

LIFEGROUP LESSON



“The Call to Influence”
(Part 3 of 3)

Earning the Right to be Heard



TIPS FOR DISCUSSION FACILITATOR

Ensure that the aim is first to understand the text and then to make it meaningful and relevant. The discussion questions provided are intended to bring out the relevance for today.

Begin with a prayer for the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Encourage everyone to participate in the discussion.

Begin the discussion by reading the sermon passage (where applicable), and discuss about its overall meaning by asking what could be the key focuses/emphases in that particular passage.

Spend appropriate amount of time on each question with as many members as possible making a contribution. At the end of each discussion the leader should summarise the main points that have arisen and direct the group towards making them applicable in their individual lives.

A balance must be kept between ascertaining what the Bible teaches and what are the opinions of participants. So the facilitator should make sure that there is an understanding of the passage before questions are raised.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

What must we do to earn our right to be heard at work?

1. Earning our Right through Our Professional Competence
2. Earning our Right through Our Christlike Character
3. Earning our Right through Our Thoughtful Consideration

Sharing Your Faith at Work

(Adapted from a sermon by Dr Bill Peel, entitled “A New Career Objective”)

The greatest communication success story in human history is how the gospel message spread across the Mediterranean world in the first centuries of the church. It was partly due to the effective preaching of Peter, Paul and a few other gifted communicators, as well as Paul’s strategy of targeting the key cultural centers to plant churches that then infected the countryside, but even more so, it was due to ordinary Christians recognizing that sharing the message of Jesus was everyone’s mission. As early as Acts 8:4, while the leaders were hunkered down under persecution, we read, “Those who had been scattered were bringing the good news of the word wherever they went.”

In simple words, the gospel spread like wildfire from home business to home business by men and women who personally gossiped the gospel to friends, relatives, acquaintances, colleagues, masters, slaves, students, teachers, customers, shop owners, and fellow soldiers through their everyday networks. Men and women who heard the gospel in a neighbour’s household carried it back to their household, and so on and so on. As a result, the church experienced phenomenal growth. Followers of Jesus grew from a few hundred on the day of Pentecost to an estimated six-plus million by the end of the third century—amazing numbers considering the only media were word-of-mouth encounters and hand-written letters.

Sometimes we might assume that reaching people with the gospel has gotten harder. In a way this is true. It is harder to get people to visit a church, listen to a gospel presentation over a media source, or attend a crusade. But the avenue of personal relationships remains wide open. But if a person does not trust us, he or she will not trust what we say about Jesus. So what is it that will cause men and women at our workplaces to be curious about our faith? Three things seemed to be very apparent:

- First, we must **do good work**. Whether doing a deal or doing the dishes, changing a diaper or mucking out a barn, studying a contract or studying for an exam. If we want people to pay attention to our faith, we need to first pay attention to our work.
- Second, we must be people of **godly character**. What makes people interested in Jesus is seeing Jesus in us. Both what we say and what we do reveal what is in our heart.
- Third, **how we treat other people** is incredibly important. Someone rightly said that people don’t care how much we know until they know how much we care. The quality of our relationships will determine the quality of our influence.

Discussion for Point 1: Earning the Right through our Professional Competence.

- What do you think is the difference between pursuing excellence and pursuing perfectionism in our work? “Nobody can be perfect, but everyone can be excellent in their work.” Do you agree with this? An author once claimed that, “our excellence at work may be the foundational requirement for spiritual influence in our workplace.” Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answers. Does it mean that those who do a good job at work should automatically be trusted regarding other matters in life? Explain your answer. On the other hand, how do you feel about a person who does not do his or her best at work, i.e. how does his or her attitude at work affect your level of trust for that person in other matters? In what ways can you earn your right to be heard in your current workplace/school through being excellent at what you are doing?

Discussion for Point 2: Earning the Right through our Christlike Character.

- In what ways can believers appear unlikeable and ungodly in their workplaces? Give as many real life examples you have encountered as possible (without giving names). How do you think such behaviours from believers can affect the way their colleagues/classmates view them as individuals in particular, and how they might view the Christian faith in general? An author said that, “what makes people interested in Jesus is seeing Jesus in us.” Do you agree with this assertion? Explain your answer. What is one Christlike character you would like to develop more in your personal life so that you can be a better testimony at work? How can the LG support you to develop this character?

