

# True Christians in the Workplace Part 2

by Sanjay Poonen

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*As Christians, we must strive to live by our values, set spiritual goals, and make wise decisions that honor God in all we do.*

**Duration:** 1:03:37

**Scripture:** Proverbs 6:6-11, Matthew 6:24, Luke 8:1-3, Luke 12:34, James 1:5

**Topics:** "Faith At Work", "Christian Stewardship"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living out godly values, setting heavenly goals, and making wise decisions in a professional setting. It encourages individuals to seek God's kingdom first, be diligent in work, and use time wisely. The message highlights biblical examples like Joseph, Daniel, and Priscilla and Aquila to inspire a commitment to excellence and faithfulness in all aspects of life.

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## Transcript

What I wanted to do today was just recap a little bit what we studied yesterday, very quickly, okay? Many of you came up to me yesterday and asked if I could make available these slides, and I'd be happy to do that. I'll send them to Rabi and he can then distribute it to as many of you. Also, when we talked about some of the values, I want to emphasize as I talk about them, these were ones that I came up from my own life, and I pray that the Lord may use them.

But please pray before the Lord as you think about them, things that you may be willing to put down on paper for what the Lord would want you to have as your own values, that you can maybe take and put in front of you at your workplace or in any kind of setting where others can see that publicly. Okay, to review very quickly, we talked about values, goals, and decisions. Anybody can recap for us what are values? Think of it as a foundation stone.

It's what you build your house on, it's what defines you, and it's who you are. So if you are dishonest and you've lived your entire life in a dishonest fashion, that's your value system. You see people whose parents are dishonest, and their children become dishonest because they haven't taught their children honesty.

And they come to school, they start becoming dishonest at a very early age, and then dishonesty becomes their value system. And then when they're older, they don't feel like it's wrong to tell a lie or to be dishonest. And as a Christian, we are taught that our righteousness needs to be above not just the

Gentiles, but even above the Pharisees in terms of what the Lord has asked us.

Our goals are what you set up for yourselves in some short or long period of time. You may have a goal for 2008. You may have a goal for five years.

You may have a goal for just the next three months. Decisions are the ones you make every day in your life. So you're faced with a crossroads, and you have a number of different choices to make, and you make those decisions every day.

And the Lord wants us to be able to be guided by wisdom in those decisions. So in review, values, they're the bedrock, the foundation stone for who you are. Goals are what you set for some period of time, and decisions.

And think of those in those concentric type of circles. So I'm going to review once again, just so we can look back at some of the values that I put down for myself. And we read a number of these scriptures yesterday.

And I want you, as you think about the values, not to... Many of you probably who are in a work setting, somebody was telling me yesterday, they send you to training classes. They send you to leadership training classes. They send you to a class where you can learn how to be a better employee, or learn how to do... This is not a pep talk.

What I'm teaching you here, or what we're sharing with you, in fact, is not a psychology management improvement class. It's all based on what the Lord wants to teach us through the scripture. So as you think about what are the values you want to live for, put them in the context of a scripture verse that the Lord has given you faith for.

And I fully expect that many of them will be very different from what I have chosen for my own life. I also will say that in many of these values, if I were to grade myself, I'm not an A today. I might be a B, I might be a C. But I have faith that in saying things like this, my life on earth is like vapor, my citizenship is in heaven.

Even if every single day there are parts in time where I'm tempted, or I'm feeling like there are earthly objectives that are driving me, that's my hope. And it's important that we're able to confess our hope in faith, even if that is where today we're not necessarily looking at a life and saying, I would score an A in this. So let's talk about a few others.

I will work hard in everything I do. I see a number of Christians who don't work hard. And they feel like, listen, my citizenship is in heaven.

It doesn't matter what happens on earth. So I'll just, you know, goof off. And I think it's very important.

You see plenty of examples in the Bible, Joseph, Daniel, many others that we looked at, for people who worked very hard. One of the amazing things of our culture that we're from, Indians, all of us, is we tend to work hard. And it's important to know that the Lord has given that to us as a blessing so that as we are in a work setting, we're able to show as an example to others that there may be others who just goof off during the 8 hours or 9 hours that you're at work, and you do a job diligently.

Sometimes you even go the extra mile to help those around you. I will be a light on a hill, salt of earth, keeping my Christian behavior excellent so that others can glorify God. Aspirationally, again, every single time I wake up in the morning, as I go to work, I say, Lord, help me be a light on this earth, some person that can stand out for what they're doing.

There are other times where you have to blend in, salt in the food. I will be open to the direction of the Holy Spirit wherever that might lead. Sometimes the Holy Spirit might lead me to do things that are inconvenient for me and may not be what I want to do as the default path in which my body is taking me.

I will be open to the direction the Holy Spirit may lead me, and often that comes through prayer. I will be generous with the seed that the Lord has given me. So the Lord has blessed you with more.

Use that blessing to bless others. It may be time. It may be material things.

It may be a gift in a particular area. Whatever it is, it doesn't refer just to money. Wherever you feel like the Lord has given you an extra gift, it may be singing and playing an instrument.

What you can do is shepherd others as they're growing up in helping them learn in a particular area. Number six, I will do nothing out of selfish ambition. And we talked about this yesterday, even during the question and answer time.

