


Faith and Work Part 8

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent, action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “**Talking Points, Walking Points**” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “**Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time**”, are perfect for private reflection.

Questions for Reflection

- What does Acts 17:24-27 teach about God's sovereignty? Have you ever considered God's sovereignty in placing you in your current job? What circumstances came together for you to have this job?

- Read 2 Peter 3: 3-9 and Romans 2:4-5.

What is the underlying reason for God's patience and kindness in delaying judgment day?

Do you share His desire that all people be saved?

- Read Matthew 9:36-38. On a scale from 1-10 (with 1 being “apathetic” and 10 being “compassionate”),
- where would you place your attitudes toward each of your co-workers?

What could you do for your co-workers to demonstrate compassion?

- Who among your co-workers is most open to you personally?

- Write a prayer for yourself using these guidelines:

...for boldness, based on Ephesians 6:18-20

...for opportunities, based on Colossians 4:2-4

...for your own compassion, based on Matthew 9:36-38

...for your co-workers to take the next step toward Christ, based on John 16:8-11

*You can learn to honor God through work.
Let a biblical counselor help!
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Example: “Lord, I pray that you will give me a heart that has your kind of compassion, to care about the future of my co-workers. Please give me boldness, as Paul also wanted. Please open up opportunities for me to talk about you, and help me recognize them. And please work in their hearts to convict them and attract them to you. Amen.”

Application-Challenge

- Pray for your co-workers, asking God to draw them to himself.
- Demonstrate genuine love and concern through active listening and tangible acts of kindness.
- Help them take the next positive incremental step toward God, whatever that step may be.
- Take advantage of training opportunities we offer here at TCC.

Sermon Summary

One of the most fruitful mission fields is the workplace. We spend a lot of time there; we have friends there, many of whom are not Christians. Think about it...we get paid to spend time alongside men and women who are, in the words of the New Testament, "spiritually lost." They need a Savior and we are Christ's representatives. It is a match made in heaven! Our goal should be to conduct ourselves on the job in a way that God will be made attractive. So, how can we honorably use the workplace as a platform for sharing God's love?

God is sovereign—it is no accident that you work where you do and with whom you do. God desires that all people be saved (1 Timothy 2:3–4), but your co-workers will perish if they refuse to place their trust in Christ as their sin-bearer (John 3:16-18; Romans 3:23). Christians are the link between a sovereign, loving God and a lost humanity. We are Christ's ambassadors on earth (2 Corinthians 5:17–20). In this room there are homemakers, builders, plumbers, doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, waiters and waitresses, students, nurses, salesmen, mechanics, real estate agents, artists and musicians... I could go on and on. But that is not who you are. That is what you do. Who you are is an ambassador for Christ. Ambassadors have a responsibility to make loving, sensitive, impassioned appeals to our non-Christian friends to be reconciled to God through Christ. Being Christ's ambassador is both a privilege and a responsibility (1 Corinthians 9:16–17).

Our sovereign God has strategically placed us in a work environment with lost, guilty people whom He desires to come to faith in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. As Christ's ambassadors we have the privilege and responsibility of sharing God's love with our co-workers. We do that by building "redemptive relationships." A redemptive relationship is one in which you pray for that person, and ask God to sovereignly draw them to himself. Write down the names of two or three of your non-Christian co-workers who seem to be most open to you personally. Then, begin to pray. Ask God to give you a compassionate heart (Matthew 9:36-38). Pray for boldness (Ephesians 6:18-20). Pray for opportunities to speak with others about Christ (Colossians 4:2-4). We also need to pray for our co-workers. Pray that the Holy Spirit would convict them of their need for a Savior (John 16:8-11). Pray that your non-Christian friends will begin to seek God in response to the Holy Spirit's convicting work and that they will come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ (Romans 10:1-2).

In "redemptive relationships" you also demonstrate genuine love and concern for someone through active listening and tangible acts of kindness. Get to know them. Look for areas of common ground, such as where you grew up, marital status or station in life, educational background, sports, fitness, hobbies, favorite cuisine, clubs, politics, and spiritual interests. Common interests can serve as a basis for developing a relationship.

Think of relationships like the layers of an onion: as the friendship deepens and trust is gained, we should gradually move towards the deeper, more significant levels. Usually conversations begin with "general interest" questions: "So, how long have you lived in North Carolina?" or "Where exactly do you live?" or "What sports do you enjoy?". Then as the conversation develops we may ask more "specific interest" questions: "Why did you choose to pick up your family and move to North Carolina?" or "Why did you choose that specific neighborhood?" or "What is your favorite team?".

As the relationship grows and greater trust is developed we can move to more "philosophical" questions: "So what do you think about the just released report about Global warming? Do you think it's mostly manmade? Why or why not? If it is, what do you think we should do about it. Or we might say, "What do you think about America's immigration policy? How open should our borders be? What kind of a vetting process would you like to see for those who wish to enter our country?" Then we might move to more theological questions: "What do you think about the Bible's prediction of a future cataclysmic middle-eastern war? Do you think the Biblical authors knew something that we don't know? Have you ever read the Book of Revelation? Have you considered Jesus' teachings on the end times? Do you come from any kind of spiritual background? Is that an important dimension of your life? How did you come to have these convictions?"

