****

**Where Ethics and Authority Meet- Podcast 4**

*PLEASE NOTE: These are direct transcripts of spoken sermons.*

Good morning! Yesterday I went out for a little run and happened to go through part of my neighborhood that connects with the Town and Country Optimist Youth Sports Complex. Anybody ever been out there with a kid? As a kid? Played another team? Almost everybody, right? Well as I was dodging the cars and the traffic and kind of working my way through the parents and the kids trying to get through there I noticed the sign for the Town and Country fields has a motto across the top of the sign. And the motto is, “play hard, play fair, and have fun”. I thought, “You know what? That’s what we’re talking about with work life.” Play hard, that’s excellence, work at it. Do a great job, invest yourself. Play fair, that’s ethics. Do the right thing, play by the rules, bring your best to the game. And then have fun, that’s engaged. That’s what we’re going to be talking about next week. And then of course at the end of the day, you know you get a little trophy and at the end of the day for us its evangelistic too. We want to see people connected with God.

We’ve been in this series on work life and we looked at excellence and what it means to work hard. To work hard as if we’re working for the Lord. And then last week we began the topic of ethics, what does it mean to be an ethical person? And we really were challenged from scripture because we came to understand that oftentimes we believe that the economy, our boss, the customer, the current business climate really, at the end of the day we believe that that is what ultimately controls our destiny. And we believe that our boss has more to do with where our life will end up than we do God himself. So, we asked a question, “do we believe that God is really able?” God really has the ability to be able to direct our lives, regardless of what happens in the work place. Because if you really believe that God is ultimately sovereign over your life then you’re going to come to understand that you don’t have to compromise your ethics to get by in this world. You don’t have to sell out.

Now there’s two sides to ethics, there’s the side of ethics that keep us from doing something bad, and that’s important you know. Lying, or cheating, or stealing, or sacrificing our moral conscience, that’s one side of ethics. But that’s kind of the negative side of ethics, there’s also a positive side of ethics, and the positive side of ethics is that engagement that we have where we do what’s right, we do the right thing. And we embrace our work life and we embrace it fully. Now we’ve defined work life as basically whatever you do. So, if you’re a student, your studies are your work life. If you’re a stay-at-home parent, raising your kids, that’s your work life. {As an aside: Job Seekers Network would say that if you are looking for a job your job search is your work life.} If you work in a business that’s your work life. Whatever you do, that’s your work life.

And how do we live out the positive side of our ethics where we truly are great employees, where we really follow through on our commitments. Now, for most of us we have a climate that we call the office. Now whether that climate is your home, and the cooperation you do or do not get from those who live there. Whether the climate is your classroom or your school. Whether that climate is out in the community doing business or in the office, we have a climate. And often times we allow the climate to dictate whether we come fully prepared to engage and do our best, and that challenges our ethics. Now some of your climates are really good and you know, there’s no excuse for you just not to be a stellar worker. And some of your climates leave a little bit to be desired, most of us know what that is, in fact it’s catching on as a craze in our country. The sitcom, The Office, is so connecting because so many people have experienced corporate and a boss, and other employee that just give you all kinds of reasons not to do your best. And what happens when you’ve got a boss that’s responsible to lead but when it comes to a difficulty they delegate their project to the least confident person in the office. Like this,

{video clip starts}

“As a boss the most sacred thing I do is care and provide for my workers; my family. I give them money, I give them food. Not directly, but through the money. I heal them. Today I am in charge of picking a great new health care plan. Right, that’s what this is all about. Does that make me their doctor? Um, yes in a way. Yeah, like a specialist.”

“There’s no dental, there’s no vision, there’s a $1,200 deductible.”

“Dunder Mifflin, this is Pam.”

“Pam! Michael Scott, how’s tricks?”

“Where are you?”

“I am in my office, I am swamped. I have work up to my ears, and busy, busy, busy, busy, busy. Can’t step away, I just wanted to check in and see how everybody’s doing. Everybody cool out there?”

