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Coming to Grips with
**YOUR ROLE IN THE
WORKPLACE**

When I'm at home I'm one person. When I am at work I'm another," Del said, complaining about the pressures that his job put upon him.

"When I'm with Christians I act like them; at work nobody even knows that I'm a church-goer, much less a born again believer."

Del was working seventy hours a week trying to please a demanding boss who expected ever more from his employees. To quit meant that he would be without a job in a competitive market. To continue meant that he was cheating his family and jeopardizing his health.

His wife's critical attitude toward his long hours of low paying work drained whatever romance was left from their relationship. Now he was tempted to seek fulfillment with

a woman who adored him, a woman whose friendship would be free of the tensions that existed in his home. He began to consider an affair with this woman co-worker.

Del knew that with his job dilemmas there were no easy answers, perhaps no answers at all. To quit after two years of training and heavy time investments was unthinkable; to continue was to be pulled even further away from his family. Now even sexual temptation lurked on the job. He was convinced that there were no reasonable options.

What should he do?

As Americans earning a living in the late twentieth century, we face a set of challenges unknown to previous generations. With the proliferation of knowledge and inventions, we are told that there are perhaps 50,000 different kinds of possible jobs, demanding a wide range of training and aptitude. Many of these responsibilities are highly specialized and require years of training. Finding the one that best matches our abilities, temperament, and pocketbooks is indeed a difficult task.

Millions of jobs also demand intense interpersonal relationships that spark conflict and force individuals to make decisions with unclear ethical guidelines. Whereas previous genera-

tions faced rather simple day by day responsibilities, our technological and informational explosion has created a whole new set of problems. Stacks of books on such topics as tension, managing conflict, and workaholism testify to the pressures of the workplace.

If you are dissatisfied with your career, you have plenty of company. Even as early as 1976, researchers in New Jersey reported that up to 80 percent of Americans are in the wrong jobs!¹

Nevertheless, the pressure-packed working world is a great place for personal and spiritual growth. In fact, *the complex demands of the twentieth century workplace form the best laboratory to prove the reality of God*. Right in the midst of corporate America, with its evercrumbling ethical structure, is one of the best opportunities to prove that Christ can make a difference.

The purpose of this booklet is to challenge Christians to bring God from the sidelines to the very center of the workplace. *Your Role in the Workplace* is a wake-up call to hear the voice of Christ telling us that every single day on the job is a day of eternal significance.

Specifically, this booklet will show that:

- Christians in the workplace are strategically placed there by God.
- Most of the biblical heroes were not in full-time ministry but had regular jobs that they shared with the unbelieving world of their day.
- The ethical pressures of the marketplace are tests given to us by God to let us prove that our love for Him is stronger than life itself.
- God often uses our dislike of a particular job to teach us lessons we could never otherwise learn.
- To “let our light shine” in the workplace means that we have earned the right to be heard.

Our vocations are an entrance exam to see where we should be slotted in the coming kingdom. Christ told several different parables, each emphasizing the same point: those who are faithful with what God has given them will receive a reward in heaven; the careless will suffer loss. Not everyone who enters heaven will hear, “Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master” (Matthew 25:23).

The purpose of the judgment seat of Christ is not to berate us but that we might be assigned a responsibility that corresponds to our degree of

faithfulness, including our diligence at work. All believers will be fulfilled in the kingdom but some will have more responsibility than others.

Is God interested in your work? It may come as a surprise that God Himself is a worker. After creation we read, "And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done" (Genesis 2:2). God created the world and it is described as work. He upholds creation and that is work. Because we are created in the image of God, we also were created to be workers.

CREATED TO WORK

Most of us suspect that work came about as a result of the curse. In truth, God intended that we work. Even before Adam and Eve sinned we read, "And the Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it" (Genesis 2:8,15). Sin makes work harder, but by no means was it the cause of work.

We were created to work; indeed work is man's lot by virtue of the de-