

418 Faith in Workplace FINAL AUDIO

Speaker: [00:00:00] Are you a Christian and you struggle with how do I express my faith at work without getting into trouble? Then this is the episode for you. Welcome to Beyond the Rut, the podcast that shares encouraging stories and practical advice to help pull you out of your rut into a life with living. I'm your host, Jerry Dugan, and in this episode, we're going to talk specifically about faith at work, practical strategies for a more meaningful career.

So, I know my audience isn't all Christian, and, uh, we come from a variety of backgrounds. Even though I do target a very specific type of person. That's the reality. And that's because these topics reach a lot of people. Now for this week's episode, I just, I really had it on my heart to share specifically how Christian men, 35 to 45 years old who are married, they've got kids.

They have all the boxes checked of what success looks like, but maybe deep down inside, they're wondering, how do I express my Christian faith? In my secular [00:01:00] workplace, and if that's you, great, if that's not you, also great. Uh, so this is going to be more specific to this crowd and this specific topic. Uh, it might be the most I've ever quoted scripture in the history of beyond the rut.

I do not claim to be a prophet. I don't claim to be a pastor. I'm just sharing my personal journey, my faith, my perspective on this particular topic. What has worked well for me and lessons I've learned from observing others in the workplace. We're going to dive right in. And these are the top three concerns that you may be facing about your Christian faith in the workplace.

Now, if you're not a Christian, you're probably thinking, man, I can come up with a lot of reasons why somebody should not be sharing their Christian faith in the workplace and. There's kind of some overlap here. So top three things or concerns that Christian men may have about expressing their faith at work.

Number one, fear of judgment or discrimination. Number two, how to navigate those secular environments. And number three, [00:02:00] balancing faith and professionalism. Now going back to that first one, that fear of judgment or discrimination, you know, a lot of Christian men worry about being judged or

discriminated against by their colleagues or superiors if they openly express their faith.

And that could lead to some self censorship and reluctance to share their beliefs. You know, we're called as Christians, I believe, in Matthew, it's the Great Commission here. So horrible quoting already, right? Like I said, I'm not a pastor and I don't claim to be one, uh, but it is the, it's known as the Great Commission.

That's to go forth and make disciples of nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In essence, go out there, share the good news of Jesus Christ and how he can help bridge the gap. Amen. Amen. That a lot of us feel, that emptiness, that only God can fill, only something higher than us, something spiritual, can fill.

And, uh, that is, how do I share the gospel of Jesus? It's the good news. I'm supposed to be a light to the [00:03:00] world, uh, the salt, those kinds of things. So, how can I do that if I'm not sharing my faith openly because I'm worried I'm going to get fired? I'm going to get ridden up. My coworkers are not going to want to work with me and so on.

And the thing is, we're meant to be the light of the world. And that's something to really keep in mind. I'm going to, I'm going to get to that in just a moment, navigating secular environments, you know, if you work for federal government, if you work for a refinery, if you work for, uh, gosh, any business in general, there may be this, this clash of, you know, Uh, maybe they're progressive, uh, leanings, and you might be more of a conservative Christian.

There's a lot to be unpacked here, and we're not going to be able to get into all this in a 25 to 30 minute episode, um, but a lot of folks who are Christian feel that there's a lot of pressure to conform to this dominant culture. So if it's more progressive. If it is [00:04:00] much more embracing of other religions and so on, that could be an internal struggle for a lot of Christians.

Uh, and you might feel compelled that you've got to now outwardly speak up about, you know, putting my cross up or I hate working there because I don't get to be a Christian because we let all the other religions express their faith and so on. There, there's a There's something to consider for us as Christians, uh, a little reality check in a sense.

Um, and this isn't one of my top three tips to address these concerns, but just something to keep in mind. What if the entire world is not Christian? What?

Yeah, exactly. We got atheists out there. We have Muslims. We have Buddhists. We have Jews. We have Hindus. There are a lot of people from a lot of different backgrounds, and they're working through their lives as best they can.

And it's very easy, especially in the United States, for Christians to come in and think this is the only worldview, because it's my experience. And [00:05:00] therefore, we make the misunderstood, misguided assumption. That the whole world is familiar with Christianity from our Christian perspective. And the reality isn't chances are they are familiar with Christianity, but for me, judgey, push my values down your throat.

Um, things like same sex marriage, uh, anti abortion, uh, things that they may not believe in things that really don't work for them. And here we are pushing that down. And, and so that's something to consider. Is that really welcoming? Is that inviting? Is that letting people know that, Hey, Jesus is here for you.

