



Relational Not Transactional

By Joe Birkholz

When I began working full time after college, I viewed the essence of work as transactional. I would trade my time, effort, and abilities for a paycheck. I would strive to provide a good work product but only so far as I was compensated. It was personal.

As my career and my family started to grow, I realized if I were to put in additional effort each day it would yield more fruit in the future, and those would be enough to sustain my family. More than just myself would benefit. That said, I still viewed work as a transactional relationship and continued to compartmentalize my relationships with Jesus, my family, and my work.

In 2018 I was asked to participate in a large project for our bank in which two

financial institutions were to merge and the surviving bank would be twice as large. It was during these first few weeks of due diligence reviews that I met a friend named Chris.

Chris and I were tasked with bringing specific functions of each of the banks together to form one cohesive unit. Anyone who has participated in a transaction like this knows that unfortunately there are always lives and families impacted through job losses. This transaction would be no different.

Chris and I spent months flying back and forth to various locations having conversations about what this future-state organization would look like. We ultimately bonded over a

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INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

Serving and Developing Others

*“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”
(John 15:12-13)*

As Christians we know we are called to serve. It’s obvious to give food to a starving family. But how do we serve others in developing personally, professionally, and spiritually?

Contributing to the development of others can be more complicated than feeding the hungry. It requires trust, communication, relationship, vulnerability, and authenticity. Jesus provides us the ultimate model for all of this and more.



Jesus Christ didn’t just come and go. He came and saved us all according to the Father’s will. For all of eternity. To this day he offers the ultimate relationship and equips us with the Holy Spirit. Unity in Christ can bring peace, joy, and purpose to any interaction. Especially difficult ones.

Where is God calling you to serve and develop others?

April Reflections: Pages 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

Inspired Delays

By Ned Sickle

So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days... (John 11:6)

The renovation of our hotel was behind schedule and over budget. The implications included frustrated employees, angry guests, and lots of conflict. Each day was increasingly challenging and problematic. Given that patience is not one of my “talents,” it wasn’t clear whether I was helping the situation or making the problem worse.

Although I had prayed to God to remedy this problem, no resolution was evident to me. Clearly God wasn’t answering my prayers or working on my timetable.

The situation reminded me of Lazarus, one of Jesus’ best friends, when he was gravely ill. Mary and Martha were Lazarus’ sisters and had reached out to Jesus to seek his help. Although they were in Bethany, Jesus was only a few miles away from them and was

in Jerusalem when he received their message. Instead of running to their aid, Jesus chose to wait several days.

Meanwhile, Lazarus died and was placed in a tomb. Martha was angry and frustrated. When Jesus arrived, she cried out to him “if you had been here, my brother would not have died,” implying that Jesus didn’t care about one of his best friends.

Sometimes God accomplishes more through a delay. In this case, if Jesus had simply healed a sick man, few would have noticed. Instead, Jesus resurrected a man who had been dead for four days. This miraculous act caused a considerable increase in the number of people who went out to meet Jesus. Thus, Jesus was able to accomplish something that could not have occurred but for the delay.

When we pray and don’t see a breakthrough on our timetable, frustration is inevitable. Whether we are praying to heal a sickness or solve a business problem, those frustration levels can be high.

Nevertheless, we can only pray and leave the outcome, and timetable, to God. Such delays can often serve a greater purpose.

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.

PRAY

Lord, when faced with a difficult situation, help me sort out the best way to work on it with my coworkers.

REFLECT

Has there been a time when it appeared God wasn’t working on your timeline? Did you adapt? If so, what did you do differently?

DISCUSS

Share about a time in which God delayed, or did not answer, your prayer. What happened? What did you learn?



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For Christians, being a torchbearer means being God’s disciple by lighting the way for those lost in the darkness. At WorkLight, Torchbearers do this by dedicating a monthly or quarterly gift to help sustain our ministry and growth.

We are blessed to have a donor who will give \$1,000 for each of the first 25 new Torchbearers between now and May 1st. Come Holy Spirit!