“Um, actually people are really unhappy, Dwight sent around this memo and people are freaking out because-“

“Pam, whoa, whoa, whoa. I’m sorry, I’m sorry I got to go, I’m getting a call.”

“No, you’re not.”

“I have to make a call after I finish my work. You know what, um just don’t let anybody in my office under any conditions today, I’m just too busy, too swamped. You know? I am unreachable, I am incommunicado, capiche?”

“Okay.”

“Thank you, oh God, here we go again. Got to go, I have to take this.”

“Still no one calling.”

“Michael can I talk to you?”

“I would love to but I am really busy, rain check?”

“Well, Michael can we talk to you about this memo?”

“Which memo?”

“Dwight’s health care memo, I told you about it.”

“Good plan?”

“It’s a great plan, saves the company a fortune.”

“It’s like a pay decrease.”

“Michael, he made huge cuts.”

“Cuts? What wow. Dwight did you make cuts?”

“Yeah, you said-“

“No, no, no, no. You know what, I said nothing specific because I was so busy. You go in there Dwight and find these people a plan that’ll work for them, okay?”

“ …Well?”

“Well what? You could be referring to anything.”

“Okay, the health care plan,”

“Why did you put Dwight in charge of that? He did a horrible job.”

“Uh Dwight, did you raise benefits.”

“I most certainly did not.”

“Oh, come on that’s horrible, I wish I had time to change it but Jane needs it by five and, what time is it, what time is it? It’s after five, it’s awful. So, well, okay see you guys on Monday.” {video ends}

Ever experience anything like that? Often times we allow the environment or the people that we work with or work for to give us the freedom to not be ethical in bringing our best to the job that we’ve been given. So, if you think that the environment that you might find yourself in is a little bit like Dunder Mifflin I want to show you an environment that is even more difficult than that and you’ll find it in Colossians chapter 3. So, turn your bibles to Colossians chapter three and I want you to see how God directs us to approach our work life in difficult circumstances. How do we approach our work life in difficult circumstances? What happens if the customer is unreasonable, if the boss is a baboon, what happens when the climate in which we work doesn’t make any sense? When there are better ways to do it than we think its being asked to be done or whether in some way shape or form we think its below our dignity to do our particular job. How do we come through at that moment? Because that tells us a lot about our own personal ethics.

Colossians chapter three starting in verse 22 we read this word. First word, slaves. Oh, slaves. “Slaves obey your earthly masters in everything and do it not only when their eye is on you to win their favor but with serenity in heart and reverence for the Lord.” Now you have to understand that in the environment to which Paul is writing, much of the employment was slave and master relationship. In fact, during this time it’s estimated that about 60 million slaves did the majority of the work in the Roman Empire. And the slaves really ranged the gambit from those who did the menial labor up to those who were highly trained. Many families would have slaves who were their family physician or their family attorney. Some would have salves that would actually run all of their business, teach and tutor their children, to be their family kind of thinker or their custodian for the family. It was not uncommon to see slaves at every economic level, in fact that was one of the downfalls of the Roman Empire is that basically, the slaves did all the work and the free people didn’t do anything. So, in this milieu Paul is writing to these people who are really owned by someone else, who can really exercise any kind of control, positively or negatively give whatever kind of directive, good or bad to these folks. And rather than Paul coming out and saying “Your job is to over throw the system,” he speaks to the individuals within the system and he tells them that God can do a revolution in your heart and in your life if you will submit yourself to God and allow Him to work through you even in circumstances that’re not best.

Now the difference here is that we are free people, we can choose to work for whoever we want to work for. If we don’t like our work conditions we can go work someplace else. If we don’t like our employer we can go do something different. Now we may not be able to keep the same standard of living. We may not be able to live in the same house, we may not be able to do the same kind of things, but we have freedom so within that freedom when we connect ourselves to a commitment to work, do we carry out that responsibility to be following through, to do our best, to do what we committed to do, or do we begin to look for reasons to do less than that. When we look for reasons to do less than that, we begin to sacrifice our ethics.