Or is it more of look at some rules you have to live by in order to know Jesus. It's almost like we've added some layers into having a relationship with Jesus and being a part of the body of Christ. And that's something to consider. Uh, the third thing, balancing faith and professionalism. We probably want to be seen as competent and professional while also being true to our faith.[00:06:00]

You know, we, we, we don't want to be seen as that preachy person and, uh, rely on, well, I'm a Christian and, you know, God will, you know, fix this problem for me. And so we might tamp down our faith so much so that we focus solely on our skills and capabilities and, uh, as a result, we don't really share the good news of the gospel.

So those are the kind of the three concerns I wanted to tackle on.

If you're still with me, uh, three tips, this is from my own journey, my own understanding on how to address these concerns. Yeah. How do I be that Christian follower that that follower of Jesus Christ, that ambassador of Jesus Christ in the workplace without crossing the boundaries that would get me in trouble that would make others feel uncomfortable, that would alienate me [00:07:00] or make me seem as somebody that.

You know, we can't work with the first tip I want to share with you is just flat out. Do your job, do your job and do it with excellence. Don't do it just enough to get by, do it with excellence. Why am I saying that? Number one, you were hired by that company to do a job for that company, to knock out some tasks,

earn some money, provide services, whatever it is, you're paid X number of dollars to do a specific thing.

And that is your primary reason for being there for that company. Now, you as a Jesus Christ follower, you have an added role, and that is to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ wherever you go, because you're out there to make disciples of nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Yes. So how do you balance that? And it really comes down to your actions, you know, do the work, do it really well, be competent at what you do. You know, when you, when [00:08:00] you show up to a meeting, make it about the tasks while still being driven by who you are and what you are and whose you are. And there's one verse that really stands out to me.

It's from the book of colossians chapter three, verse 23. And that is whatever you do, work at it with all your heart. As working for the Lord, not for human Masters, and it goes on to say in verse 24. Since you know that you'll receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward, it is the Lord Christ. So, when you are going to work, yes, you're working for that company, Acme Corporation, whatever it is, the US government, the military, refineries, yes, you're getting paid by that company, but as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, the work you do is also a reflection of Him.

Because think about it. If you come in late, you leave early, you do crappy work, yeah I said crappy, is [00:09:00] that really the best light to show Jesus? Cause you're really just coming in and saying, well this place sucks, I'm gonna give the bare minimum, because I don't believe Jesus has my back. So when it comes to topics like tithing, giving generously, loving others, we've lost credibility because we came in and we're like, I hate working here, I hate planning for my day to get here on time, I don't like my coworkers enough to relieve them on time, I don't care about my customers enough to be here to do my job the best I can, and it's all about me.

And if you're following Christ, you know, it's not about us. It is never about us. Yeah, we benefit from following Jesus, but it's all about Jesus and it's about him connecting people back with God. So how we do our job being competent, being on time, honoring our commitments, negotiating for new meeting times or deadlines, if we know we can't make it.

Letting our yes be yes, our no be no, those are the things [00:10:00] that we're hired to do, but also show us and show Jesus in a positive light. So do your job. We're also not there to proselytize to others. So, you know, you don't have to

plaster big crosses everywhere. Uh, and that gets me to my next point. My next tip, deeds, not words.

Now, this is slightly different from doing your job. The first thing was strictly about the job requirements, the job duties, knocking those out of the park and going above and beyond, not because you're showing off to your boss, like, look at me, look at me, but because you're serving Jesus. And you know, that is the best way to represent him.

You've got more to give, more to give, and you may get rewarded by that financially by your company through promotions and pay raises. You may not. It doesn't matter because that's all about Jesus. The second tip, deeds, not words. That is about you as a person in the workplace. [00:11:00] And the best scripture I can give to you that it brings it all together because really our deeds should reflect the character of Jesus Christ all the time, not just when we want it to, not just when we're doing like, Hey, we should open in prayer in the meeting, um, everywhere you go, bathroom, break room, in your cubicle, in your office, out in the field, whatever it is, Galatians chapter five, verses 22 through 23.

It's the fruits of the Spirit, and it goes like this in case you've never heard it. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, and Faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Against such things, there is no law. So if you want to express your faith as a follower of Jesus Christ, do those things.

When you're about to say a thing, is it in line with those fruits of the Spirit, or is it the [00:12:00] opposite? Is it going to be building people up, or tearing them down? Is it going to be the benefit of the company? Yourself and so on. And this isn't just in the meetings. This is in everything you do in the workplace.

Are you getting caught up in water cooler talk and talking trash about other people? Maybe you don't want to do that anymore. Maybe you want to redirect that and say, Hey, you know what? I don't think that's as constructive as we think it should be. Can we talk about something else? Can we redirect this?