Light the torch and show your support by making a recurring donation at worklight.org/support-us

WORKLIGHT

REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

Servant Leaders

By Luke Cahill

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves ... (Philippians 2:3)

One of the members of our team models service toward others daily. He has a diverse set of skills and is always finding ways to be useful to others by helping them solve problems, get things started, or get things done.

In one case, there was a report due on a project that someone else was leading, but they had limited availability. Instead of letting that person work longer hours to get it done, he stepped up and pulled almost the entire report together without dropping any of the other balls he was juggling.

As a result of his consistency of selflessness, he has endeared himself to everyone on the team.

Recently, this team member received scary news that his dad needed triple bypass surgery. Because his parents were both primary caretakers for his daughter during the work week, this was going to add some complexity to their lives leading up to the surgery and during recovery; in addition to the emotional stress of having a sick father.

One of our other team members saw an opportunity to help and stepped in to field a project to give him more flexibility. As a company, we gave him additional flexibility to work more days from home while eliminating his need to travel.

It also gave me the opportunity to take a bold step and pray with him for his dad. These small actions by our team meant a great deal to him and to us. Being able to reciprocate acts of service provided a powerful sense of connection and love for all of us.

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.

PRAY

Father, give us the grace to model servant leadership every day.

REFLECT

Who at my work models service well. How have I reciprocated their leadership in this area?

DISCUSS

What can I do to encourage a culture of service toward others within my workplace?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Be a Friend

By Marty Anderson

Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31)

She hadn't worked in our department very long and I'd never introduced myself. Her parents had both been sick for a while and now I'd heard that one had died.

A reorganization had been announced in a coworker's department and they had their job eliminated.

A coworker who was a husband/father had been caught in a compromising situation. Word spread that he had been fired.

In all three situations, I was confronted with a choice. Do I reach out or keep to myself? What would I want others to do for me? I realized that too often coworkers might completely avoid them. Since they

don't know what to say or don't want to appear to take sides, they will do nothing or worse, they gossip.

But we're called to be different because we follow Jesus.

So, for the person whose parents were sick and dying, I responded with a caring conversation and asked how I could pray for them. They didn't need cheering up or a pithy bit of encouragement. Instead, it was better to simply be present in their grief.

For the person who lost their job and doubted their value, I did what I would want done for me. I offered perspective and encouragement and helped them see how this trial could make them stronger.

And to the person who was caught up in temptation and their sin resulted in tragic implications to so many others, I came alongside them. I didn't point fingers or judge them. Instead, I tried to remember my own sin and reached out to let them know I cared and that I'd be praying for them.

So, who in your life is struggling with bad news? Who is under the weight of their sin and doesn't know a way out? Will you be their friend?

Marty Anderson lives in Bloomington, Minnesota, with his wife Cecilia. He is the president of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Chapter and a member of the WorkLight Editorial Board.

PRAY

Lord, help us to be like Jesus. Help us to treat others how we want to be treated.

REFLECT

How do you respond when coworkers are hurting? Do you live in fear?

DISCUSS

Share situations you've experienced and how you responded (or wish you had).

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

Running with Pepper

By Louie Albanese

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. (1 Corinthians 9:24)

He was one of the students assigned to me in a classroom with several underachieving students. His nickname was Pepper.

Standard classroom teaching was not his strong suit. He needed inspiration and motivation in his life. We would see a spark in him when we ran together. He liked to compete with others and with me, as well. I let him know that the annual school track meet was coming in a month, and he should enter.

Pepper's attention in class, as well as his grades, began improving significantly. His parents were impressed, as were

his classmates. For a month, Pepper practiced not just to compete, but to win. He had "never won anything before" but believed he had a chance. He wanted to know what the school record was. The time was daunting. Pepper wasn't discouraged, he was on a mission, practicing hard every day. On the day of the meet, friends and parents gathered.

The starting gun went off and Pepper ran with everything he had. Pepper crossed the finish line first, completely spent. I glanced at my watch and quickly shouted, "It's a new school record!" The crowd roared and he was ecstatic. He couldn't believe he'd done it!