Now in this passage, the principal that Paul’s pointing out is that an ethical worker recognizes and submits to authority. **An ethical worker recognizes and submits to authority.** Who is the authority in your work life, who is the one that gives you direction, who’s the one that you answer to, who’s the one you work for? As a student, it’d be a teacher, as a self-employed it’s probably your customer you’re signing contracts with. Maybe you work in a corporation and you’ve got managers and you’ve got a management chain that you work under. Stay at home spouse you probably have some kind of commitment that you’ve made to the family that you’re going to follow through on, raising the kids and taking care of the house. As a teacher who’s your authority, who’s the one you actually answer to in your work life. And how do you respond to that person? Do you submit to their authority?

What Paul says here in verse 22 is he says, “slaves obey your earthly master in everything.” And obey, there’s a very important word. It comes from a compound word, hupakouo. Kouo means to listen, hupa means to listen under. In other words, what this word is saying is that we’re supposed to listen to the directive of our supervisor or the directive of the authority in our life, we’re supposed to listen and then we’re supposed to act under and execute the directives that are given to us. In other words, the action of an ethical employee is to tune in, listen to what I’m being asked to do; what’s in my job description, what are my deliverables, what have I committed to? And then to execute against those. And to do that consistently. That’s the action of an ethical worker.

Now when you wrestle with that, there are all kinds of reasons and ways and plans and excuses to kind of find ways around that aren’t there? All kinds of little things that we can do to kind of skirt the issue. One of our elders was sharing the story of the Winchester heiress who built the mystery house out in California, some of you guys may have visited out there or been there. And she was a little bit eccentric but she knew what she was looking for in a gardener and one time she decided she was going to hire a new gardener so she interviewed three gardeners, and when she brought them together she had a little test for them. She said, “Now I want you to go out and I want you to plant these cabbage plants with the roots up.” Roots up, okay? Plant under the ground, roots sticking up. The first gardener went out to look at the job, heard the instructions, went out to look at the job and said, “This is just stupid, I’m not going to do it.” The second gardener came along and said, “This is just stupid but you know what if this is what she wants, this is what I’m going to do.” And just planted them all just like that. The third gardener looked at the work listened to the instructions and he came back to her and he said to her, “You know what, I think you get better results if you planted these root side down but if there’s some reason you feel like they need to be done the other way then I’ll do it like that way for you.” Now which of those three got the job?

See the first one said if I don’t understand or I don’t think what I’m being asked to do makes sense to me I’m not going to do it. The second one said you know what, I don’t care if it makes sense or not I just do what I’m told, I just get through the day, I put in my time, I make it happen. Now the third one, the third one came along and listened. What are you asking me to do? You want me to plant a plant? The instructions you’re giving me they don’t make sense. I’m going to give you feedback to that. Value add, provide value add cause I’m trying to figure out what you need here and I can help you by doing my job but ultimately, the third person said you know what maybe there’s something here that I don’t know and you know so at the end of the day after I give value add I’m going to follow through and I’m going to do a good job. Now is that how you approach your work? You listen and you’re characterized by doing it and doing it well.

**Not only is there an action involved but there’s an attitude as well.** There’s also an attitude here as well, he goes on to say in verse 22 “Slaves obey your earthly masters in everything and do it not only when their eye is on you to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart in reverence to the Lord.” In other words, your attitude should be characterized not by self-serving work but by loyal work. Not just when the boss is looking, not just when somebody’s paying attention, not benefits you, not just on the projects that get high profile. But doing what’s needed all the time, not having to be supervised, not having to be looked over, not having to have somebody kind of waving the heavy stick over your head. But attitude to go out and serve, and he says you should do it with sincerity of heart, that phrase sincerity of heart means single mindedness. There’s not a duplicity in your attitude. You’re there to do your best, to work hard and you’re not playing games. You’re not playing games. Give me the right encouragement, I’ll work hard, don’t give me any encouragement I won’t work hard. Well, I’ll do the job but I’m going to sow seeds of disloyalty by telling everybody how stupid I think this is. That would be duplicitous, that’s not single-minded or single hearted in your work.

