape any accountability. She is extremely faithful and asks for prayers daily, shares her frustration and disappointments, and suffers emotional and physical ailments while enduring this hardship. Yet, she refuses to force him out on the street, and continues to trust God to heal her son.

As a professional, I would have discontinued "helping" her a long time ago, as she is not open to changing her circumstances. I catch myself labeling her as "an enabler," until I see a different path; one illuminated by the Lord that strengthens me to offer hope and strength by praying with her, reinforcing her faith and trust in God in all aspects of her life.

This role has taught me to trust God more fully in all circumstances; to recognize his patient and enduring love for us even when we do not "change" according to someone's expectations for us.

I have learned that God has no time limit when loving others. God does not abandon us when we refuse to hear or act according to his will. This mother's faith and trust in God; her desire to pray and be present with him, and her willingness to love her son in spite of his circumstances, reminds me of Christ's light and love in all situations. While I strive to bring Christ's light and love into our relationship, I am refreshed by her faith and trust in God in all things, according to his will and purpose.

Laurie Primavera has been a nurse and health care leader for the last 30 years, overseeing outpatient programs such as hospice and home health. She currently coordinates a Stephen Ministry program at her church.

PRAY

Lord, help us to bring your light into the lives of others by listening, encouraging, praying, and supporting others.

REFLECT

With all the darkness that surrounds us in our daily lives, where do you see the light of Christ?

DISCUSS

It's easy to label people based on first impressions. How can we shine the light of God when faced with the impulse to cast doubt on the way others live their lives?

Fan the Flame

By partnering with the National Christian Foundation, WorkLight is able to accept planned and complex gifts from donors. Business owners, property owners and families have multiple options to fan the flame for future generations through their generous giving.

Learn more at WorkLight.org/Legacy



REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

Shining the Light Together

By Tom Petersen

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) Jesus calls us to share his light, making disciples, baptizing, and teaching others.

The directive is straightforward. But moving from hearing it to doing it is where I tend to fall.

Before accepting the assignment, I want to make sure everything is just right. I wait for the right time, when the intended recipient seems open, and even make sure the room temperature is right. I want everything to be optimal before I try to share the light.

In waiting for the perfect moment, I'm unconsciously building barriers because I operate as if I need to be a light through my own power. I place a heavy responsibility on myself, ignoring the power of God to work in all circumstances.

I'm also ignoring the power of others.

John, in his first letter, references being in fellowship with others as a benefit of walking in the light. We are in fellowship both with God and with those who also walk that lighted pathway. I also believe that tapping into that fellowship can help us shine the light for others who haven't yet experienced the light.

We are not called to be solitary lighthouse keepers, but rather a collective mirror, magnifying our Father's light for all.

One of the benefits of WorkLight is that it brings us together with other believers to encourage one another and amplify our impact.

We are called to walk in God's light and share it. And that light shines brightest when we share the light together.

Tom Petersen is a former utility communications professional who writes on work and faith issues. He and his wife Cathy have two children.

PRAY

Lord, help us to embrace the joy of fellowship in reflecting your light to those who need to experience it, not taking the responsibility on ourselves, but joining with others to serve others.

REFLECT

How has joining with others helped you magnify the impact of your ministry?

DISCUSS

What barriers do you find to discourage sharing Jesus' light with your coworkers? How could joining with others help magnify your willingness to talk about Jesus?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Living Integrity

By Greg Aitkens

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)

I joined a small financial planning advisory a few miles from our home that was owned by Mike and his wife. There were four or five people in the "hub" office, and they worked with about a dozen outside advisors, who tended to work from their own homes. This office was the "resource center" for all these people.

Mike was a very hard worker, always in the office early and preparing for the day ahead. He was always helpful—from technology issues to contacts in the home office, to just being a great sounding board in discussing client situations. During

my four years of working closely with Mike, I never saw him get rattled, angry, anxious, or stressed out.

At the time, "do the right thing" was a phrase in the workplace. In financial services, it was common to "cut corners" to favor the advisor, but that never happened on Mike's watch. He was always fair to everyone—especially the clients we served.

Mike's honesty and humility in all matters helped him to be trusted by everyone in the firm. He would explain what could and could not be done, but with great gentleness and kindness. And he always seemed to have a pleasant manner. Working hard was just fun for him.

Mike's example of being God's light at work really helped my own approach and attitude toward work. His calm and honest demeanor provided a great witness to me of what Christ is like if we were working directly with him in our workplace. Mike was a living example of integrity at work.