The folks said, it is very hard. How can I live this life if often I am tempted to do things out of selfish ambition? And this is for me also an area where I constantly have to challenge myself and say, Lord, even if I'm not a B even today, and I feel at times where I'm a C level in this, I've been so far from being an A, I want to confess my hope with faith that I want to live my life without selfish ambition, and please give me grace. Fill me with the power of the Holy Spirit so that I am not living my life at times where I'm only thinking about myself.

Show me ways. Remind me by the power of the Holy Spirit when there are times when I'm being selfish, that I need to be less selfish. And the Lord will remind you.

Number seven, I will be a servant leader. Very, very important. As many of you, as you get older, I think 80% of the room here are in your 20s.

As you get to your 30s and your 40s, those who the Lord blesses may get more responsibility. It may be responsibility just for a small project. It may be responsibility for a bigger project.

It's very important that we're able to show the world, and even other Christians, often a lot of other Christians themselves, their behavior when they get more responsibility is to lord it over the other people. They assume that I am the leader and you will serve me. Now this doesn't mean literally you're going around your office washing the people's feet.

But you know figuratively what I mean. It means there are going to be plenty of times where you're able to visit the sick, maybe do an extra project for somebody who is not able to finish it on time. In general, helping your team in a work setting be successful, not so that you will get the glory, but so that they can be successful.

When you're thinking as a father over the children, when my child is able to run around and play and do certain things, and I'm able to help her, I'm not doing this out of my own selfish interest. I'm really helping

because I have the good of her in mind. And that's the attitude of Christ as it relates to not just children, but also the people that the Lord puts around you.

I will be careful with all my words and actions. How true is this? When we are in a work setting, there is so much that goes on by way of gossip. There's so much that goes on by way of idle talk.

There's also so much that goes on by way of foul talk. Language that is not becoming of Jesus being in the middle of that midst of people that you are talking with. One of the questions in the Q&A time yesterday was, what if somebody blasphemes Jesus openly? You have a chance to take a stand before the Lord and say, listen, I'm a Christian.

I really want to excuse myself from this conversation. I've got other things to do. Also, not just words and actions.

You have to believe that there are people who are watching you. Watching you 5 days a week, 8 or 9 hours a day. And if you think the amount of time that you have from let's just say 9 to 6 or 8 to 5, you come back at the end of the day, you have a few hours and then you go to sleep.

So 70-80% of your time is not at home, on an average work day. It's not in front of the other believers. It's at work.

And in your words and actions, we can be an example. And the Lord has honored those who have honored Him in many of those places. I will seek the counsel of those who the Lord has put in my circle frequently.

I have found this to be immensely helpful in my life. And through all the decisions that I have made, this is something which I would encourage you not to feel proud that you can do all of it on your own. And to find the counsel of those around you who can help you, especially when you're making decisions.

I will be a change agent. And this means that when you're in a certain place and you're not happy with the way things are going, the Lord is calling you to be different and also lead a place where you can do things differently. Pray before the Lord that the Lord would give you the boldness to be different.

I will always seek to improve and grow those around me, above me, beneath me, in work, in all the other areas. So this is probably hard for you to improve perhaps your boss. And you can improve your boss primarily by your actions and your example.

But there will come a time, potentially, where the Lord gives you responsibility over people. And as I said yesterday, it's really important that when the Lord gives you a team that you're able to look out for their welfare. And there are so many managers I see that when they're given responsibility, they're always looking to take the credit.

They're always looking to say, you do the work, give me the work, and I will present it to my manager as my work. And that is not the spirit of Christ. Now you might think that's so obvious.

Why would I want to take credit? But it would be surprising, even among Christians, how much that exists where people aren't willing to promote and help and nurture those around them. They take the credit. You probably have examples of this even in your own managers where people are always looking to take the credit for themselves.

And finally, I will not seek my own glory. Instead, I will seek to honor God and praise and encourage those around me. So these were a dozen that I came up with.

As we talked about yesterday, my encouragement to you is, over the course of the next couple of days, while this is still fresh in your head, you don't have to write down five. If you have only two or three, write them down on a piece of paper over the course of the next week before the new year. And pray before the Lord and say, These are the values I want to stand for in my workplace.

Put them up on your workplace, in front of you, and say, These are the values, and it may be just... And the only thing I would ask you is, if it's a value that you have, don't read it out of a psychology book. Read it from the Bible. Put a verse underneath it that says, These are the values I'm going to stand for as a man or as a woman of God.

Okay? And ask yourself every day, Can you live by those Christian values and still be successful? Absolutely. There are going to be times where you're going to feel like perhaps you aren't being successful. But the Lord will give you grace.

And if you live by those values, it is a time-tested principle that those who have honored God, God will not be a debtor to you. It may feel sometimes like you're like Stephen. You're getting stoned, okay? And our glory is in heaven.

But stay through it. The Lord will be with you even through the times where you don't feel like you are being recognized on earth. And ask the Lord as we enter 2008, How can you change certain things? As I look at those ten or dozen values that I put down, I ask myself, Lord, there's a couple of them that I really need to grow in.

Because I fall short all the time. I'm tempted again and again to think of myself, not of others. And Lord, help me so that in that particular area, you can help me be more like you.

Okay. So, let's now take a little bit of a break. We covered values.

And now we're going to talk about goals. And I'm going to cover the next section between now and the next 45 minutes fairly quickly. And I wanted to first off, give you a little bit of a comical picture of goals.

Goals start very early in life. Every one of you has a goal. And the goal may not be, I want to be the Prime Minister or President of India or the head of your company.

It may be as very simple as this little kid. Now she looks back and says, Come catch me. And she continues.

