

DAY
4

REACH Out at Your Place of Work

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24

Most of us spend a good deal of our life working. We have places of employment. We earn a living through our work. Many people have meaningful work. Many even have a sense of calling and vocation. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. One place where we learn to make a life is on the job. When your job becomes a vocation, your place of work becomes a location to do God's work.

What does it mean to do good work? At the least, it is work you do with excellence and work you do ethically. Good work honors God and blesses others. Are you doing ethical work and excellent work?

Martin Luther said, "If you are a street sweeper, then sweep streets to the glory of God." What does it mean to do your work to the glory of God? Are you doing that?

We are living in a cultural season where the Great Resignation and the Great Revolt from work is taking place. Sin impacts all things, including work and the workplace. What has gone wrong with work? What can followers of Jesus do to redeem bad workplaces? What are you doing to redeem your workplace?

If you have a leadership role of any sort in your workplace, that is one of the most critical places you have for reaching our community. How can you be an agent of transformation that impacts not only the workplace, but also those who work there?



DAY
5

REACH Out as a Good Citizen

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Romans 13:1

Followers of Christ always live in the tension between being citizens of heaven (see Philippians 3:20) and citizens in a physical country such as the United States. We are reminded of our citizenship on earth when we get a passport or cast a vote in an election or tune into media. We are rarely reminded that our citizenship is in heaven, as Paul says.

The first step in being a good citizen in our country is to have a growing understanding that our citizenship is ultimately in heaven with Jesus Christ. This eternal citizenship gives us the impetus to be good citizens here and now.

Our witness to the people around us is connected to being good citizens. 1 Peter 2:13-16 offers us a blueprint for citizenship: Submit to governing authorities, for the Lord's sake. Do good in the community (see below). Show respect to everyone. Love people. Fear God. Honor governing authorities.

We who follow Christ are called to model a better way of citizenship.

We live in highly polarized times where partisan division and anger is a daily occurrence. We who follow Christ are called to model a better way of citizenship. How good are you as a citizen of our nation? How are you treating others with whom you might disagree? How is God asking you to change and grow to more reflect his Kingdom in this earthly kingdom?

Good citizens do good in their community. We do good when we get involved in the organizations, groups, and systems that make for a strong and healthy community. Schools, non-profits, a variety of civic clubs and groups, local associations for special interests, the list goes on. Find a place to get involved. Build relationships. Improve the group. Work for good results. A local community flourishes when its people (citizens) work toward that end. Where can you get involved?

WEEK OF JANUARY 16



for I know the plans I have for you...

DAY 1

REACH Out to Build a Better Community

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect... 1 Peter 3:15

REACH is among the highest priorities for Living Word. Our world has changed and our community has changed. We live in a secular (non-religious) culture. We live in an increasingly post-Christian culture. The beliefs, values, and the systems of the Christian faith have greatly diminished in North America.

The United States is a mission field and a challenging one. Every church must get much, much BETTER at REACH. The old ways no longer work. They haven't worked for some time. We need creative new ways of connecting with our community.

This week is about REACHING our local community of York. This is where we live, work, play, have friends, have family (hopefully), and have the closest opportunity to make a difference. York is our corner of God's world. While the Internet makes it possible for anyone to connect with the largest churches anywhere in the nation, it is just a long-distance relationship. Incarnational, up close, and embedded is how Jesus came to earth. He moved into the neighborhood (John 1:14, 14:23-24, *The Message*). York is our home. York is Living Word's home. Here we are. Together, let's make a difference.

- 1) You can make a difference as an individual, finding people and places with whom to connect.
- 2) You can make a difference as part of a Life Group. Your entire group can adopt projects in the community.
- 3) As an entire church body, we can mobilize everyone to make a difference in our community.
- 4) We work with many local missional organizations to make a difference together.

Keep these four options in your mind as you do the rest of the devotional. Ask God to help you REACH our community.

DAY 2

REACH Out - Evangelism and Discipleship

I am obligated... I am eager... I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes... Romans 1:14-16

Evangelism is simply telling others about the good news of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Evangelism invites people to turn from their old ways, find forgiveness, and find freedom as they begin a saving relationship with Jesus.

Discipleship is the process of growing in Christlikeness once we have been saved by Jesus. Discipleship is the transformation process of becoming mature in Jesus.

Evangelism and discipleship are the responsibility of every Christian as we connect with the world outside the church. But it is hard. Most Christians have few good friendships with non-Christians. When we encourage everyone to be highly intentional about Just One person who needs Jesus, many of us don't even have Just One! This year, you want to have a Just One.

Who can you get to know as a friend? How will you do that? Who is around you that needs a friend?

Are you learning how to have spiritual conversations with non-Christians? If you want to learn more, get a copy of *Mere Evangelism* by Randy Newman.

Another avenue is to invite people to connect at Living Word. You will have a valuable role as a connector. Share invites to watch Living Word online. Share links on Facebook or Instagram.

Be alert to the many outreach events we are planning for 2022. We will create quality events that non-Christians will enjoy, but we need you to invite them.

DAY 3

REACH Out - Compassion and Justice

And the word of the Lord came again to Zechariah: "This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.'" Zechariah 7:8-10

Also read these verses: Isaiah 30:18, Amos 5:15, Micah 6:8, and Matthew 23:23. By the way, notice that it was the most religiously conservative group in Jesus' time that was most guilty of compassion failures and justice failures.

Why is justice and compassion such a hot potato for the conservative Church? Justice is mandated 130 times in the Bible. Not all social justice is biblical justice, but ALL biblical justice is for the sake of the society.

People are hurting. Life is not fair. The system is often biased against hurting and innocent people. It was true in Israel and Israel was chastised by God for their failures in this. If God judged his people Israel for these failures, then God's people the Church is in for the same.

Evangelicals through much of western history were on the side of justice. Evangelicals created hundreds of missional organizations for works of compassion and mercy and to work for justice for those who did not have it.

In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus proclaims his messianic mission as that of compassion and justice for those who need it. His entire ministry concentrated on those with the greatest need for both.

If the Church of Christ is to be a Church like Christ, then we must have his heart, his commitment, and his strategies that are full of compassion and result in justice. It will be hard. We will all be stretched. We have a lot of learning, praying, and activating ahead of us. But faithfulness to Jesus on this is essential. Our missional witness to our post-Christian culture will fail apart from it.