Greg Aitkens is a past member of the Board of Directors, was involved in starting the Orange County Chapter, and is a member of the Editorial Team. Greg is the author of *A New Mindset for Forgiveness* and can be reached at greg.r.aitkens@gmail.com.

PRAY

Thank you, Lord, for the "Mikes" around us at work. Help us to adopt that kind of integrity in all our dealings in the workplace.

REFLECT

Think about any dishonesty or not doing the right thing where you work. How can you encourage others to do the right thing?

DISCUSS

How can you be a living example of integrity in your workplace? What changes might you need to make?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

Be An Encourager

By David Staloch

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up ... (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Author and speaker John Maxwell says, "Those who add to us, draw us to them. Those who subtract, cause us to withdraw." Indeed, our words carry tremendous power. Every word choice can either bring someone forward, create an obstacle to moving forward, or worse yet, take someone backwards.

Unfortunately, the workplace often includes circumstances and challenges that can lead to poor word choices, but with practice and discipline, we can turn that around and be a light in our workplaces. Most certainly, there is a coworker who is deserving of thanks, so it is up to us to ensure we're showing appreciation for the many efforts of others who contribute to our collective work activities and outcomes.

One simple discipline is to purposefully and formally thank someone every week. In my workplace, we have a digital "thank you" system, so there is an obvious avenue to show appreciation. But I also use task pairing as a mechanism to ensure I am consistent in doing so. Since we are required to utilize a time tracking system at the end of each week, I pair that unpleasant task with the joyful activity of recognizing one or more of my coworkers for their work efforts and send a copy of the recognition to their manager and other key leaders.

Often, when a coworker receives a note of thanks, they in turn thank me for the recognition. That shows the hunger and the genuine appreciation that others have for being recognized. The impact of even the simplest acknowledgement of appreciation is powerful for both the receiver and the sender of the recognition.

Providing encouragement and inspiration is valuable not only for recognition of the efforts of others, but also because many people are hurting in some way. Even if they don't show it on the outside, many are struggling on the inside. A few words of sincere recognition and thanks can go a long way

toward reassuring our coworkers of the value and goodness that we see in them.

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 by encouraging others and being intentional in thanking my coworkers for their work efforts.

REFLECT

What encouraging thing can I say to each coworker I see today? How can I thank coworkers for their efforts?

DISCUSS

Are you encouraging others in a consistent and intentional manner? How can you increasingly and consistently give thanks to your coworkers?

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light on my path. (Psalm 119:105)

Light Is So Much More

Both the Old Testament and New Testament use light often as a means of explaining how the divine presence of God comes into creation. Seems quite fitting since we need light to see. But maybe there's more to this metaphor than getting out of the dark.

Go one planet closer to the sun than us and you would be on Venus. It's not just hot there, the average temperature is 847 degrees Fahrenheit. That's hotter than any oven I've ever seen. It's about the same as the climate inside a

campfire. Go one planet further away from the sun than us and you would be on Mars. With a consistent temperature of around minus 80 degrees Fahrenheit, that's unbelievably cold—even for a Minnesotan like me.

Yet God put us right where we belong. In between the scorching heat of Venus and the frozen landscape of Mars. And here on Earth sunlight does much more than help us see and keep us comfortable between burning and freezing.

Have you ever thought about the fact that a steak sandwich is solar powered? I'm not talking about photovoltaic panels here. I'm talking about the plants at the bottom of the food chain that depend on photosynthesis to grow. These solar powered plants include

the grains along with vegetables and other foods that livestock eat. Without sunlight there is no bread, no cow, and certainly no steak sandwich.

It's entirely valid to see the light of Jesus as a source of vision. If we are wise, then we depend on that light to show us the way. But there's more to light than being able to see. If sunlight is powerful enough to provide more than visibility, then what does that tell us about the light of Jesus? Where might God's light be not only shining for you to see the path, but providing you with warmth, health, and sustenance along the way?

With you in Christ,
Wes

2023 Fundraising Update

By Wes Farrow

Since 1983, God has used Christians in Commerce to transform so many lives. Are you one of them? I thank my Lord and Savior that I am. By the grace of God and nearly 300 donors in 2023, this work continues into the next generation. Thank you, Lord Jesus!

We had a remarkable year reinvigorating WorkLight to help build God's Kingdom. This past year we celebrated the 40th birthday of our very first Challenge Weekend by welcoming 137 new igniters onto their first weekends. Even more impressively, 45 of those first-timers went on to participate in a local Chapter or Small Group. Thanks to local leaders, Chapters and Small Groups we are already praying and working to see these numbers surpassed in 2024. God willing, the funding for the addition of a new staff person will turbocharge both the depth and range of these faithful efforts.

