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By Rick Boxx

SHINING LIKE STARS IN THE MARKETPLACE

A question I often hear when speaking about faith in the workplace comes from people who are not CEOs, those who are not the top decision-making executives in their companies. Many of them can readily understand how a CEO can affect change within an organization, but those who are not CEOs doubt their own ability to bring about change where they work, especially in terms of faith and spiritually based values.

This kind of thinking, while understandable, is unfortunate because it can undermine the potential for genuine, positive change. From my own experience, and in consulting with people in many kinds of businesses and organizations, I have discovered there are unlimited opportunities of all people to make a difference.

A question that naturally arises from such a statement is, “How can we make that difference?” I think the best place to start is by considering two similar passages from the Scriptures, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. Both talk about people of faith “shining like stars” in their surroundings.

In the prophetic book of Daniel, it tells about “a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.” But then it declares, *“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:1-3).*

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The other passage, the second chapter of Philippians, reminds us, “it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” Clearly, it states wherever we go and whatever we do – even in the workplace – God can use us to accomplish His plans. Then we are instructed, *“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky” (Philippians 2:13-15).*

We live and work in turbulent times; at times things seem dark and disheartening. “Where is God in this?” we might wonder. It is at times like these, however, that we have the opportunity to do as the Scriptures say, to “shine like stars in the sky” to illuminate the oppressive darkness.

Think of it this way: In a large, well-lit room, a lightbulb of low wattage or a candle seems to make very little difference in how bright the area appears. However, when the lights are turned off and all other sources of illumination have been eliminated, that small lightbulb or candle suddenly seems to shine brightly, drawing us to it. In a similar way, if we find ourselves working in spiritually dark environments, we can ask God to provide ways where we can “shine like stars” and make a difference far beyond anything we could imagine.

Author C.S. Lewis wrote, “I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen. Not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” That is a profound statement, and we should pray as ambassadors for Jesus Christ in the marketplace, as described in 2 Corinthians 5:20, that as others observe our lives and hear us tell about what we believe and why, that they also will be able to see Him.

It is important to remember that God’s ways are unconventional. When we embrace His ways, and model them in the places where we work, our actions stand out to others. As the Lord works in us and through us, often in

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unexpected ways, they will see a difference. Over time, He will give us the opportunity to reveal Jesus Christ, *“the light of the world” (John 9:5)* to those around us.

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Reflection/Discussion Question

1. Do you believe that people other than top executives can make a meaningful difference in the workplace, especially in terms of helping to set a spiritual focus for how work is done and services are provided? Why or why not?
2. How can people make this kind of difference, especially if they are not the primary decision-makers?
3. What do you think of the idea expressed in the Bible about “shining like stars” to the world around us, including those places where we work?
4. If you made this decision, resolving that “I want to be one of those who are shining like stars at my company (my business or organization),” how might you go about striving to do this?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Matthew 5:14-16; John 1:4-9, 3:19-21, 8:12, 12:45-46

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