There’s also some accountability present and that accountability is found in the verse as well, he says, “but not only when their eye is on you to win their favor but with sincerity of the heart and reverence for the Lord.” That phrase reverence for the Lord reveals that we understand that at the end of the day we’re ultimately serving the person that is our boss or giving us direction, we’re serving that person as if we’re serving the Lord. In fact, the next couple verses go on to say that it’s really Jesus Christ that we’re serving. And so, our attitude and our accountability is ultimately to God. If your boss or your customer or your teacher or whoever’s giving you directive, if they were Jesus Christ would you change your behavior? Would you change the way you did your job? Would you change your attitude? You say absolutely man, if my boss was Jesus Christ he wouldn’t be asking me to do the stupid things my boss asked me to do. I don’t know, there are a lot of times when in my flesh, my flesh is saying “Oh no this is the right path for you Tim and Jesus is saying don’t go down that path. That would be a really bad path, I want you to go over here, and I want you to surrender, I want you to step outside of yourself.” There are lots of times when Jesus is asking me to do things that there’s a part of me that says, “I don’t want to do that” but if I’m really honoring him as my lord and God, I do, I follow through. That’s my job, to follow through. In the same way, there are lots of times in a work environment where there will be things that you don’t like or you don’t want to do or you think are stupid. And your response to those things speaks to your ethics, who you are as a worker.

Now Paul doesn’t just leave us here with workers. He goes on and he talks to bosses as well. Now how many of you here have responsibility to lead or manage someone else? Yeah, a few of you are brave enough to raise your hands. Some of you don’t want to admit it, do you? You don’t want anyone around to see. Anybody who is a stay-at-home parent should have your hand raised. You got responsibility for people, right? As a boss, as having responsibility to someone else there’s also a directive in this passage to you. So, if you’ve got responsibility for other people there’s something here for you. Now I don’t know what you guys think but I’ve got some responsibility in this particular area. I went back because I wasn’t sure, so I went back and asked some of our HR to tell us how many people we have on staff at Hill Country Bible Church, we’ve got 79 employees, 61 full time, and 18-part time. And in addition to the 2 hours of work I do on Sunday, which I know many of you think that’s all, I’ve got responsibility for people. And in some ways, I’m a boss, and I’ve got responsibilities for some people. And I’ve got to tell you, that’s the hardest part of my job. Because when I look at what I’m responsible for you guys invest financially in the church by giving your tithes and offerings because your desire is to see people ministered to and to see the kingdom expanded. And so, we got people that are on our payroll that’re working with the poor. We got people that’re working with missionaries. We got people that are working with students. We got people that are working with children. We got people that’re working with recovery. We got people that are working with all kinds of ministry needs, people that are in the hospital when someone is sick. People that are helping with weddings and with funerals and with premarital counseling and overseeing all these ministries. So, you guys are expecting that the money that you give is going to produce something, it’s going to have an impact in people’s lives. And believe me, you say, “what do all those people do?” if one of them isn’t doing their job somebody here notices it and I hear about it. So, there’s a work side to the ministry of the church. And I’m responsible to make sure people do their jobs and they do them well. So, what you give is used to advance the kingdom, but there’s also a people side to this.