Discussion for Point 3: Earning the Right through our Thoughtful Consideration.

- Nothing reveals more about our character than how we treat people, especially in our sensitivity (or lack thereof) towards others in our speech and actions. Do you agree with this? Give reasons. Give some examples of how believers can at time be insensitive or inconsiderate in their relationships with others at work. Thoughtful consideration should not just be limited to our actions, since the manner in which we communicate with others also reveals much about how greatly we value them. Why do you think that it is important for believers to be considerate and thoughtful towards the people around us, especially those in our workplace? In what ways do you think God wants you to show more thoughtfulness for others through your actions and your communication at work? How can the LG be the training ground for developing such thoughtful considerations towards others?

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for human masters,
since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.
It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

~ **Colossians 3:23-24** ~

Appendix A (For general reading and reflection)

What Makes You So Different?

Four ways to have an impact for Christ in the workplace before you say a word

By Becky Brodin,

(Adapted from Discipleship Journal, <http://www.navpress.com/magazines/archives/article.aspx?id=13492>)

"Three o'clock a.m. and all's well!" I quipped, sliding into my chair at the nurses' station. There were only two patients in our Cardiac Care Unit that night, and both were happily on the mend, leaving us with a quiet shift. As soon as my notes were updated, I settled in to stare at the monotonous heart rhythms bouncing across the monitor screens. The other nurse on duty that night interrupted my reverie. "Can I talk to you about something?" Her tone of voice snapped me to attention. "Sure," I said. "What is it?"

She cleared her throat and began. "I've noticed you bring your Bible to work every day, and I know you are a Christian, but . . ." she paused, "as a nurse in this unit you are dispensable. You have a lot of potential, but the discrepancy between what you could be and what you are is disappointing. Let me give you some advice whether you want it or not. If I were you I'd become indispensable. Maybe then someone will listen to your religion."

I was shocked, but I wasn't offended—I knew that she was right. I had learned what I needed to do in order to get by, but I hadn't progressed any further. Outside activities had multiplied, leaving me a pittance of energy to do a good job at work. I was eager to share the gospel with my co-workers, but I'd become blind to the laziness that clouded any chance to witness effectively.

The next time I worked the day shift, I made an appointment to talk with the head nurse. I apologized for my laziness and asked her to point out any other attitudes that hindered the quality of my performance. After that, I apologized to my co-workers, left my Bible at home, and got down to work.

Our attitudes and actions at work that contradict the validity of the gospel message are costly. Too often we miss the contribution we can make through godly distinctives that set us apart. These characteristics can cause others to wonder what makes us different. If our co-workers sense we have something that they lack, they may be drawn toward Christ.

First Peter 3:15 says, "In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do so with gentleness and respect." Our co-workers may never say to us, "Will you give the reason for the hope that you have?" But just last week another nurse commented, "You have an inner strength that I wish I had. How do you do it?" That was what I call a **1 Peter 3:15** question.

Again and again, Scripture points to our attitudes and actions as the critical touch point between us and others. The Apostle Peter exhorts us in **1 Pet. 2:12** to "live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." Paul gave Titus a similar challenge: "In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us" (**Tit. 2:7–8, NASB**). Even Jesus commanded us to "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (**Mt. 5:16**). All three passages point out that our behaviour does have an impact on others.

Scripture describes four godly distinctives that can set believers apart from the rest of the world. When cultivated, these attitudes and actions can make those watching our lives thirsty to know more.

WORK IS WHERE THE HEART IS

The first distinctive is wholeheartedness: When we're at work, we need to be all there. If we're in a job God has willed then we can give that job all we have for His sake. **Colossians 3:23** challenges us, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

Wholeheartedness has a variety of applications, from little things like writing down another person's phone message, refilling the coffee maker, or returning borrowed files and books, all the way to keeping current professionally, willingly volunteering for extra work, and being an integral, involved employee.