Can we think about what could this person assuming good intentions, Wanted to accomplish by those actions and how can we support them? Those are the types of things you would say and do out of the fruit of the spirit. Ultimately, the, the, this tip of deeds, not words, is about being trustworthy because.

Ultimately, your actions may be the only Bible most people will ever read. Heck, your actions might be the only Bible many Christians [00:13:00] will ever

read. So, you've got to demonstrate that loyalty and faithfulness to Jesus so much so that Now Jesus was not a weak person. He wasn't meek. He wasn't, Oh, Kumbaya, you know, and, and, you know, this guy took whips to the back for our sins.

That is tough. Not only did he do that, he carried his own cross up a hill while he was bleeding, while he was beaten and bruised, knowing he was going to die. And he still went up there. That to me is ultimate bravery. That is not meekness. And then on top of that, yeah, he's, he's known to flip tables. Now, a lot of us think that means we got free license to also be jerks to everybody.

If you take a look at the, the scene in, in the Bible where Jesus is flipping tables in the temple, those weren't, from my understanding, those weren't just, they weren't non believers. These were people who were part of the Jewish faith. They [00:14:00] were part of the people who regularly go to synagogue, but they were profiting off of other believers.

And a lot of the times when he called people out, calling them brood of vipers, calling them Satan, He was saying that to the Pharisees, not to the sinner, not to the non believer. He was saying that to the Pharisees and those are the people who knew better. They were the people who knew the law inside and out, and he was calling them out.

So now, am I saying you do that in the workplace? No, absolutely not. What I'm saying is you can control you. And what I want you to do as tip number two is control your actions. Be self controlled, be gentle, be kind, be trustworthy. And what you do, do it for everybody in your organization. Do it equally across folks.

Don't just hook up one person because you know they, they have a cross in their cubicle. Hook up the guy that's a Muslim. Take care of everybody and don't lord it over them. Don't be like, Hey, look, I did this because I'm a Christian and I love you, man. Just do [00:15:00] your job that goes back to the first one, but then how you do it, how you treat others, the conversations you hold, you don't ever have to bust out a Bible tract.

You don't have to bust out scripture in the meeting or in a conversation, even in the break room, just have a conversation, treat people with dignity. I mean, respect their dignity, treat them as equals. Those are the watchwords of, of us. And then the third tip is just accept, yes, you're in the secular job setting.

That is your ministry field. You know, some folks, they just want to go where there's a bunch of other believers. So maybe they go to a faith based company or a faith friendly company. And they, there's like, I love it here because we pray before every meeting. We do Bible studies. We do, you know, a lot of Christian ministry type of work.

That's fine. Again, as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, and I'm looking at, uh, [00:16:00] book of Luke, uh, chapter, oh man, where am I here? I want to say five. Yeah. Chapter five, verses 27 through 32. And I'm not gonna, maybe I will read the whole thing. I'll read it fast. How's that sound? He just said yes, didn't you? This is recording guys.

Got you. Okay. Um, so Luke chapter 5 verses 27 through 32 After this Jesus went out and saw a tax collector Those are the bad guys in that time because they were corrupt and they just took your money and they did a lot of bad Things with it while also paying Caesar. He went out. He saw a tax collector by the name of Levi 1 Sitting at his tax booth.

2 Follow me, Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. 3 Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. 4 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, who belonged to their sect, complained to [00:17:00] his disciples, Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?

5 And then Jesus answered them, It is not the healthy who need a doctor. But the sick, I have not come to call the righteous. I have not come to call the righteous, I don't know why I threw the T in there, but sinners to repentance. So in every example I've seen of him, also when he's talking to sinners and offering in them this new life, you know what I'd never see him do is he, he never goes in there and says, you know what?

You're a horrible person because you got an abortion. You're a killer of babies. He never goes in there and says, you know what? You're a prostitute. I'm not going to say it on here. Uh, family show. Anyway, uh, he doesn't go in there and rebuke them. He goes in there and he just, he has dinner with them. He picks them back up.

There's the woman at the well. Uh, there's the woman who was being stoned by a bunch of dudes because she was having an adulterous [00:18:00] affair. And at the same time, it was like, well, where's the dude, get him in there and stone him too. No, no, no, no. Chances were I'm making this part up. The dude who had the affair was in that crowd also.

And so it's like, let's stone her. Let's get her. So when that ends, you know, that's, that's the scene with the stoning of the woman. Um, Jesus said, Hey, all right, cool. Any of you without, uh, without any sin, go ahead and throw the first stone. And they all, they get up and leave. Uh, well, they were already standing, but you get the point.