Anyway, I wanted to show that to you because very early on in life, you watch little children and they have goals. And you develop them. And as you go to school, your teachers encourage you to achieve certain things.

And probably the best example of people who have goals in their lives are athletes. We can all relate to them. We see them running.

We see them scoring centuries, triple centuries, double centuries. And they all have goals. They're trying to beat a record.

And what I wanted to do was use this example of an athlete and ask ourselves, What are the goals that we want to set for ourselves as children of God? So like we did yesterday, I'm going to ask different people to read these. These are all descriptions of athletes in the spiritual sense of the word. So if somebody would pick 1 Corinthians 9.27, somebody else would pick James 1.12, 1 Peter 1.6-7, 2 Timothy 4.8, and Revelation 3.11. Okay? You can pick your favorite verse.

And if you would, let the first person who's got the first verse raise their hand and we'll read that. And it's important as we think about goals that the Lord talks in these passages of scriptures about taking that same picture of an athlete and applying it to our lives. Okay, who's got 1 Corinthians 9.27? Keith.

Amen. So think about that. There's going to be a number of different times where we are feeling like we are just doing things on our own without any discipline.

And Paul here talks about being constantly disciplined, just the way a runner is disciplined to achieve a certain goal. For those of you who have watched runners, athletes who run, usually often you don't have to be as, I don't mean to be insulting to cricket players, but you don't have to be as physically fit. Sometimes you're playing certain positions.

If you're just a batsman and you're playing in the slips or in a couple of places where you don't have to run very much, you can gain weight and you see a lot of cricket players who have gained weight. But athletes, you can't have a lot of fat in your body. You have to be running.

Look at that picture of that athlete, right? It's all muscle. And how do you think that became all muscle? Training. They are waking up early in the morning, 5 o'clock, and you'll see them running, running upstairs.

They're doing intense amount of weight training. Very, very disciplined. And sometimes you'll see them working out 3 or 4 hours.

There's discipline, discipline, discipline, discipline towards an earthly goal. And then often they will go and compete and they don't even come first, second or third. You see them, they run the race, they've qualified for the Olympics, and they come last.

But they don't give up. They'll come back the next year. Eric Little was one of those.

In some of his first races, in fact, as he started training for the 400s, it wasn't his good event. He came in last over and over again. He trained and trained and trained.

So the Lord here is really reminding us that part of achieving a goal starts with a discipline in our lives. And here we're talking not just about earthly goals, but spiritual goals. Okay, who's got James 1 verse 12? Okay, yeah.

Good. Think about having an ambition of this kind, where our gold medal and the crown of life that we seek for is Lord, bring on more temptation to me. Bring on more trials because I am going to be sustained and I'm going to be looking forward to going through this testing of purification.

So if you can bring on more trials to me, I will be ready. Most of us don't have that attitude. I shun.

In fact, when I'm looking at tribulation, I think about Lord, take this away from me. And part of what the Lord wants to do as he brings us trial and tribulation is not focusing us necessarily on the goal of an earthly objective, but on the heavenly objective. The crown of life is much more important than a gold

medal on earth or any physical reward one might get on earth.

Okay. 1 Peter 1 verse 6 and 7. Who has that? Go ahead. Go ahead.

Amen. How many of you have either seen or heard about how gold or pure metals are purified? It starts off, and what does gold look like before it goes through the fire? What's the color? Brown or black? It's almost got like an iron type of thing on top of it, right? It doesn't look like gold. It doesn't have a glow to it.

It doesn't have the purity that, in fact, someone looked at it and says, I'm not going to pay you a lot of money for that. What ends up happening through the fire? What physically is happening to all those layers of impure metal? It just goes away. It just goes away, right? What comes out of it is something that people pay a lot of money for, for earrings or necklaces or rings or whatever it might be, right? But if you looked at any gold object when it starts off, it is impure.

And as we think about our goals in life, often it's going to feel like the early stages of where we start off, Lord, we're impure. Many of the values that I put on there, Lord, I'm a C or a D. I don't feel like as yet I'm a gold or an A in that particular area. Help me so that as you put me through more and more trial, part of the goal of a trial that I'm going through is to make me an A, to make me a gold medalist.

So we ought to welcome those, just the way Peter talks about here, as part of the purification process and think always about the fact that this life is short. We are like a vapor. And when we compare our, let's just say the Lord doesn't come and we are allowed to live 70 or 80 years, the average age the Lord says a man lives.

Compared to eternity, we will probably be working out of those 70 or 80 years, maybe 50, 60 years. Compared to eternity, that work period of life compared to eternity is going to be so minuscule. Okay, who's got 2 Timothy 4 verse 8? This is a good verse for a brother to read.

So let's have a good brother stand up and read it, but read it with boldness. Amen. Think about that.

If that can be our goal in life, Lord, I'm not looking forward to being a big shot in this world. If you give that to me, that's good. If you don't, my goal is the crown of righteousness.

Whatever path you're going to take me through, my goal is the crown of righteousness. Again and again and again. And I've used these passages of scriptures because they've talked about gold medals, about crowns, about the type of things that athletes aspire for.

And our goals have to start off with those ambitions in mind and then the practical ones that we set for ourselves flow out of that. If our goals and objectives are earthly, we'll have the entire pyramid inverted. We'll have no time for God and completely have Him second place in our lives.