Not only do I need to care for the individual but how do you be somebody’s boss and pastor at the same time? How do you look at somebody who their gifts are just not fitting the ministry that they’re involved in and they’re not doing a good job at their job and they know that you’re the pastor for their wife and their children as well and you’re having to say, “this just isn’t working out.” I got to tell you, of all the things that I do, personnel issues is absolutely the hardest stuff that keeps me up at night. Worrying about people and how they do their job, and any of you guys that are managers you got people that work for you, business owners; you know. You know this. There was a time when you thought, “hey if I could get promoted and be in charge, wouldn’t that be cool?” and now you’re promoted to be in charge and you’re thinking “what in the world was I thinking?” Like this is crazy, I got peoples’ lives in my hands and I’ve got to do well by them and still accomplish the work that God has given us to do.

And in the midst of all that, Jesus Christ speaks to us through this passage and he tells us how we’re supposed to approach it and it’s very very simple. In chapter 4 verse one, he says “masters provide your slaves with what is right and fair because you know you also have a master in heaven.” Your responsibility, he says is to provide slaves with what is right and fair. The word provide here means to give or grant, or to exhibit. In other words, what he’s saying is that when people watch how you deal with the people who work for you, they ought to see in your behavior rightness and fairness, that ought to be displayed. Rightness would imply that what you’re asking them to do and how you’re working with them is good and wholesome and truthful and honest. Fairness is a whole different issue. And let me just say in these united states, we think fairness means treating everybody the same. It’s not, fairness is not treating everybody the same. In fact, God doesn’t treat everyone the same. Think about it, some of you guys have a really high IQ and you know who you are. And some of y’all have a really low IQ and the ones with a high IQ know who you are too. And if you ask them, they’ll tell you. Some of you were born good looking, and some of you were born looking like me. People are born into all different kinds of circumstances, growing up with all different kinds of gifts, God doesn’t treat everyone the same. But God deals fairly with each individual. And as a manager or as a leader, or as a boss, you’ve got to understand the difference between that. You got to understand the difference between that. It’s why if you’re running a restaurant the single mom that has been with you for ten years probably gets the weekend shift, because of the weekend shift she can make twice as much money on tips as the college student that’s going to be with you for the next six months can make on Monday and Tuesday nights. You just have to deal differently with different people because of who they are, their stage in life, where they are, how they fit in, what their needs are. And that takes a lot of prayer and a lot of work on the part of a good boss or good manager to understand, “how do I treat people fairly?” and so fairness is a transaction of trust between the individual employee and the employer and fairness is not simply treating everyone the same.

Now in the midst of that, t**his passage tells us that an employer is supposed to respect people and understand that people have value** and that’s one of the big challenges that many of us face in managing people. Is to recognize their value beyond the task. And so, I asked the question on your outline “**what is your wake?**” and you may be saying, well what in the world do you mean by what is your wake? Well Henry Cloud, a Christian counselor psychologist who’s also doing a lot of business consulting wrote a book called *Integrity,* and in that book, he put a little illustration that I would think is so helpful for us to understand how we operate in our dealing with other people. He talked about a boat traveling through the water and so here’s my best impression of a boat. And as the boat travels through the water it leaves behind a wake. Now the cool thing about the wake is this, the wake reveals the character of the boat. So, you know if a boats got real deep drag, you’ll see a real big wake, if a boat is kind of traveling back and forth you’ll kind of see the zig zags in the wake. If a boat’s traveling at a high speed you’ll see a different wake than if a boat’s traveling at a low rate of speed. But every wake reveals that a boat has passed this way, it’s gone this way and it gives insight into the character of the individual boat.

The same is true of the wake of an individual, as a boss, as a worker, as a business owner, as a manager, as a parent, as a teacher, when you travel through life, when you travel through the lives of people you will leave behind two very clear indicators of how well you did. The first indicator is the indicator of task, that’s one side of your wake. The task side is kind of the job side. It’s the performance side, it’s did I make my numbers, did I finish my sales, did I finish projects on time, did I do projects, did I get things accomplished? This is the accomplishment side and that side can look like very positive, yes when I look back on performance and getting my job done you’ve got a history of good performance. Or it could look bad. History of excuses, nonperformance, not getting anything done, not making any deadlines not generating any money, not creating anything, not teaching anybody anything. It can look bad, or it can look good.