And then he turns to the woman, he says, Hey, there's no one here to stone you. She's like, Oh, there isn't. He said, All right, well, I don't condemn you either. Uh, go forth and don't sin anymore. And off she goes. That doesn't sound like a rebuke to me. That sounds like an invitation. That sounds like, I accept you.

He's also challenged her to a new way of life. Yes. So all that is to say that as a [00:19:00] Christian, as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, as somebody who wants to so badly share the gospel in the workplace, there is a way to do it. Your ministry field. So tip number three is accept the fact that your ministry field is in the secular world, because the reality is if we focused only on being Christian in church, and we wanted that kind of environment all the time, we're really just looking for a club of like minded people and we're not really being the church in the world.

Now, Christians have done a lot over hundreds, if not thousands of years to create some distrust. You know, is there evil out there? Yes. But have we also, as a body, committed some atrocities? Oh, yes. Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes. Or at least atrocities were committed in the name of Jesus who were really not really following the will of Jesus.

They weren't doing the things that Jesus would have done. They're really just slapping [00:20:00] his name onto their evil work. And because of that. You get stories like, you know, clergy who abused children, uh, abused women, uh, who have adulterous affairs. You, you have stories of people in religious, uh, businesses who now are caught because they've committed fraud and now they're in trouble.

Uh, you have folks who are trying to puff themselves up as, I don't know, um, a prophet of some kind, a chosen one, what have you. When it gets to those things, yeah, we've, we've done some things that have made the world uncomfortable, but we're talking specifically about you as a follower of Jesus, as an ambassador of Christ.

What could you do to show the love of Jesus, to be a beacon of hope, to be a guiding light to others in a way that allows you to express your faith, give added [00:21:00] meaning to your work on a day to day basis and impact the lives of

others without ever having to bust out a Bible tract? Without having to get somebody in a conversation in the break room about how Jesus is the way, the truth and the light, uh, or life, um, I had to look that one up.

I, I, that one, I hear both. Um, the point is, you don't have to get overtly religious to express your faith in the workplace. Because ultimately, the, the thing that separates us from all the other religions in the world, It's not the deeds. It's not what we do. It's not the formula of do this and you're Christian.

The ultimate thing that makes us Christian and followers of Christ is that we believe that we are separated from God by sin and that goes back to Adam and Eve. And because of that, we cannot be in the presence of a perfect being, [00:22:00] not because he'll destroy us, but his perfection and his light and his radiance will destroy us because we're imperfect From there, the only thing that can atone for that sin is death.

Because, if we just show up, boom, we're dead anyway. So You know, there was a time where we would sacrifice lambs and animals and so on very barbaric, right? But then Jesus comes along. He's like, you know what? I'm perfect. He doesn't say like that, but he goes in human form serves humanity for Up to 33 years because that's what it's believed his age was and he dies as the perfect lamb for our sins And all the sins that are gonna happen in the future ultimately cleansing us and Reconnecting us to God Well, that sounds crazy, right?

And the crazy thing is, I was a science major. Yeah, I used to be an atheist too, or at least a Gnostic. So that is [00:23:00] the thing that separates us from everybody else, is that, yes, we were separated from God by sin, and then Jesus is who bridged the gap. Um, for us made us new. And even though we're still sinful, imperfect people, we're now striving to be more like him, more like Jesus to be that ambassador.

We're already going to heaven because of this. That's also the belief. So the reason why our works, our deeds are important is because they give credibility to our faith. They give demonstration of our faith so that others may see it. Not our boss to give us a promotion, but our fellow coworkers to see, you know what?

Amen. Amen. There is a light coming out of Jerry that I can't quite put my finger on, but when I'm around Jerry, I feel safe. When I'm around Jerry, I feel like it's, I can say just about anything because he's not going to judge me. When I'm around Jerry, I feel like I have a better day. [00:24:00] That is huge! And, oh, and this is just my own experience, in my work life.

It is rare that you hear me bust out any scriptures. In fact, this show has been around since August 2015. The three verses I shared with you and the one Bible story might be the highest concentration of biblical reference I've made in the years of this show. And we're talking about what, nine years almost?

Man, it's because to me, it's, it's important of how we express ourselves on a consistent basis. It's, it's not about how many scriptures can I actually quote to you. And it really boils down to that 1990s bracelet. What would Jesus do? WWJD. And chances are Jesus would do this. Chances are he would not. Uh, when I read the Bible, finally, it was a one year Bible reading plan and I got it done in a whopping six years, guys.