When my coworker confronted me with my poor work habits, I made some changes. Besides leaving my Bible study at home, I started getting up in time to be at work fifteen minutes early instead of sliding in under the wire, as my habit had been. I read nursing journals, volunteered to care for difficult patients, offered to prepare special in-services, and looked for opportunities to lend a hand to my co-workers.

My new wholeheartedness brought benefits in addition to pleasing the Lord. The extra effort increased my enjoyment of the job, and I noticed a growing interest among the other nurses to talk about spiritual topics during down time.

YOUR TELL-TALE TONGUE

The second characteristic of excellent behavior is discretion in speech. Remember the words to the simple children's song, "Be careful little tongue what you say, for the Father up above is looking down in love"? The Father is not the only one who notices our speech. Those watching our lives also listen carefully to what we say.

Two critical areas of speech either reveal our commitment to Christ or leave others bewildered as to what we believe: the purity of our words and the way we talk about others.

Keeping it clean. After finishing a surgery recently, I was cleaning up when a sack full of bits of suture and paper dumped out on the floor. As I bent over to pick up the strewn pieces, a co-worker came over to help me. He uttered a couple of swear words, then smiled at me and said, "Since I knew you wouldn't say that, I've said it for you." It was a small clue that he had noticed what was missing from my speech. Abstaining from using the typical array of four-letter words makes Christians remarkably different from their peers.

The same principle governs our jokes. Recently I overheard two nurses joking about one of the doctors who openly identifies himself as a Christian but tells lewd jokes and casually tosses sexual innuendoes about. The nurses laughed as they speculated about the range of his duties as an elder at his church. My heart ached when I caught their analysis of the apparent hypocrisy. There's something out-of-joint when a professing Christian tells off-colour jokes and teases with sexual innuendoes. This sexual bantering is common in our age, but it's inappropriate for us to join in.

Avoiding gossip. Besides abstaining from swearing or off-colour jokes, another tricky area is how to handle the bits of gossip that inevitably come my way— they're so easy to pass along. Like all Christians, I need to remember the devastating effects such storytelling can have on relationships. As genuine friendships develop, people begin to exchange personal facts and feelings. Can our co-workers open up to us, knowing that we will keep their information confidential? Or have they heard us gossip about others and decided to keep quiet around us?

Betraying a confidence and participating in gossip not only violates relationships, it ruins a hearing for the gospel. When our speech is free of gossip, we give others a basis for trust.

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

The third godly distinctive that exalts Christ is our willingness to develop and maintain a positive attitude. In the workplace today, everything from the management to the soup-of-the-day offered in the cafeteria are targets for complaint and criticism. Yes, some situations require scrutiny and change. But indulging in unnecessary negativism can become a destructive habit.

Philippians 2:14–15 gives us a different standard: "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe." Choosing not to complain in a society of complainers sets us apart.

Every job has its unpopular duties. Where I work, being pulled to another area of the hospital to work triggers grumbling. A co-worker answered the phone one day and relayed the message to me that I was being called to work in the surgical preparation area. I responded with a simple, "O.K." He did a double take, spun around, and said, "Why don't you whine

and complain like everyone else? I've never seen anything like it!" Again, a simple difference in attitude made a statement.

It's especially hard to be positive when we're personally criticized or corrected. It's more natural to become angry and defensive. What will set us apart is choosing to accept the criticism and learning from it. The Apostle Peter wrote, "How is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and endure it, this is commendable before God" (1 Pet. 2:20).

When I was first learning the duties in my present job, another nurse approached me with a slip of paper in her hand. She said, "I'm going to criticize your work. There are six or seven things you are not doing right." Then she proceeded to itemize them. I prayed for wisdom, and by God's grace I was able to ask her for more details, to write down her suggestions, and to thank her for her input. Our relationship deepened, instead of splintering because of defensiveness on my part. A month ago this same nurse asked me if I knew of any Bible verses that could help her in a tough situation. There's genuine openness between us.

SWALLOWING THAT PRIDE

The last, and for me the most powerful characteristic attitude of a Christian in the workplace is the willingness to apologize when I'm wrong. For some unexplainable reason, when we go to those around us and humble ourselves because we've done something wrong, the opportunities to witness open wide.