Right around Thanksgiving of last year you might have noticed the launch of our "Let's Shine the Light" Campaign. Our campaign goal was to raise the funds needed to balance our budget, publish the *Spark* and *Flame*, and continue the basic support to our 24 Chapters and 53 Small Groups across the country. Not only did we meet our goal, but we surpassed it by early December. Hallelujah!

Once the "Let's Shine the Light" Campaign goal of \$160,000 was met, we temporarily unlocked the Mooney Campaign for all gifts through the end of the year. And the Lord provided! In just a few weeks \$50,000 was raised as initial funding to add a ministry program director to the home office staff. This hire is critical for us to take the next steps in stewarding 500 igniters onto Challenge Weekends and beyond by 2025. Praise Jesus!

The committed work and fervent prayers continue. Come Holy Spirit! Our local leaders and home office will continue to work hard for our Father as best as we can so that we can continue to prayerfully petition God to bring us the ministry program director meant for WorkLight. Our generous donors continue to give, including 100 of you that give monthly, which sustains the legacy of CIC and the basic operations of WorkLight. At the same time we are praying urgently to find a handful of major donors to help make this hire possible as soon as we can.

Please join us in that prayer and let us know if you are in a position to make such a transformative gift.

Wes Farrow is the president of WorkLight and he can be reached at wesley@worklight.org.

Lighting the Darkness

Continued from page 1

will harden their hearts toward God. Through prayer and discernment, I have received clarity in each case that God had something better in mind for them and that I am not their savior. They were given to my care for a chapter and God has something perfect in mind for them as they move on to the next chapter.

Letting anyone go is challenging, but I have sought to enter those conversations representing the light of Christ. In each of those cases, I spend extra time in prayer and preparation knowing that God can bring peace and hope to a situation that otherwise would be full of darkness and despair. Those meetings were hard, but it was amazing to see how the individuals were able to accept the decision and feel reinforced in their identity as a person who is valuable and seen, even if not the right fit for our team anymore. In turn, the remaining team has shared their gratitude for the courage to do these hard things and has been renewed.

Every day presents more opportunities to bring light to the darkness. Most opportunities are on a smaller scale and often revolve around the idea of rising above the frustrations and hardships of life and "being ready to share the reason for our hope." Other situations feel heavier, like being there for a coworker grieving the loss of a family member.

Life will always present hard moments that are opportunities for Christ to work. He uses us to bring light and hope in these situations. Always be ready!

Luke Cahill is a member of the Minneapolis-South Men's Chapter. He is also the chairman of the Board of Directors for WorkLight. Luke lives in Eagan, Minnesota, with his wife and five children. He owns a marketing research agency, REAL Insight, based in Minneapolis. Luke can be reached at lcahill@real-insight.us.

An Unexpected, Surprising Encounter

By Greg Aitkens

Bart Tesoriero and Kalani Ayau connected at a National Challenge Weekend. Through the follow-up Coworker Challenge, their friendship is continuing to this day across thousands of miles.

They met at the 2022 National Challenge Weekend in Arizona. Bart, a member since 1989, felt a nudge to stand up when President Wes Farrow issued a call for volunteers to accompany first-timers. Kalani, who was from Hawaii, almost didn't come on the weekend and was brand new to WorkLight.

"We both said yes to the Holy Spirit in different ways," Bart reflected.

During the weekend, Bart and Kalani started to get to know each other while sitting together at the same table. As they strolled together during the Emmaus walk, they connected more on a heart-to-heart level. When they bid each other goodbye on the last morning, they committed to keep the fire from the Challenge Weekend burning brightly using the new Coworker Challenge.

"I've often felt that the Challenge Weekends provided an

anointing by creating an emotional closeness to the Lord," Bart explained, "But within 24, 48, or 72 hours, if I didn't make a connection with someone else, that anointing receded."

Like Paul and Timothy's relationship in scripture, the Coworker Challenge pairs someone new to the ministry with an experienced WorkLight member. It is designed to stimulate growth and transformation in each person's relationship with God.

Kalani felt meeting Bart was a divine appointment. He admits the Challenge Weekend seemed a little strange to him at first; however, talking with Bart really helped him to become more comfortable with the experience.

They decided to use 10 weeks to take advantage of the experience the Coworker Challenge provides by keeping an appointment every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. and overcame the three-hour time difference between Phoenix and Honolulu.

Bart and Kalani kept a key Coworker Challenge question in mind during their appointments: "Lord, what changes are

you asking us to make so we can walk with you more closely, and shine brighter for you at work?"