Woohoo! Now that was a few years ago. And I'm glad I did because [00:25:00] at some point. I started to realize, wait, what if I looked at the Old Testament in the context of Jesus? What if I looked at every message in the context of Jesus? Every Bible story, every lesson to be learned from the Bible, all in the context of Jesus.

Where was he in the beginning? Where is he now? Where is he going to be in the future? What would he want me to do? It all clicks. And that's for me. That's where it made sense for me. Um, so there you have it. That's my insight. Those are my takes on three common or three concerns that Christian men may have about expressing their faith at work, fear of judgment or discrimination from others, navigating secular environments.

And my three tips to you were number one, do your job, don't just do your job, do the bare minimum. Get out of there, but do your job as somebody who wants to show the abundance, abundance of Jesus Christ, the [00:26:00] caring, the compassion, the, the integrity of Jesus. Do your job in that way. And that was, uh, in reference to Colossians chapter three, verse 23.

Tip number two was deeds, not words. So not just the job tasks, but how you carry yourself in the workplace every single day, every single moment as best as possible. Express the fruits of the spirit from Galatians chapter five, verses 22 through 23. And when you mess up, not if, when you mess up, be humble.

Own it, take responsibility for it, and offer to make amends. And when you take, make that offer, take the action to actually make those amendments happen and stay humble. I, I didn't, that's bonus content right there. And then the third one, accept the fact that your ministry field is in the secular world.

So the people you need to [00:27:00] reach through your life, your behavior, your testimony, even when the moment arises, it is in the secular field. Amen. Amen. It's in the secular world, the workplace. And when I just threw in there, sharing your testimony, again, that does not mean the first chance you get in the break room, tell people how you became a follower of Jesus.

That may not be the best time. So the probably the number one tip I want to share with you, I think a lot of us, we get excited as believers and we want to manufacture a mirror, a miracle. We want to manufacture the moment. Where somebody became a believer in Jesus, that may not be the thing we need to do.

You know, it's just, God is the guy in control of the miracles. He's the miracle guy. He's the one who brings the dead back to life. Our job is just to represent him. And I've come across a lot of folks that they so badly want to be the person that brings every single person they come into contact with [00:28:00] into a relationship with Jesus, and that's where that whole style of like Bible tracks and asking the question of, do you know where you'll go to, you know, after you die, you know, Um, you know, really being forceful in a way with those conversations.

And I appreciate their sense of urgency, because frankly, I truly believe that the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ. Then how much do I have to not like you to share, to not share Jesus with you? Because if that's the only way to eternal life, then I should be telling everybody. And the thing is, by.

Shouting it all the time and blaring it, um, one may not just cross the line with HR policies. It's also a great way to actually not be heard because people will tune you out. And so if you want to get past those defenses, because shouting from the rooftops is almost like being bombarded by commercials in a way, yeah, we hear people quote that scripture all the time, but [00:29:00] we don't actually see anybody living out those verses.

We don't see anybody living out those values. And. That's my biggest challenge here is actually live out the values that we're talking about and really take the time to discern and be challenged. You know, my wife and I, we've served in marriage ministry and we still support fully biblical marriages where it's between a man and a woman.

Yes. Now, does that mean two men cannot get married? That's, that's not my job. My job is not to stop same sex marriage. My job is to support my own marriage and make that work. And by making that work based on biblical

principles and practices, then other couples will notice that and they want that for themselves.

That to me is a key difference here. I don't make my marriage better by going out and campaigning against [00:30:00] same sex marriage. Not at all. I make my marriage better by working on me and making myself better and being a better representation of Jesus to my wife, for my wife, with my wife. That's what matters.

And The distraction would be saying that two other people cannot be together for the rest of their lives. That's not my business. And so there you have it. I may have lost some of you just with that last comment. That's up to you. That is up to you. Um, but the point here is how do you express yourself as a follower of Christ in the workplace in a way that is inviting?

That opens up people's eyes, gets them asking the right questions about how to have a relationship with Christ. Those are three practices that have helped me and hopefully it helps you. I hope you liked everything you heard in this episode. Uh, if you want more information, check out the show notes at beyond the rut.

com slash. [00:31:00] 418, I believe. And, uh, there's a, there's a book in there by a friend of mine, Mary Crimmins. Uh, she just wrote a book about how to show up at the workplace as a follower of Christ. I'll put that link in the show notes. Sorry. I didn't mention that sooner. I'll, I'll put that in there. So go check out the show notes beyond the rut.

com slash 418, and I'll have that information in there for you. I'm so glad you joined me for this episode. I look forward to joining you again on the next episode, but until then, live life beyond the rut. Take care.