On the other side is people. Everybody works with people along the way. The question on the people side is this, “Do the people that came along for me or with me, were their lives enriched? Did they have a good time along the way? Did they experience any personal growth? Did they feel like they made a contribution? Did their gifts and abilities actually become enhanced because of their working with me on this particular project or in this particular adventure?” if the answer to these two are both positive we accomplish what we set out to do, we got a lot done and along the way **people grew and enjoyed themselves and were enriched and blessed in the process** you’ve got a very positive wake. If along the way you got a lot done and the people along the way felt used and abused, beat up, mistreated, mistrusted, and they went away from the experience bitter then one side of your wake is strong and the other side is very weak. Or you could come away with everybody feeling like “man it’s great to work with you because we get nothing done, we just play all the time. Best manager I ever had, we just play” well sooner or later you’re going to be without a job cause the company’s going to go out of business but you know in the meantime enjoy the ride. When you look at your history as a manager or a boss look into the faces of the people that have been with you and have left you. What do you read there? Were they valued as humans? Were they developed? Were they encouraged? Were they better because of the trip with you? When you look at the task side did you get something done? Did you provide something for your customers or for your kids or for your students or for the stockholders or whoever it was and that gives you the ability to understand whether the way you come at something is both right and fair. Doing the right thing, dealing with people fairly, because that’s the two sides of leadership, management and that is a challenge to take a step back and look back at those things.

One of the questions we got to ask as bosses is who’s going to do my performance review? Who grades my performance? And this passage tells us that you might be surprised at who actually gives you a **grade at your performance**. Verse 4 he says “masters provide your slaves with what’s right and fair because you know that you also have a master in heaven.” You’ve got to understand and you’ve got to believe and you’ve got to embrace the fact that you’re going to be held accountable to God. Both if you’re an employee, if you’re a worker for how you work, and also if you’re a boss for how you’ve treated people and what you’ve done. God’s going to have a time of accounting where you’re going to be given an account for your life which raises the stakes and also makes it worth your while. What you’re doing with your time is very very important. You say I’m just making widgets, who cares? You know who cares? God cares. Because in the course of making widgets God cares about your course of life, how you come at it, what you do with it. Your creativity, how you connect with people. God is so interested in your life that He made you as a worker and gave you His characteristics.

So, let me give you some applications as we wrap up our discussion of ethics. First application on your outline is this: **determine your earthly and heavenly authority**. Determine your earthly and heavenly authority. What I’m saying is who do you work for? Put a face there, put a name beside it. Is it your manager? Is it the owner of your business? Is it your family system, your spouse, your kids? Do you work for the customer, do you work for the students? Do you work for the school district? Who do you work for? Be very specific; it’s very important you get a grip on whose authority am I supposed to be responding to? Who is it? Can you say, right now “my earthly authority, the person I’m supposed to line up under and respect, his name, her name, their names, are-” and then also recognizing that there’s a God face too. Ultimately, we work for Jesus Christ.