During their calls they pray together for their respective needs, such as recent fires in Maui, and how Kalani is using his many skills as a contractor to help rebuild a church in his area. They also discuss personal struggles, including a huge challenge for Kalani to help his mother, who is now experiencing dementia.

Bart is retiring soon, and he and his wife Brenda are planning to relocate to Texas to be with their grandchildren. Bart has confessed his feelings of anxiety and trepidation to Kalani. He's praying how he might be involved in starting a new WorkLight group after he gets settled in the Fort Worth area.

The weekly experience has been surprising and unexpected, but isn't that just like the Holy Spirit? Their appointments have long surpassed the original 10-week mark and now are an important, weekly connection across many miles.

Greg Aitkens is a past member of the Board of Directors, was involved in starting the Orange County Chapter, and is a member of the Editorial Team. He and his wife Ginny have three children and three grandchildren.

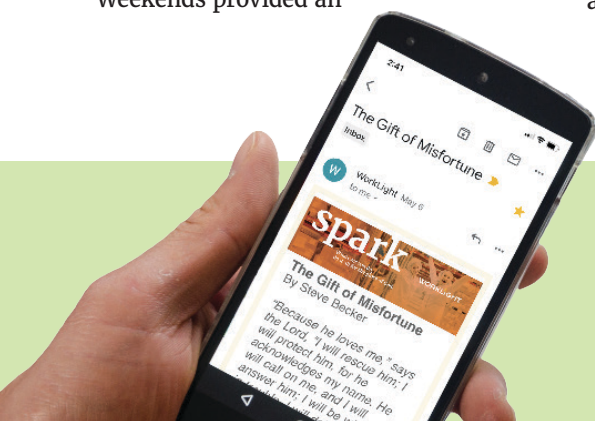
Do you have a Coworker Challenge story you'd like to share with your fellow WorkLight members?

Contact us at communications@worklight.org and we'll help you share your story.

FORWARD >>

a spark

If a Spark Reflection reminds you of someone, that's a Holy Spirit nudge. Forward it on and ignite a movement of the Holy Spirit in their life.



NEWS

CHAPTER AND SMALL GROUP MOMENTUM

Did you know that last year we reached over 130 igniters with Challenge Weekends? Even more impressively, nearly one-third of them went on to participate in a Chapter or Small Group. Praise Jesus! As our prayerful efforts continue in 2024, please join us in prayer for the momentum to reach far and wide. Come Holy Spirit!

JOHN MOONEY MEMORIAL CAMPAIGN

Thanks be to God for the hundreds of donors who contributed to the "Let's Shine the Light" campaign in 2023 and unlocked the John Mooney Memorial Campaign during the Christmas season. By the grace of God and with prayer supporters like you we are in a stronger position than ever to reach the next generation. Stay tuned for ongoing updates on how these resources are to be invested in hiring staff to support 500 igniters on Challenge Weekends by 2025 and beyond.

TRIVIA

In 2020 we moved our home office from northern Virginia to Minnesota. But that wasn't our only move across state lines in our 40-year history. How many states have been home to the headquarters of Christians in Commerce and WorkLight? Bonus question: Which states were they in?

Last month's answer: There were 12 talks on the first-ever Challenge Weekend in 1983.

NATIONAL GROWTH COUNCIL

Imagine a place where you can share experiences, learn best practices, and pray with other Small Group and Chapter leaders. Look no further than the National Growth Council! As a partner to our Program Committee and resource to our Governing Board, the National Growth Council is built to engage leaders across the country in the planning, pursuit, and prayer for growth from coast-to-coast. Interested in learning more? Are you a local leader looking to be a part of this national movement? Let us know by emailing us at ignite@worklight.org.

2024 CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

Palm Desert Men's Chapter

- February 16-17 at Sacred Heart Church, 42230 Deep Canyon Road, Palm Desert, California.

Palm Desert Women's Chapter

- March 2-3 at Sacred Heart Church, 42230 Deep Canyon Road, Palm Desert, California.

Fresno Women's Chapter

- April 19-21 at St. Anthony Retreat Center, 43816 Sierra Dr., Three Rivers, California.

Salinas/Santa Cruz Men's Chapter

- April 26-28 at Mission San Antonio De Padua in Jolon, California.

Minneapolis' Hilltop Small Group

- April 26-28 at a local member's cabin in central Minnesota.

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

Three Keys to Transformative Small Groups

For Small Groups to be effective, members need to work together to be **missional, formational, and relational**. All three are needed.

Learn more at bit.ly/WLgroups

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

Galatians 2:20

FEBRUARY 2024

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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