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ABOUT MY
FATHER'S
BUSINESS

Taking Your Faith to Work

REGI
CAMPBELL

Foreword by ANDY STANLEY

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About My Father's Business

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“Regi has captured God’s heart for every Christian businessman to be a light in the marketplace. The process is simple and effective. This book will make a real impact for the kingdom of God.”

BRUCE R. WITT,
DIRECTOR OF FIELD MINISTRY,
CONNECTING BUSINESS MEN TO CHRIST

“As a friend and business associate, I have admired Regi Campbell’s committed and maturing faith for nearly three decades. In *About My Father’s Business*, Regi’s approach is open and nonjudgmental, and his writing is inspirational. I highly recommend this book to any Christian seeking more out of his or her workday than a paycheck or a promotion.”

GARY M. PARSONS,
CHAIRMAN, XM SATELLITE RADIO

“For many years workplace and ministry have been viewed as entirely separate, almost like the church and state. Now, as men and women begin to see their workplace as their greatest field for harvest, we’re entering a revival. Regi’s work is a valuable tool for any Christian ready to touch their marketplace for God.”

PAT GELSINGER,
AUTHOR, *BALANCING YOUR FAMILY, FAITH AND WORK*;
SR. VP AND CTO, INTEL CORPORATION

“Regi helps you get ‘the monkey on your back’—a sense of ‘ought to’ about sharing your faith in the marketplace. His approach is practical and wise, one he has modeled for years. He’s one of the finest mentors to young businessmen I’ve known, and this book will multiply what he has already done in the lives of individuals he has mentored.”

G. BRYANT WRIGHT,
SENIOR PASTOR, JOHNSON FERRY BAPTIST CHURCH

“For the last ten years I’ve watched Regi in the boardroom, leading a company or investing in start-ups, impacting those around him for Christ. Now he’s written the book that reveals practical, easy to follow steps so we can do it, too.”

CHARLIE PAPARELLI,
VENTURE CAPITALIST AND PRESIDENT, HIGH TECH MINISTRIES

“*About My Father’s Business* is a practical strategy for being intentional with our lives between Sundays. Regi is the CEO with the vision and experience to wisely get us on the right track.”

DARYL HEALD,
PRESIDENT, GENEROUS GIVING

Endorsements continued on page 239

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This book is dedicated to my friend and brother Craig Callaway.

It was through his spiritual journey from apathy to excelling Christian that most of the principles in this book were validated.

And it is because of his encouragement that there are words
on this paper and this book is in your hands.

A man will never have a better friend
than the one he helps find the Answer to life.
And I will never have a better friend than Craig.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

by John C. Maxwell 9

FOREWORD

by Andy Stanley 11

INTRODUCTION

The Monkey 13

CHAPTER ONE

The Curse? 19

CHAPTER TWO

At Work...on Two Jobs! 30

CHAPTER THREE

Turning It Up a Notch 44

CHAPTER FOUR

Relationships Are the “One Thing”! 56

CHAPTER FIVE

The Apathetic—“Don’t Know and Don’t Care” 70

CHAPTER SIX

Beginning to Search—From Apathy to
Active Interest 87

CHAPTER SEVEN

Calling the Chosen Frozen 112

CHAPTER EIGHT	
Developing Disciples—From Passive to Active	124
CHAPTER NINE	
Counting Our Soldiers—The Excelling Es	144
CHAPTER TEN	
Sensing the Sensitivities	155
EPILOGUE	
A Final Word	169
STUDY GUIDE	
For Personal Reflection or Small Group Discussion	171
Notes	235
About the Author	237

FOREWORD

DOING WHAT I DO, I MEET SHARP BUSINESS PEOPLE FROM ALL over the world. And from my involvement with top ministry leaders, I meet people who have a passion to share Christ. In Regi Campbell, you get both.

When my pastor first suggested that Margaret and I start a small group and Regi Campbell and his wife became a part of it, I immediately saw that Regi had both business wisdom and spiritual passion. I knew that he was involved in the lay leadership of our church and that our pastor, Andy Stanley, often sought Regi's insight on big decisions. But as I got to know Regi personally, I began to understand why. He thinks clearly; he speaks clearly; he speaks from experience; and there's a ton of wisdom in what he has to say.