So, as you think about your goals, there are goals that you set, as I described, for a period of time, maybe a quarter or for years or multiple years. What should a Christian's goals be in the context of a workplace? I'm not going to read all these scriptures. Some of them you can look at later on.

But the most important thing I have learned is the simple verse in that Sermon on the Mount. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. And when we are seeking God's kingdom first, it's amazing how, even though it may not feel for a period of time that I have an answer to a particular objective or a goal.

Well, your goal might be getting a job. Okay? And you may be working for two years trying to get a job in a particular place. And you don't have an answer.

And then the Lord takes you through those two years saying, Lord, what am I... And you're asking the Lord, What is going on? How are you going to answer my prayer? But through that, if you have sought God's kingdom first. And what does seeking God's kingdom first mean? It means in very practical ways the Lord teaches you what you need to put first in your life. It may be just coming to the meetings on Wednesday evenings and on Sunday mornings and being among the believers and being encouraged and saying, Well, if this is important, there are certain other things that I need to say no to.

Okay? Or it may be being able to find the time to read and pray regularly. Those are all the practical ways in which one can keep God first. But there's many of those you and your conscience know what it means to keep God first in your lives.

It means that when God is first in your life, there are many other things that just have to drop out. Okay? And each of us know what those are. I'm not going to cover them in detail.

The one verse we read yesterday that I would encourage you also to keep in mind, there is a beautiful example in Hebrews 12 of many saints of God who by faith did this, did this, did this, did this in Hebrews 11 and Hebrews 12 it talks about setting your eyes on Jesus. Read those verses when you have time. Should you have goals? Now that I've said all of that in the context of our spiritual goals which are keeping God first in our lives looking for the gold medal and the crown of righteousness that's the heavenly crown of righteousness and heavenly goals.

What about our physical goals on earth? Where you're looking to achieve a particular objective of some kind. The message I would leave with you is to always ensure whatever they are there is no recipe to saying you shouldn't have a goal to advance in your career. Make sure that they're subject to the Lord knowing that He may change them.

And I have sought through my own career where the Lord has blessed me and there are other times where the Lord has basically stalled what may appear to be progress even in my career. There have been times where I've been promoted and there have been other times where I was fired from my job. And in both those times I say Lord, this verse in Proverbs 21.1 is what I'm going to hold strong to.

Who can stand up and read that verse for me? Imagine that. Imagine that we can put that verse in the context of our manager or our boss. There are times when I mentioned yesterday in this particular point in time in my own job I'm going through a little bit of uncertainty.

And this verse has constantly encouraged me and said whoever the king is in my life if you're working your king may be your manager. Maybe your manager's manager. It might be the vice president.

It may be the CEO of the company. Think about this verse. Literally the king's heart are like the channels of water.

And what happens many of you have seen streams. What do you observe about streams? They meander. They literally move.

One time they're moving like this. Another time they're moving like this. Another time they're moving like this.

And what makes them move? This is geography 101. Let's see if you remember your geography class in 7th standard or 8th standard. What was that? The wind.

There's also soil. Right? A number of different areas. Wind and soil and so on and so forth.

But it's natural phenomenon that make this. You can't predict. Often man tries to put a dam or a structure to try and move it.

But they have a natural way almost a God made way by which the streams move. Think about this in the context of your work. You might be feeling like the king in my life has decided he's going to do this.

And that really really does not help me. And it's going to be really hard for me to work because I would like him or her to do this. Something different.

Pray that the Lord would really make this promise true in your heart where you believe that the king's heart are like channels in his hand. Literally he may move them. Or he might decide I'm not going to have you work for this king.

Which is also part of saying he's going to move you into another type of situation. I have found this to be tremendously tremendously freeing in the context of a number of different goals and objectives that you might have. The reason I haven't put specific goals and objectives that might be ones that I'm going to encourage in the work setting is because I think the Lord keeps that completely open.

There may be some whom the Lord has called to be in a place where work is a very very nominal part of what they're doing. There may be ones who the Lord is called to progress and be successful in their career. There is no right answer here.

The only guidance I can give you is when you seek God's kingdom first there are no disappointments. There are no disappointments. There are times when the Lord may bless you.

There may be also other times when you feel like it's a desert. Both those times like Job when the Lord blesses you when the Lord has given much you give thanks and when the Lord takes it away you also give thanks. And that's a wonderful example.

Okay, what I also wanted to do was just share with you some of the goals that I have placed for my own life. And these are personal. But I wanted to share them with you.

I didn't put them in the context each of them with scripture. But many of them are tied to the values I seek to have. But it will give you a sense of the way in which I am seeking to say, Lord, may I live my life in this fashion based on scriptural and godly values.

I'm going to just list out 10 that are personal. Again, and I would encourage you as you think about your own goals in 2008 there may be something that's similar or very different. Very similar to what I talked about.

Having this, knowing that my life is a vapor and I'm a citizen of heaven. I'm going to put God first in my life aware constantly that my citizenship is in heaven. Think about if you were in a foreign country.

Not even perhaps a friendly foreign country. Imagine that you were in a hostile foreign country, in Iraq. Or a place where there's a war.

And you were constantly waiting for the day in which you could go home. Because you knew that there was a war zone and you wanted to be in a place where you could be safe. That's exactly what the Lord does.

So number one, I will put God first in my life. Number two, I want to make my marriage an example of scriptural marriages. And that's very important for those of you as the Lord prepares you to be married or for those of you who are married to have a godly example because people will not just watch you.