A while back during the heat of a life and-death crisis in the operating room, I snapped at another nurse. After things settled down, I went to her and apologized for the manner in which I had spoken to her. She accepted my apology. The next day in the break room, that nurse's best friend approached me. "What makes you so different?" she asked. I suspected she was referring to my exchange with her friend the day before. "It's because I have a personal relationship with Christ," I responded.

She moved her chair next to mine and began asking questions. Two days later she approached me again and asked if we could talk outside of work. She confided that she was facing severe personal problems and was looking for someone who could help her deal with them from a spiritual perspective. Nothing else had worked for her. We met at a restaurant and talked for a long while. When I sketched out an illustration of the gospel for her, it made so much sense to her that she bowed her head right there and invited Christ to come into her life.

Had it been worth it to humble myself to her friend? Yes, many times over. In fact, whenever we don't measure up in any of the areas I've discussed, God gives us a second chance if we will humble ourselves:

- If we have become lazy, we can go back and clear the record to allow for another run at working wholeheartedly.
- If our speech falls short, we can apologize to those involved and buy another opportunity to identify with Christ.
- If complaining has encroached on a positive attitude, we can go back and set things right, then rebuild a platform from which to share the gospel.

Although it was painful at the time, I'm glad someone cared enough to tell me about the attitudes and actions that were hampering my witness at work. The investment and effort made in cultivating some godly distinctives in my own work habits has paid off above and beyond what I ever anticipated possible.

Of course, even when our performance and our attitudes begin to reflect the difference Christ makes in our lives, there's no guarantee that our co-workers will be drawn to Him. Godly behaviour may make some people uncomfortable, and may even subject us to misunderstanding or ridicule.

But there are those who are searching for meaning in the day-to-day routine, who sense in their spirits that there is more to life than just getting by, more to relationships than shared misery and power struggles. To them, a truly Christian attitude is a signpost to a better way. When they see the truth of the gospel in our lives, how natural it will seem for them to accept it from our lips.

Appendix B (For deeper reflection)

Integrity In The Workplace

Some Christians contend that biblical truths don't work in the business world. Can you really do your job without ethical compromise?

By Robert Tamasy,

(Adapted from Discipleship Journal, <http://www.navpress.com/magazines/archives/article.aspx?id=13520>)

Jerry frowns at the bid specifications in front of him. The design contract would give a much-needed boost to his fledgling architectural firm, but he could not complete the work as scheduled. "The only way I can get that contract," he mutters to himself, "is if I lie about meeting that deadline."

In another setting, an account executive sits across the desk from the president of a brokerage house. "Charles, you've been with the firm for nine years, and I appreciate your work. But as I've told you before, business and religion don't mix—at least not here. I won't tolerate any more Bible studies in this building, and no more proselytizing. You are paid to serve our clients and oversee your department, not to be some kind of missionary!"

How would you deal with these situations? Ethical dilemmas that seem so easily resolved in a Sunday sermon or a Bible discussion group are much tougher to handle in the everyday marketplace. Are Christian principles really valid in the business world? Is work without ethical compromise possible? I once heard a real estate salesman who professed to be a Christian admit, "I don't always tell potential buyers facts that might influence their decision negatively. If I were totally honest, I'd never make a sale!"

Not long ago a business manager for a group of newspapers told me that he now refuses to grant credit to advertisers whose business cards or stationery bear Christian symbols or Bible verses. The reason, he explained, was that most of his overdue accounts were those of people who had boldly proclaimed they were running "Christian" businesses, yet had not found it necessary to pay for ads they had purchased.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRITY

Working for the Right Boss. One reason we wrestle with maintaining our integrity in the marketplace is that we misunderstand our primary purpose for working. Most people, Christians included, would say they work to earn a living, because they enjoy it, or so they can afford the "nicer things" in life.

The New Testament tells us God has a different perspective. Paul writes, "And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (**Col. 3:17**). He continues, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, *as working for the Lord, not for men*, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. *It is the Lord Christ you are serving*" (vv. **23–24**). Scripture tells us we are to work as if we are receiving our assignments from Jesus Christ, rather than "Mr. Harris" or "Ms. Abernathy." Would your attitude toward job responsibilities be different if the signature at the bottom of your paycheck was "God"?