But the side of Regi that is even more impressive is his heart for the people that he works with. Here's an "entrepreneur of the year"...a leader with a lot of success in the business world, asking the people in our group to pray for people on "his list." I now

recognize that list as his “intentionality map” (he will give you the details as you read *About My Father's Business*). He would ask us to pray for people that he had developed relationships with...to pray that God would move them “the next step” toward excelling in Christ. As the months went on, I gained a very healthy respect for Regi's insights and wisdom. Some of the people at my company, the Injoy Group, had also come to know Regi, and we ultimately invited him to help us shape Injoy's strategy and plans to help churches and business people to be more effective in the marketplace for Christ. Regi gave us his time because he so badly wants to see business people wake up to the opportunity that they have to influence people for Christ right where they are, every day at work.

If you're a business person and you've been looking for someone to show you what to do next in “taking your faith to work,” this book is for you. If your husband or wife is a business person, this book will challenge them to “get in the game,” but in a way that is smart and effective. And if you are a pastor, this book can provide the business people in your church with a “track to run on” for effective evangelism and discipleship in the marketplace.

John C. Maxwell

Author and Founder, The INJOY Group

FOREWORD

FOR THE PAST NINE YEARS I HAVE LEANED HEAVILY ON THE wisdom and advice of Regi Campbell. Often I catch myself asking, *What would Regi do in this situation?* And I'm not alone. Over the years Regi Campbell has poured his life and wisdom into dozens of professional men and women. The time he invests in others flows from his conviction that his own success in business is something to be stewarded rather than hoarded.

When Regi mentioned that he was interested in writing a book, I connected him with my publisher, Don Jacobson, president of Multnomah. When Don finished talking with Regi, he called me. "Wow!" Don said. "Not only do I want to publish his book, I want to sit down and pick his brain about the publishing business."

I wasn't surprised. Regi's business intuition, along with his uncanny ability to read people, positions him as a coveted mentor for anyone who is attempting to take his or her company to the next level.

But there is more to Regi than insight and business acumen. Like a growing number of professionals in this country, Regi sees the marketplace as a platform for ministry. Thus the title of his book.

Regi has been about his Father's business for more than twenty years in a variety of corporate environments. He has waded through personal issues of reputation and perception. He has confronted the barriers posed by policy and procedure. And he is well aware of the legal ramifications of bringing one's faith to work. When it comes to ministering in the marketplace, Regi is a decorated veteran. And like every veteran, he has a story to tell—a story that offers value and insight to every professional who has a passion to leverage his career for kingdom purposes.

I know there are a dozen or more books on this topic; it's something of a publishing trend. But the content of this book is anything but trendy. This is meat and potatoes for any man or woman who is serious about being an ambassador for Christ at work. For as you are about to discover, Regi successfully dismantles the artificial wall we have erected for ourselves between work and ministry.

In *About My Father's Business*, Regi Campbell provides you with a strategy for assessing your workplace, identifying your opportunities, neutralizing primary obstacles, and boldly enjoying the mission God has called you to. I believe the message of this book has the potential to fuel-inject the marketplace ministry movement—a movement to which God has called every one of us who gets up and goes to work.

Andy Stanley

THE MONKEY

NO DOUBT YOU KNOW THE MONKEY...PERHAPS ALL TOO WELL. Every sincere Christian is familiar with him. He's most noticeable on Mondays, especially if the sermon that Sunday was about being a vibrant witness for Jesus Christ.

The monkey shows up just as you're getting settled in for a new week. As you finish up your morning coffee, you're pretty pumped about being one of the good guys—a Christian—at work. Then one of your coworkers stops by to share a new joke and to fill you in on the wild party he had that weekend. As every illicit detail is described, you think of the sermon you heard the day before. Suddenly, you feel the monkey—the unmistakable weight of responsibility to stand up for your faith in a world that needs God.

If you're like me, you'll start to rationalize with the monkey. *Surely, I'm not just supposed to start talking about God now...right in the middle of a story like this!* Gradually, the unspoken dialogue evolves into a theological discussion. *Does this person really think*

I'm just another one of the guys? If so, then I must not be much of a witness. Maybe I'm not as spiritual as I thought. Maybe my salvation didn't really stick. Since you obviously haven't been a very good witness up until now, you can't help feeling some pressure to give the right response—one that would honor God and let this guy know whose side you're on. Unsure of what to do, however, you fake your best laugh at the joke, despite its crude overtones. After all, you don't want to alienate yourself from someone who obviously needs God. Even Jesus wouldn't do that.