They will watch you as a couple. They will watch the way you and your wife interact. They will watch the way in which you bring up your children.

And there's an enormous example that you can be to those around you. And it's my prayer for my own marriage that the Lord will give me a tremendous amount of grace so that my goal can be to be godly. Spend quality and quantity time with my family.

This is something that's hard when you have to work very hard a number of hours. But find a way, Lord, by which you can allow me to both spend quantity and quality time with my family. Train my children praying that they will become disciples of Jesus early on in their life.

Now, the second and third one here may not apply to those of you who are single. But you can pray ahead of time for the husband or wife the Lord is going to give you. Or for the children the Lord is going to give you.

And pray that the Lord would make them disciples. It's one of the prayers that I know a number of different elders here have prayed for their children. It's the most important prayer that we can pray for our children.

Not that they will get into a big college or that they'll have a great job and they'll be successful. But they'll become disciples of Jesus. And there's nothing more rewarding.

Think about when we go to heaven and we look around and we look at our extended family. Wouldn't we feel sad if there are certain members of our family who aren't there? Think about as you as a parent or as a father or mother, if you look back and say Lord, I could have done more to train my children to be disciples so that when I get to heaven it's not just one happy family of my physical family hopefully that's all there but also the family of God who will all be our brothers and sisters and parents and mothers and so on. Continually be in the Word of God.

Again a challenge when we have a lot going on during the week. But I'm going to set this for myself as a goal. Memorize scriptures.

I have found it to be enormously uplifting to find small passages of scriptures. We have a weekly Wednesday night study that meets in our home. And I've always been inspired by 32 years ago when the fellowship group in CFC started in our home and then there were small other families that came together in a small fellowship group and all we did was we opened the Bible and read.

I don't remember very much of 1975. I was only 6 years old at the time. But it has been my goal to say Lord, can you use that setting of a Wednesday night study to help me study the Bible more.

To read, potentially take just one passage of scripture and memorize it. And maybe something small. And then use the concordance.

One of the most amazing things of a computer now or if you've got a small little PDA, you can carry the Bible on a digital device or on your computer and look it up. You don't have to have when I was growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, the brothers would say buy a Strong's concordance. The good thing is you can fit that whole thing in something as big as this today.

Or in your computer. And you can use that concordance to look up a particular verse and understand the full depth of what the Lord is trying to teach you by something as simple as selfish ambition. So if that's what I am struggling with, I look in the scripture and say Lord, what have you said in the Bible about ambition? Look it up in different versions.

Read it in the message translation. Those are the type of things that can bless you. This book has got an enormous amount of gold in it if we would only search and read this.

And it's very important at a young age that we're able to use our intellect not just to do well in our academic endeavors, but also in studying the Word of God. Fast and pray regularly. Again a challenge when we are young and we have a lot going on or when we're working hard and we're hungry.

Both fasting and praying is the analog of what the world calls eat and exercise. They tell you you've got to eat and exercise properly. Nobody will talk about fasting and praying.

And both are important. We've got to take care of our bodies, but we've also got to take care of our spiritual bodies. Provide generously and liberally to the people of God.

And this is one where when the Lord gives you money, I don't think you need to feel like this is an obligation or condemnation when the Lord hasn't given you an income. But as the Lord gives you more, if you find that your paycheck goes up by 10% or 15% or 20%, the Lord may put on your heart somebody that you can bless. And it's always going to be somebody who is less than you.

And take what you have and generously bless them. And it doesn't have to be money. Like I said earlier, it may be time.

It may be other gifts that you can bless them with. But the more that we can bless the people of God, especially those who have less than us, and often the Lord may guide you to do it anonymously. Completely anonymously, where your left hand doesn't know what your right hand is doing.

But use those instructions from God as a time where secretly you're doing this to bless the people of God. Pray that the Lord will bless us. This is my own it's been our own passion in our weekly study.

I pray that the Lord will use our Wednesday night studies to really bless not just us, but those the Lord has brought into us. There's four or five different families and these are one single person who the Lord has got to put in their heart a passion to be disciples of Jesus. They haven't heard all the truths of CFC.

And it is a tremendous opportunity for us in our own home setting to be able to share many of these truths. They've heard my dad speak in a number of settings at Abundant Life in California. And the Lord has really allowed that to become a blessing not just to them, but also to Kathy and to me.

The Lord may open up a similar type of setting if you leave Bangalore. If you're outside of this fellowship which is so wonderful on a Wednesday night or a Sunday morning, find a way by which you can become a leader even if it's just two or three. Or if you're in a bigger church setting look for those people who you

can regularly study with.

Always seeking to learn. And this for me, these again are goals, but if you tie them not just in the context of the physical world, but also the spiritual world, I have always sought to say, Lord, what can I learn new this year that I didn't know last year? And it may be something in the physical world that I'm looking to learn in my work setting where learning does not end when you're finished with college. You're always looking to learn something new.

When I approach people who know more than me, I spend time with them asking them questions. Not just talking a lot, but asking them a lot of insightful questions. And this is in the professional work.

But you can take those same principles that I've learned in a godly setting. To say, Lord, if I'm going to learn instruction from those who know more from me in the church, as you put around me people who know more than me in a particular discipline or in a particular area in work, I'm going to learn from them. And then as I learn, I'm going to teach.

And that becomes something that as you grow older you don't think about yourself just as selfishly learning and soaking in you're able to teach. In the work setting, it may be a place where someone has said, you're going to be a trainer for three or four others that they put in your circle. That will be the place where you start, and then the Lord will open up many other doors for you to teach.