Second application is examine your general attitude toward authority. What’s your general **attitude toward authority**? “What do you mean, Tim?” Well what is it? Are you generally a compliant person? You know, somebody gives you a directive you go do it, that’s no big deal. Maybe you’re one of those kinds of people, I’ll be compliant as long as you convince me. Like I’m happy as long as I know that you know that I know that what you want me to do is exactly what I believe I should be doing and I wanted to do it first. But if it doesn’t make sense to me, I’m going to have a lot of trouble doing it. Maybe you’re the kind of person that you just get up in the morning and you’re looking for somebody to tell you what to do, so you can tell them where to jump off. You’re just looking for somebody, the first person that’s trying to get into your lane because they got to turn and put their hand out and boy you’re just, don’t tell me to let you in. You’re just rebellious at the core of your being. How would you grade yourself, if you were grading yourself on a one to ten scale, ten being man don’t tell me what to do, one being hey, whatever anybody tells me to do is what I’m going to do, where would you put yourself on that scale? And the reason why I’m challenging you to think about this is because if you find yourself above a five this particular issue is going to be a challenge for you, it’s going to be a challenge for you. Which brings us to our last point of application, and that is to commit, you got to commit yourself to **taking advantage of the divine resources available to you**. What are the divine resources that are available to you, to learn to live under the authority that God has placed into your life. What has God given you to do that? And some of us just need to get back to the basics of our faith. We need to recognize that when we get up in the morning, we need to spend some time in prayer we need to open our bibles and spend some time and seek some guidance before I head out the door, before I head into my work life I need some help because if I’m left to myself, God if I’m left to myself here I’m not going to do this well. I need divine help, some of us need to make a commitment that on our commute into work we’re going to make that a holy place in our cars. That’s going to be a holy time or rather than simply going through all the things I need to get done today or who I’m going to visit with or what I’m going to have for lunch, I’m spending that time really asking God, “God as I drive into work, help me prepare my heart, change me, make me the kind of person that’s prepared. That when I get there I can live out your life in my work life.” Maybe you need to begin to put in place a regular practice of prayer before you’re going to get into any kind of confrontation or if you’re going to go in a meeting that might be tough or you’re going to the Wednesday part of your job that’s really boring and monotonous , that you’re going to ask God to give you insight into how to discover how you can do that effectively , you can take advantage of the spiritual resources God’s given you to be able to do your work onto the Lord and be able to serve Him faithfully.

One of those resources is our work life challenge, I encourage you to reach into your bulletin and pull this out, if you don’t have one raise your hand, we’ve got some ushers that would love to put one in your hand. This is our work life challenge for week four. As you tear them open think your mission if you choose to accept it you should tear this open. There’s two challenges and you don’t have to do them both, just pick one and do but if you’re type A you can do them both, feel free.

So, the first challenge, challenge A, it says think about ways you demonstrated a bad attitude in your work life. Have you engaged in gossip, addressed others in a poor light or contributed low morale by not supporting those in authority? Commit to follow through on a specific plan of action, make restitution and seek forgiveness as applicable. So maybe you’ve demonstrated a bad attitude, maybe you’ve thrown somebody under the bus, maybe you’ve gossiped or talked bad at work because you just don’t like the authority or don’t like what the company is asking you to do. You find yourself undermining others’ attitudes by your attitude and you need to go back and deal with that, maybe ask for forgiveness. Now that’d be a real challenge.

Pray about that this week, the other challenge regardless of our worklife role we’re all ultimately under God’s authority. Do you relate and respond to God as though He really has the final say in your life? In what ways do you demonstrate submission to His leadership? Ask God to show you areas where you have challenged Him especially in your work life. So, the second one is more generic but it’s an issue of authority. God speak to me, reveal to me how I respond to your authority and show me ways that I can grow in my responsiveness to you. Especially in your work life.

And then take some time to get on our website, write down your story. If you haven’t had a chance to go back and read people’s stories, there’s some fascinating stories about how people are discovering God in their worklife by taking these challenges. May we be the people that live in such a way that those people who employ us, those people who teach us, who lead us, say, “whoa, Jesus Christ is doing something supernatural in her.”

Now let’s bow our heads for prayer, Father we just thank you for being perfect in every way and it’s not difficult to understand your lordship in our life. But Father we do admit that it’s often hard, it’s often hard and one of the ways that you challenged us to live that out is by demonstrating respect and authority to the authority in our lives and Father we admit that that’s hard too. And may we be a people that go into our work life this week to do our work well, to be pleasing to you. And to demonstrate our commitment to those in leadership. Father as leaders may we treat people fairly and with respect and in doing this may we experience the blessing of Jesus Christ in our work. Pray in Jesus name, Amen.