With a second look at the stopwatch, I realized I had misread Pepper's time. I took a breath, cleared the time on the stopwatch, and ran to give him a congratulatory hug. Through the years, Pepper has stayed in touch.

I've kept my mistake to myself, and he would go on to accomplish so much more. He continued to run competitively through college. Now in his 60s, "Pepper" has retired from a rewarding career in Silicon Valley. He has lived a

rich, successful, and Christian life with his family and in the community.

Louie Albanese is a member of the Santa Cruz Chapter and was a teacher and school principal in the Bay Area for 20 years. In the second half of his career, he worked as a high-tech company owner in Silicon Valley.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, open our eyes to see your potential in those around us and show us how we might support them in growing in your call for them.

REFLECT

Who has "run alongside you" to make a difference in your life?

DISCUSS

Like Louie and Pepper, how can we better run the race that God has set before us in WorkLight?

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



... encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. (1 Thessalonians 2:12)

Building Blocks of the Kingdom

At WorkLight one of our four core values

is "serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives." To realize God's Kingdom is being built means opening our hearts to the anticipation of Heaven and Earth together.

But wait, there's more! God is calling us to expand this kingdom, inviting us to glorify him with our work, and summoning us to be good and faithful stewards of his creation. This means that the creator of everything not only loves us, but he wants us to actively

invest with him in the growth of the kingdom around us.

At February's Board retreat we spoke and prayed about this call, not only to faith, but to action for Jesus. Shining the light of Christ doesn't stop by sharing the story of eternal salvation. It means walking alongside our brothers and sisters on a lifelong adventure of seeking to serve our Father. At our best there are moments of the Holy Spirit supporting us to be like Jesus to one another. At other times we are simply clinging to the hope of a future Heaven. Throughout this journey God patiently invites us to join him over and over again. Not just to know we are saved for eternity, but that we are called today to work for and with the Lord.

One of my most common prayers at work is for Jesus to show us how to build our Father's Kingdom. In some

of the most profound moments of prayer I've found myself visualizing human relationships as the building blocks of this work. By treating one another as Jesus would, we are loved and challenged into the building blocks our Father has planned for his Kingdom. Encouraging, comforting, and urging one another gives us divine strength to bind together with more power than any cement or adhesive.

Where and how might you make your next effort to advance our Father's Kingdom? What relationship in your life could be a building block for the Lord's purposes? Prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit is a great place to start.

With you in Christ,
Wes



The Important Question

By Dave Mazanowski

Over the years I have had the opportunity to mentor young men going into business for themselves. I have enjoyed providing the strategic and tactical advice that will help them. Sharing my own shortcomings and failures, talking about things to avoid, and encouraging them when they are making big decisions has borne fruit.

All that is great and needed, but I contend the most valuable part I have played is asking them one question: What is your worldview?

I have yet to ask a person that question and get a cohesive answer. I love this part! It starts a journey into possibilities they could never have fathomed, the great adventure that God the Father has in store for them.

Their response is something like, “Hmmm, I don’t know my worldview. I have never thought about it. What’s yours?” (I thought you would never ask.)

My response? “Jesus is the king of the world; he is establishing his Kingdom on Earth, and he has asked me to help. I have accepted his invitation.”

Overall, the reactions have been very positive. My favorite was, “Well that changes everything!”

“It certainly does, building your own kingdom will never fulfill you but building God’s Kingdom will give you the purpose and meaning you are seeking. Whose kingdom will you build?”

Lewis Carroll famously said: “If you don’t know where you are going any road will do.” The only road worth taking is the one led by Jesus. Many people say it is all about getting to

Heaven, but I would suggest that’s a consequence not the goal.

The goal is to build God’s Kingdom on Earth. The things we do on this Earth truly matter and will have eternal impact for good or bad. The Father has invited us to collaborate with him to change the world. How cool is that?