Whatever the Lord allows me to do in my profession, I'm going to do as well as I can. If the Lord allows it to be accepted and promoted, that's great. If I'm not, that's also okay.

I'm going to do the best I can in my profession. And finally, I have been burdened to write a short book about some of these things that the Lord has taught me in the context. You don't have to write a book.

Again, this is my own goal that I've set for myself so that I can put into paper a little bit of these thoughts. If the Lord has guided you to write down some of these things, one of the best things I think we did in this conference was each of you writing down your story. It was absolutely precious to listen in to some of your stories that were written.

It felt like sweet poetry. It felt like a novel that you were able to read. And you notice when you wrote down your stories and you had other people listening, it wasn't just like a testimony.

There was time that you put into writing down. You had lots of different images going on in there, and I think that was a great exercise that Sandeep had us do. And that might be take a short form of a two or three page essay as you do in your classes.

Or it may take the form of a longer book. Some of you have a journal where you write down what the Lord is teaching you. I think that the exercise of being able to write down some of those physically will enormously help us later on not just reflect.

If nobody else reads it, we may reflect on that later on. It may be the case that the Lord uses those writings to bless others. So anyway, I thought to leave you with these as an example of some of the goals I have set for myself.

I would encourage you as you think about usually, you know, it's very often people do this at the time of a new year. It doesn't have to be the time of the new year. But set goals for yourself that are based on

heavenly goals first.

And then it becomes very easy when you're in a work setting and you've got a new job or you've got a new assignment to say this is how I'm going to approach these very goals. Okay? I'm going to cover the decisions part very quickly and then in the last 15 minutes talk about some very practical guidance in a few areas. The only thing I would say here as it relates to decisions are values and goals are what you build things on and then decisions you're making every single day.

Every single day. There are going to be times in the day where you have to make a decision where nobody's there to counsel you. And the more and more that you can say, Lord, give me wisdom the way you gave some of the godly men of God wisdom.

The more and more that you find that as you've made a decision the first time, you've learned through it, you've learned through mistakes. The next time it becomes easier and easier to do. It's very important that the examples here in scripture that the typical wisdom of this earth aren't these qualities that you see here.

Pure. Peaceable. Gentle.

Full of mercy. They're typically the opposite of these. You find that the typical wisdom of this earth is doing things in a very harsh and autocratic fashion.

And the wisdom from above is ones that are completely inverted from the ways in which people typically tell you to make decisions on this earth. As you are working there are going to be times where just being peace and gentle and mild will potentially mean that sometimes you could get stamped over. And it's important there that we can also take the guidance from Jesus about being shrewd as serpents.

There are going to be times where you have to stand up and say, well, I don't think this is fair. I can't agree. And that's okay.

It doesn't mean that you can't stand up and speak your opinion and that you have to be a doormat in your work setting. There's a way to be both as gentle as a dove and also as shrewd as serpents in the same type of context. And most importantly as it relates to our decisions remember that the manifestation of your decisions are your actions.

People will see this and know immediately, are you exhibiting the fruits of the spirit or the deeds of the flesh? You can look like one of these false apples that people can see on Sunday morning and look like a genuine true apple. But when people actually poke at it, and this happens with you're getting lots of different types of temptations and lots of different places where you're being pressured to make decisions. That's the time where you will notice whether you are fake or whether you're true.

Okay? Alright. With that as context I wanted to spend just 10 or 15 minutes giving you some practical guidance on two or three topic areas. One of them I'm not going to cover in detail because I'm going to refer you to a book that my dad wrote called Practical Discipleship that has a lot of guidance on financial matters.

And all I would guide you to is that that's one of the areas where as the Lord gives you more and more responsibility and more on your plate I think there's a chapter in that book, I think it's chapter 3, that I would encourage everyone of you to read. I'm going to highlight a few points there, but pick up that book because I believe that part of the example of being a disciple is being able to live through a life that's not

bound by money. Okay.

Let's cover very quickly manager and employer relationships. So this means where you are an employer and you have to relate to your manager. Or if the Lord gives you a management type of role and you have to relate to employees.

Here is the instruction that Peter gives to the worst or the most extreme form of a manager and employee, which is a slave and a master. Okay. And everything falls as a function of that.

So part of being when you're an employee working for a manager let's look at this verse. You who are servants be good servants to your masters, not just good masters, but also the bad ones. What counts is that you put up with it for God's sake when you're treated badly for no good reason.

There's no particular virtue in accepting punishment that you well deserve. But if you're treated badly for good behavior and continue in spite of it, be a good servant and that is what counts with God. And that is think of that as almost the worst case of a manager who's treating their employees badly.

Okay. And in that situation, which is the worst possible situation, the Lord says this is how you're supposed to act. And everything then falls as a function of that as being better.

And what I mean by that is that literally as you're dealing with your manager, part of being an example for Jesus is that when we are treated inappropriately, we can still be bold and tell them this is wrong, but we are not rebellious. We aren't in a place where we are trying to kick up unrest and create a lot of turmoil, but we are acting the way Jesus acted even when he was led to Calvary and said, you know, I might disagree. I'm going to go along with this.

And in your submission there between you and your manager, you're able to show an example of the way Christ acted. And the Lord will allow often mysterious ways in which a bad manager is removed and you might find after a period of time that you may have somebody who's new. There are plenty of examples even in Joseph's life as we talked about.