Trusting the True Provider. To avoid compromise in the workplace, we also need the conviction that it is God, not our employers or businesses, who will ultimately provide for us. While **Heb. 11:1** defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (*NKJV*), we find it much easier to place our confidence in the substance of a corporate logo, or to rely on the evidence of a supervisor's handshake. God does not guarantee us every promotion or the most successful business, but he has promised to meet our needs (**Phil. 4:19**).

Some years ago, Jerry, the architect, decided to stop his double life as devout Christian on Sunday and secular businessman on Monday. He determined to glorify God in all his business decisions, even if they seemed foolish from a worldly perspective. That commitment required becoming completely honest when bidding on projects. If he could not meet the specified deadlines, his bid proposals openly acknowledged he would need more time.

Ten years later, Jerry's architectural firm is thriving. He has missed out on some contracts because of his honesty, but in the process he has gained a reputation as a man of integrity who is true to his word. Clients frequently return to him with new projects, confident the work will be done well—when promised.

Serving as Salt. Although our society often rejects the laws of God, people who live out their convictions are still respected. People of principle stand out as the "light" and "salt" we are called to be. But unless we retain our flavor, unless our actions are different from those of the people around us, we will be like salt that is "no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men" (**Mt. 5:13**).

Not long after Jerry resolved to serve God in every area of his life, he hired a young architect named Carl. They occasionally discussed the Christian faith, but what really caught Carl's attention was Jerry's determination to be unquestionably honest and forthright in his business dealings. This helped Carl recognize the reality of Jesus Christ in Jerry's life, leading to his own commitment to the Lord. Today, they are business partners having a strong impact for Christ in the lives of many other people.

Avoiding Spiritual Shipwreck. The impact of our ethical behavior on those around us is important, but even more important is the effect our obedience has on our own relationship with God. Even small concessions can lead to spiritual disaster. Paul writes that by giving up a good conscience some had "shipwrecked their faith" and had even become guilty of blasphemy (**1 Tim. 1:19–20**). Admittedly, consistent, upright behavior on the job is more easily espoused than achieved. What steps do Jerry and others follow when facing ethical dilemmas?

ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES

Our convictions establish boundaries for our behavior. Therefore, it is important to think through our convictions and decide how we will act in various situations before they occur. A moment of ethical crisis is not the time to begin wondering, "What should I do now?" Steve, a department store executive, felt it was unfair for his merchandise buyers to keep all the clothing samples commonly given away by manufacturers. He directed that the free items be shared with other employees. One morning Steve arrived at his office and found a sweater on his desk. An attached note from one of the buyers read, "Thought your wife would like this." For an instant, Steve considered keeping the sweater; but he knew he, too, had to abide by the new policy. He promptly returned the sweater, instructing her to give it to a clerk who could not afford such an item.

Sometimes ethical conflicts are best dealt with by avoiding them before they present themselves. When Janice was offered the position of national sales manager for her company, she was delighted. Her husband was fully in favor of the promotion. As they prayed about the new position, however, they began thinking through the new responsibilities Janice would have. The job required traveling around the country and meeting in motels with sales representatives—many of them men—to encourage and motivate them. Although Janice and her husband had a strong and happy marriage, they understood the dangers of courting temptation. When she met with the company's executive vice president, Janice told him how much she wanted the job, but also expressed why she felt she could not accept it. A long discussion followed, and afterward the company established dual national sales manager positions. Janice was given the responsibility for only the female sales representatives around the country.

SEEK AN ALTERNATIVE

Since God wishes for us to be salt—and not vinegar—it is often advantageous to suggest an alternative to avert an ethical conflict. Proclaiming, "I can't do that—I'm a Christian!" may indeed communicate one's convictions, but it may also sound judgmental and condescending, and may hinder future witnessing opportunities. Sometimes a silent prayer asking for God's wisdom and intervention is a better course of action than a direct confrontation with a superior.