As collaborators with God to build his Kingdom, we are set free from our own minimalistic and self-serving plans and can enter into God’s economy. This opens us up to endless life-giving possibilities that inflame our hearts and minds.

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything I have learned from my Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:15)

Everything else pales in comparison. When we truly understand who we are as children of God, we will lean into the world without fear or concern because our Father is the creator of the universe and has no rival.

He will bring about his Kingdom on Earth and he has empowered us to do it with him. There are countless ways we can serve, develop, and mentor people, but the most important thing we can do is point to the right road, because not any road will do.

Dave Mazanowski is a member of the Board of Directors of WorkLight. He lives in Indianapolis, Indiana, with his wife, Donna. He is the co-founder of Mainscape Inc. and can be reached at maz@mainscape.com.

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task that helped change my perspective on work forever.

We met with nearly everyone across our organization to listen to and assess the skills, desires, and drives of over 200 coworkers. Although many of our coworkers would ultimately be left without a job following this process, we felt that the painstaking process of meeting with so many people would aid us in treating everyone with dignity and respect.

Chris and I were able to use what we learned by actively listening to find roles for many individuals in different departments or functions of the newly combined bank and limit the impacts on many families.

The changes would affect Chris and my relationship, as well. In order to stay with the new bank, Chris was faced with a decision to accept a role that didn’t fit his long-term desires for work. I was the one who needed to deliver the somber news.

Prior to beginning this journey with Chris, the process of delivering this news would have been something I could have compartmentalized; but I had grown as a person and deepened relationships with Chris and many others. I had learned a very tangible way of seeing the gifts of work not only as a means to a paycheck but a way to impact the lives of others even in times of uncertainty.

Today, both Chris and I have moved on from the original bank we helped transform and stay in touch updating each other on our families and how our experience together helped shape our current roles.

Joe Birkholz is a member of the WorkLight Board of Directors and serves as the secretary of the Executive Committee. He is the chief risk officer at Bridgewater Bank in Minnesota, and Joe and his wife have seven children.

Accepting Service from Others

By Bill Dalgetty



Several years ago our family was traveling from New York to the Midwest. We alerted a friend from law school and his wife that we would like to stop by to see them. They expected us to stay with them overnight, but we decided to check into a motel, not wanting to “impose” upon them. They were offended, interpreting our decision as a rejection of their offer of hospitality.

When Jesus came to Peter at the Last Supper to wash his feet, Peter said, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you will have no part with me.” (John 13:8)

How hard it is for us to accept being served by someone in authority, particularly when the service involves a menial task! A servant serves his master. An employee serves his or her

boss. Jesus, the master and teacher, was turning that paradigm upside down. Peter was the first to proclaim Jesus to be “the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16) How could he allow the Son of God to wash his feet? Unthinkable!

From earliest childhood, we are taught to be self-sufficient. A young child proudly proclaims, “I did it by myself.” As we become adults, one of the challenges of a disabling illness or injury is having to depend on someone else to do things for you that you would ordinarily do yourself.

Like so many of Jesus’ words and actions, his example offers multiple lessons for us. While we need to be willing to receive service, it is just as important for us to serve. When the disciples were arguing about whom

among them was the greatest, Jesus told them, “Whoever wishes to be great among you, must be your servant.” He also reminded them, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:26, 28)

In David McCullough’s biography of President Harry Truman, he tells the following story. At a special reception Truman held for Stalin and Churchill at the Potsdam Peace Conference near the end of World War II, Sgt. Eugene List, an American concert pianist, played a Chopin waltz. List asked if someone in the audience would be good enough to turn the pages. Truman jumped to his feet, waived off another volunteer, and did the job himself. In a letter to his wife, List later wrote, “Imagine having the President of the United States turn the pages for you! ... But that’s the kind of man the President is.”

May we choose to follow both lessons from Jesus’ washing the feet of his disciples—having a desire to love and serve the people in our lives and responding with gracious acceptance when being served by others.

How willing are you to be served?

Edited from former President and Board Member Bill Dalgetty’s blog, [Christ in Life and Work](http://www.christinlifeandwork.com) (www.christinlifeandwork.com). Used with permission.