Ten years where he was in prison and then mysteriously got out of that situation and the Lord was able to bless him. So if you're in a situation where your manager is not treating you fairly, our call, calling as Christians, is to submit and to be an example there in submission and pray, Lord, take me off this yoke if it's your will when it's the appropriate time. I'm going to be vocal but not be disruptive or rebellious and vice versa when you become a manager eventually be far, far be it from us if that's what's said of us where we are treating people unfairly and unjustly.

And there are plenty of examples in the Bible. Daniel and Joseph are probably the best ones that we talked about. Financial matters, I'm not going to cover this in detail but let me say there are plenty of examples in the Bible of people who have been led astray by following money.

Lot is probably the biggest example. You saw Abraham and Lot. They were both trying to decide where to go and Abraham said, you pick first.

Lot picked the place which had a lot more money and here's what happened. You see the picture of Lot escaping with his daughters and his wife became the pillar of salt. Lots of other examples Gehazi, Balaam, Demas even in the New Testament where Demas left Paul to pursue money.

It's a result that in this area that a lot of us are tested because I fundamentally believe it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God because again and again the riches become a temptation and when the Lord gives us more, the best thing that I have learned is to say, Lord if you take this away it's good, I'm going to give thanks but when you give me more, I am going to use this first off to lay it as an Isaac at the altar which means I'm not going to be attached to this I'm going to use it also to bless those around me liberally with a cheerful and a liberal heart There's more material that I've put in here together but I'm going to basically ask you to read chapter 3 of that book it has a lot of very, very practical guidance in the context of financial matters. It is very very difficult to serve two masters. If you are increasingly as you get a paycheck occupied with earning more and earning more and earning more, you will find invariably it takes your time away from serving the Lord wherever it might be.

You've heard this quote being mentioned of this atheist, Voltaire, who said all Christians of all denominations are the same when it comes to money they're all the same. It may not be said of us that our love and our fascination for this is so great that there's no difference between us and the worldly people. This is an area where many of us will be tested now in the last 5 or 10 years the standard of living in Bangalore has grown up significantly as more and more investment comes to India, you're going to find you have more opportunity you have opportunity to earn a little bit more use that which the Lord has given you with your discretion and put that as an Isaac before the altar so that you can be found faithful let me cover the last set of things very very quickly.

A couple of examples here of people who when they were given much, used it to bless Priscilla and Aquila they used to live in Rome. Rome was one of the most expensive cities there yet they opened their home so that the church could be blessed if the Lord has put you in a setting that's in Bangalore or outside of Bangalore, use what you have.

This is an example of two who were using what they gave to bless the Lord it doesn't have to be just men there are good examples of women who were behind the scenes helping Jesus in his ministry you've seen this in Luke 8 Mary, Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna and these were women who just were giving money to help in many of these places if the Lord has given you a job and you are a single sister who before you got married you have an income that you can bless others with, this is something that you can do whether you're a brother or a sister think about the ministry of this man, Joseph Arimathea, okay it says he was a disciple of Jesus and all he did was he provided the grave for Jesus he was a wealthy man and think about it when Jesus died, the grave that Jesus was placed in was funded

and was given by Joseph Arimathea and that was his ministry, that's all it says about him he was a disciple of Jesus so we know that he followed him so there may be many who are not called to be in a setting where you are you are publicly visible, you might be behind the scenes helping and it doesn't have to be just again money, it could be in your time, it could be in your actions it could be in a variety of different things the Lord blesses you with okay this final topic before I wrap up I know is on a lot of your minds because invariably as you get more and more responsibility or as you grow in your responsibilities at work from the first time you take your job you're constantly under pressure for your time and as an example I think many of you who are working on projects may be asked

by your manager, you have to finish things in a certain period of time come back and you either have this period of time 30 days to finish a project or 45 days to finish a project and you estimate it's going to take you this long and you come back and you find that it's going to take you much longer as you get closer to the deadline you get more and more stressed and the aspect of how you deal with your time is something

that will be much much more a pressure in a work setting than in a college setting and I want to just share with you a couple of principles that are from the scriptures on how one can think about dealing with time first off, it's very important when we have free time we know what we're doing with it we aren't like a slugger who just says I'm going to waste all the free

time here is a simple principle from an animal that we can learn from and we all know the example, right? this is from the message you lazy fool, look at an ant watch it closely let it teach you a thing or two nobody has to tell it what to do all summer up it stores up food it harvests, it stockpiles provisions so how long are you going to laze around doing nothing how long before you get out of bed a nap here, a nap there, a day off, a day off here sit back, take it easy do you know what comes next? you can look forward to a dirt poor life poverty will be your permanent house guest and this is important because when there are periods of time where the Lord gives us rest and relaxation we can enjoy it but at no point in time should it be said of us that we were lazy that's very very

important as Christians that we're able to set an example that we do our work, we do it well we do it thoroughly we aren't sloppy in whatever we do and this is a good example of what we can learn from but there are going to be other times when we're going to feel significantly under pressure there are times when I have been told you need to finish this thing and it needs to get done in 2 or 3 days and it feels impossible or I'm feeling that I am trying to solve something and I have no way of understanding how it's going to get solved or maybe you're studying for an exam and you feel like Lord I've got to cram in so much in the next 2 or 3 days or next week and I don't know how it's going to be done let me ask you a question when you think back to the example of Joseph he was in the prison