Daniel and several other Israelites were among an elite group selected to serve the king of Babylon and to eat from his table. But since the food served would break Jewish dietary restrictions, "Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine" (**Dan. 1:8**). He could have said, "Hey, no way I'm going to eat that garbage!" but instead chose a more conciliatory approach: He asked the chief official for permission to test an alternative diet. The official was reluctant at first, but finally agreed to let Daniel and his friends eat and drink nothing but vegetables and water for ten days. At the end of the trial period, they looked healthier than those who had eaten food fit for a king!

Years ago, I was publisher of a community newspaper belonging to a corporation that owned other newspapers and printing plants throughout a large metropolitan area. I was notified that effective the following day, our plant would begin

printing a newspaper for homosexuals. Previously, the company had printed the publication elsewhere in the city. I was distressed and angered by the decision. After praying and seeking counsel from friends, I wrote a lengthy letter to my superior. I explained that from a Christian and moral perspective, I was opposed to my plant being involved with the "gay" newspaper in any way. In addition, I pointed out that the decision would threaten the good will and support of our conservative, family-oriented community.

Within two weeks, the decision was reversed. Responsibility for printing the homosexuals' newspaper was assigned to another area of the city. I would like to say that my moral opposition prompted the change, but the decision was made strictly from a business perspective. One problem remained. I was responsible only for the work in our plant, yet my company still printed a publication that clearly endorsed lifestyles that God opposes. This was a "gray area" for me. I could have resigned in protest, but I determined my role as "salt and light" would be served best if I stayed.

STAND FIRM!

Ethical dilemmas cannot always be avoided, nor are there always alternatives that permit everyone to save face. Sometimes we have no choice but to cling to our convictions, look to the Lord, and refuse to compromise our faith.

While King Darius was preparing to put Daniel in charge of the whole kingdom, jealous administrators plotted to dispose of the prophet. Knowing Daniel prayed to God before an open window three times a day, they convinced Darius to issue a decree outlawing prayers to anyone but the king. Daniel continued his public prayers to God. Darius regretfully arrested Daniel and had him thrown into the lions' den. The account tells us the Lord "shut the mouths of the lions" (**Dan. 6:21**), sparing Daniel's life and affording him greater opportunities to glorify Him.

Daniel knew holding to his convictions could cost his life, but saw the conflict as unavoidable and without an alternative course of action. His trust in God proved sufficient. Yet the reward in remaining faithful to God is not always immediately forthcoming. In the midst of descriptions of such champions of the faith as Abraham and Moses, we find this sobering statement: "All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance" (**Heb. 11:13**).

Fred, a high school teacher, felt it was his duty before God to teach the biblical view of Creation as well as the theory of evolution. This often gave him an opportunity to present the gospel to individuals in his class. Eventually one parent, incensed to learn her son had prayed to accept Jesus Christ, demanded that the principal prohibit the teacher from "imposing his faith on young, impressionable people." The principal ordered Fred not to teach about Creation or to talk about his Christian faith in the classroom. Fred did not argue, but the next time he taught the theory of evolution he again presented the scriptural account of Creation. Fred was soon confronted by the principal and fired.

Pam agreed to work on a major project for a Christian businessman, but when she completed the products he refused to pay for them. Following biblical guidelines, she approached him individually, then took some witnesses with her, and finally brought the matter before their church. The businessman still did not pay. Pam eventually lost more than \$100,000 because she obeyed the scriptural injunction not to take a fellow believer to court (**1 Cor. 6:1-8**).

NO EASY ANSWERS

The Bible is not a simple "how-to" guide for dealing successfully with every situation. Just as no two people are alike, neither are the ethical dilemmas they encounter. But God's principles are clear. What is your situation today? Would a person be able to determine you are a Christian simply by observing your actions on the job? Have you established specific, biblically-reasoned ethical boundaries for your life? Do you seek out alternatives when you are asked to compromise your convictions? Are you willing to stand up for Christ, no matter what the cost?

If any of your answers is "No," or "Not always," don't despair. None of us could claim total success. Even the Apostle Paul wrote, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (**Phil. 3:12**). We too must press on, with the solid assurance that God will give us the strength to do anything He asks of us.