WORKLIGHT

Challenge Weekend™ Toolkit

Is your group interested in putting on a Challenge Weekend? Will you answer the call? Find important planning and event materials in the Challenge Weekend toolkit!

worklight.org/cwetoolkit

NEWS

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

By partnering with the National Christian Foundation, WorkLight is able to accept complex gifts. At various moments in life many of us are blessed to hold assets such as stocks, business interests, or real property. If you are in a position to consider such a gift, the National Christian Foundation is here to support and facilitate with their team of experts across the country. To donate stock, set up a charitable remainder trust, make a legacy gift, or to discuss planned giving options, email us at donate@worklight.org.

FEBRUARY BOARD RETREAT

Twice a year the WorkLight Governing Board gathers to pray and discuss the current state and future of WorkLight. This year was a blessed time together in Arizona where we sought God's will, prayed for an ongoing renewal of the Holy Spirit, and reflected on what each of us might do to be more like Christ in our own respective workplaces. Planning is already underway for our next retreat in October. Please let the home office know if you are experienced in board retreat facilitation or otherwise feel a call to learn more about the WorkLight Board, Committees, and retreats.

NATIONAL GROWTH COUNCIL RENEWAL

As we continue our work toward 500 igniters on Challenge Weekends by 2025, the importance of building relationships and community between local leaders and the home office is clearer than ever. To that end, we are seeking to engage local Chapter and Small Group leaders in meaningful ways through our Program Committee and National Growth Council. If you're in a position of local leadership, please let us know what would attract you to connect and build relationships with other local leaders by emailing us at info@worklight.org.

TRIVIA

As you can see from the response to last month's trivia question, God blessed us by not only reaching our goal of 75 but seeing nearly twice that many first-time attendees on Challenge Weekends. How many of those folks going on their first Challenge Weekend last year went on to participate somehow in a local Chapter or Small Group?

Last month's answer: Over the course of 2023 we saw 137 first-time igniters attend Challenge Weekends across the country.

2024 CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

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.

Palm Desert Women's Chapter

- May 3–4 at Sacred Heart Church, 42230 Deep Canyon Road, Palm Desert, California.

Gilroy Women's Chapter

- August 3–4 at St. Francis Retreat Center, 549 Mission Vineyard Road, San Juan Bautista, California.

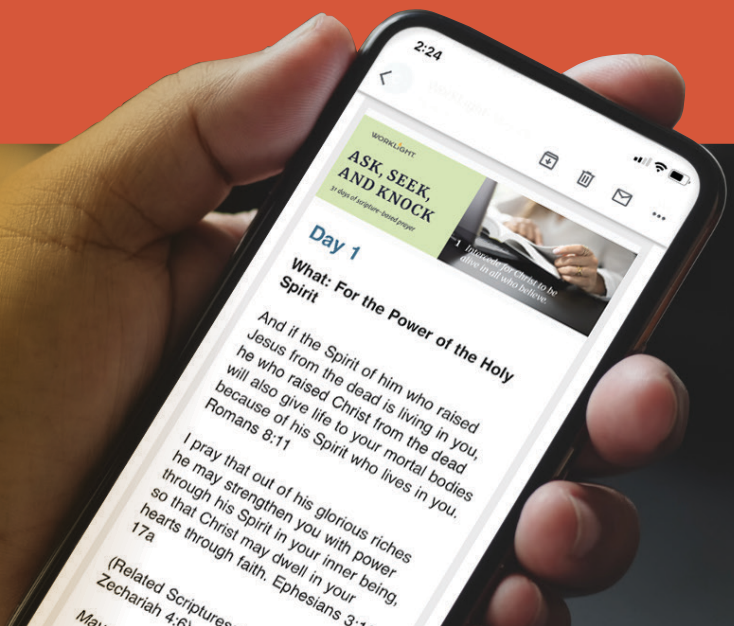
Check out these events and more at worklight.org/events/.

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

Galatians 2:20

APRIL 2024

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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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