for 10 years and then one day Pharaoh had a dream and you remember how much time Joseph had to interpret the dream does anybody remember what in Genesis 41 how much time did Joseph have anybody? less than what? no literally it says in the message he had time to just shave and get ready in the message it says he was hurried out of prison he had to shave, cut his hair and there he was he had no idea what he was going to go to the king for he was hurried out of prison 10 years in prison and then brought out all you have time to is get ready, shave in 15 minutes you have to be in front of the king and the king says here is the dream and if you don't interpret it you may not even just go back to prison you may die because that's how the kings treated many of their people who couldn't interpret

that and think about that, that's an extreme example of where God gave enormous wisdom to somebody under the time pressure of an instant and that's the God we're dealing with and we can pray with that level of faith where we're under an immense amount of pressure and say Lord may the God of Joseph who instantly took him up out of prison, he only had time to shave and he was asked to do something that was virtually impossible in Daniel's case he had a little more time we probably had a day he asked the king for more time and it says he had a night vision where it was revealed so maybe he talked to the king during the day and the night he stayed up and he prayed with his friends and the Lord revealed that vision to him so whether you have an instant or 15 minutes or whether you have a day

to finish something or we have several days, my encouragement to you is look to the Lord to the God of Joseph to the God of Daniel to say Lord I need help, I need help here and I know that you can help me finish something much faster than I can humanly finish and you will find that God is able to help you do better than the average person in the world think about again the example of Daniel and his friends, they honored God they didn't drink of the king's wine and eat of the king's food and they were smarter they were more fit than the average person who was tested against them, that's the God we're dealing with and

that's my encouragement to you as you think about being under time pressure, the other thing I want to share with you which I think is a little bit different here in India but

in whatever situation you're in, the Lord will give you wisdom and guidance, many of you have an hour and a half sometimes I think the worst case, I was talking to a few of you have an hour and a half commute each way to work how many here have an hour of commute to work distance to travel, it takes you an hour to get to work 1, 2, 3, 4 5, 6, 7, 8 how many of you have an hour and a half more than 90 minutes, more than an hour on average so the hour is probably the most more than an hour sometimes think about that, I don't have an hour each way but I was really thinking, I said Lord if you were to, certainly I think if I was to drive an hour each way, I'd probably try to live closer to work or something like that, in many of your cases I know you either take a car or a bus fortunately you

don't have to drive yourselves or to drive the vehicle if you have to, I know that's hard but if the Lord is using you in that hour and a half use that time as a precious way in which you can get close to the Lord I think one of the most marvelous inventions right now is an mp3 player okay, they're cheap also, you can get them cheaper and cheaper and if you can put the 70 hours on a mp3 player you can listen to all of them or you can download one of the messages from the Sunday morning, listen to them there are also now places where you can download parts of the scripture read on an mp3 where you can listen to it so if you're finding it's too hard to read because it's bumpy and you're tired find a way by which you can use perhaps a little of your money to invest in getting one of those

devices that can help you spend time during that hour or hour and a half in the Word I think that's really, really precious that you will find is helpful to you in your life so, no simple recipe here as it relates to time and stress management, but what I would encourage you to do is, remember the principles of not being lazy of using our time wisely before the Lord the Lord will give us wisdom and in any place where we're finding it's too stressful we can always be assured that we can go to the Lord and say, Lord may the God of Joseph, may the God of Daniel give me a special dose of grace that I need for this period of my life so, let's review once again, we talked about values we talked about goals, we talked about decisions as we close this session that as we conclude this session that

the Lord would use, especially the passages of scriptures that we read, I will send this material to Rabbi and all of you can look at it and review it but look at those passages of scripture the power in what we've talked about today is not in clever thoughts, it's in the passages of scripture that we read, that the Lord has used to encourage me and I pray that He will also use to encourage you as you work in a professional setting the Lord has called every one of us to be an example, as I mentioned when we started, 99% of us will have to work until we retire, there may be few of us that are called into a full time ministry, so we have a tremendous calling to be like those examples we've talked about, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, who had a full time job yet, their

citizenship and their mind was in heaven whether the Lord blessed their career and they did well or the Lord put them through times where their career wasn't going anywhere they blessed the Lord equally well, let's close in prayer as we bow our heads in prayer, I would just ask every one of you if the Lord has used one passage of scripture to bring you closer to Him in terms of what your heavenly values need to be, your heavenly goals need to be the decisions you're making everyday are ones that need to be guided by Him we pray that the Lord would grant in you the power of the Holy Spirit so that your life will be a new one in 2008 that our lives will be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit that we could be witnesses for you Jesus Lord I pray for all the brothers and sisters here

today, all of us Lord, we're in one family together as we live in a world where we have to deal with all kinds of different situations employees, managers those around us who are most often unrighteous Lord people who have value systems that are different you've called us to be a light on a hill salt of food on this earth Lord I pray that you would help us Lord, we need tremendous amount of help, our natural instincts are not to please you our natural instincts are to please ourselves or to please other people Lord and I pray that you would use the words of the scriptures that we have looked at over the course of the last two sessions to remind us of the example you want us to be thank you Lord that you are a powerful God that can give us wisdom, however complex the situation is and we

trust you Lord, we trust you that during times of turmoil during times of uncertainty that you are close to us and you are looking for us to reach out to you like Peter did even when they were sinking Lord I pray that this would be true bless every young brother and young sister here Lord, thank you for this wonderful conference and the way you've been able to bless us through this, in Jesus name Amen

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