In redemptive relationships we seek to help others take the next positive incremental step toward God—whatever that step may be. On the one hand, people are either spiritually dead or spiritually alive. They are either lost or saved. They either have a saving relationship with Jesus or they do not. But in another sense, people differ in their spiritual receptivity:






At -7 a person has no awareness of Christianity. At -6 they are aware of the existence of the Christian faith. At -5 they have some knowledge of the gospel message. At -4 they understand the gospel fundamentals. At -3 they grasp the personal implications of the gospel. At -2 they recognize a personal need. At -1 they profess faith in Christ. And 0 equals conversion. Evangelism is a process, not an event. Our role is to discern where a person is and help them take the next positive spiritual step toward God by clearing up misconceptions and living in a way that makes God attractive. All of us can do that.

Suggestions for Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time

Jesus said that his followers are to witness. What does it mean to “witness”? Is “witnessing” different from “evangelism”?

Monday—Read John 9

- List everything the formerly-blind man (let’s call him “FBM”) knew for certain. List everything he speculated/concluded.
- What indications do you get regarding FBM’s social status—was it high, medium, or low?
- Rate FBM in the following areas:
Level of Knowledge 
Level of Social Status 
Level of Boldness in Witness 
LOW **MEDIUM** **HIGH**
- Did FBM’s “witness” include anything about heaven, hell, or about “being saved”?
- What are witnesses in courtrooms today called upon to tell? How is FBM’s witness similar?
- What do you think motivated FBM to witness? Do you have that? Why or why not?

Tuesday—Read Acts 9:1-19

- Paul (Saul) also “gave witness” to what he’d seen, heard, and experienced. List the facts/details of Paul’s testimony.
- Did Paul’s “witness” include anything about heaven, hell, or about “being saved”?
- What could an honest, open listener conclude from Paul’s testimony?
- Was God “glorified” by Paul’s testimony? (to “glorify” means to “draw attention to” and to “ascribe excellence to”)
Was God “glorified” by “FBM’s” testimony (see Monday’s study)?
- What have you “seen, heard, or experienced” that you could testify to, thus bringing God “glory”?

Wednesday—Read Acts 21-31—22:16

- What was the occasion/circumstances for Paul’s witness (Acts 21:31-40)?
- Grab a watch with a second hand and time how long it takes to read Acts 22:3-16 (Paul’s actual “testimony”).
- How long did it take? Paul knew enough theology to speak for **hours**—but he didn’t. What conclusion do you draw from that?
- What details would **your** testimony include? What details could you leave out in order to keep it under five minutes?

Thursday—Read Acts 26:1-18

- What was the occasion for Paul’s witness this time?
- Did Paul’s retelling of his testimony include or omit any details compared to Acts 9:1-19 and 22:3-16? What does that suggest?
- In Acts 22, Paul gave his testimony to a riotous crowd. In Acts 22 he gave the **same** testimony to a king in a court of law. What does that suggest to you regarding the appropriateness of witnessing and the content of the our witness?
- If you prepared a brief testimony of what Christ has done for you, in what situations might you be able to “bear witness”?

Friday—Grab paper and pencil (or computer) and let’s craft our “testimony”—just like FBM and Paul did!

- What were some of your typical attitudes, need, and problems from **before** you trusted Christ?
What did your life revolve around? What gave you a sense of security or happiness? Give a simple example.
How did that disappoint you? How was it unfulfilling? When and how did you realize that?
- When and how did you first hear about Christ’s forgiveness?
What were your struggles **right before** you received Christ?
- What happened when you received Christ? How and why did you begin to change?
When and how did you begin to notice change in your thoughts, attitudes, motivations, and actions?
Concretely, how are you different than you were before you trusted Christ as savior? Be specific.
Is there one verse from the Bible which powerfully relates to or illustrates your story?

Saturday—Now, polish up your testimony:

- **Don’t:**
Make statements which reflect negatively on any church, organization, or person.
Don’t mention denominations or church names—keep the focus on Jesus.
Don’t write in a preacher manner. The goal is to tell a story—your story.
Don’t use *vague* terms such as “joyful”, “peace”, or “changed” or *religious* terms such as “saved” or “convicted” without explaining what they mean in everyday language or giving a real example from your life.
If you do use a Bible verse in your testimony, don’t give detailed the detailed verse reference (such as, “2 Thessalonians 3:3 says...”). Instead, just say, “One of Jesus’ followers said...”.
- **Do:**
Ask God for wisdom. Be realistic; don’t exaggerate.
Begin with an attention-getting sentence or incident.
Be positive, accurate, and specific. Details arouse interest.
Write things as you would say them.
- **Final Checklist:**
Does it read like a story?
Is it disjointed? Does it make sense?
Can you read it aloud in three to five minutes?
Have you exaggerated anything?
Did you give God credit for the changes in your life?