Later that day you're sitting in a strategy session to brainstorm ways the company can reduce turnover among its employees. You can't help recalling the Christian book you finished recently about how to treat people the way that Jesus did. You remember how moved you were when you read about God intervening to help the people who put Him first. You would love to be part of something like that. Maybe God showed you those principles so you could suggest them in this meeting. Maybe it would start a new movement in your workplace. Maybe that's part of God's purpose for your life's work.

Then again, maybe they'll just think you're crazy. They might laugh behind your back for months. You might lose all respect at work, and along with it any chance for having any Christian influence. Besides, maybe it's God's purpose that you just earn a good living for your family without rocking the boat. The monkey feels even heavier for the moment.

The monkey can show up just about anywhere. It's the burden we Christians feel when we remember we're supposed to be making disciples. But all along we're struggling to understand what it means to share our faith in a country where it's politically incorrect to "impose" our beliefs on others. So we learn to work within the boundaries. It's okay to mention God, just don't talk

about Jesus. It's okay to do Christmas as long as it's about Santa and winter rather than what's central to our faith.

As Christians, we get pretty good at blending in. And for a while, the monkey goes away.

As Christians, we get pretty good at blending in.

Then along comes a speaker at church telling stories about boldly sharing his faith on an airplane or something. We hear of people instantly turning to Christ, all because of the faith of someone who was willing to risk it all for God. We can't help wondering if we're supposed to be doing something like that...something profound—something God-sized—with our lives. Maybe being a Christian in the workplace should look a little more like that guy on the airplane. After all, he had only a couple of hours to operate; we've got forty every week. You have to wonder if we're really doing all we're supposed to as Christians. Is God truly pleased with our lives?

Wait a minute. There I go again, overthinking things. Enough already. Spirituality is important, but it's not everything. All things in moderation. Besides, God just wants me to be at peace.

Then again, maybe sharing my faith in my workplace is what it's all about. After all, here I am, a pretty serious Christian, and I'm surrounded by people who don't really know the difference between religion and a relationship with the living Christ. I'm supposed to be a light in the darkness. I've been charged with carrying out the great commission. There's got to be something I should be doing around my coworkers. Surely He didn't intend for me just to blend in.

The monkey can make you feel *overwhelmed*—there's a burden of responsibility when you're talking about someone's eternal destination. The monkey can make you feel *guilty*—what if you are denying your faith by not speaking more openly about it in the workplace? The monkey can make you feel *frustrated*—it's hard to know how to share your faith without looking like a superstitious simpleton to all your coworkers. What good would it do for God or your career if you lose your credibility?

When I first started to experience all this confusion years ago, my first instinct was to pretend the monkey wasn't there. After all, I looked pretty good compared to most of the other Christians I knew. But the more serious I became about my faith, the harder the challenge was to ignore. When you drive from a men's prayer breakfast to an office that's hostile toward God, the contrast is undeniable. It's hard to gloss over the fact that you possess a treasure that could change the lives of everyone around you, if only you were willing to share it.

I've even tried running away from the monkey. What better way to exercise my faith than to start my own "Christian" company? And if I surrounded myself with enough Christians, maybe the tension of having to deal with all those non-Christians would go away. But it didn't. Deep inside, I still knew there were people out there who needed to hear about the God who runs deeper than religion.

So, over the years, I've emerged from that struggle over how to share my faith in the workplace with a clear picture of what it means to be about my Father's business. I have learned that there is no greater calling than to make my workplace my mission field.

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my workplace my mission field.

In the pages that follow, I've distilled what I've learned into a strategic method for sharing Jesus Christ in your workplace. You are about to discover some eye-opening principles that will change your whole approach to your work and to your faith—no more uncertainty about when it's appropriate to speak up or whether your timing is right. I will also share a powerful assessment model that can help you identify the most strategic opportunities in your workplace. You will be able to see more clearly where God is calling you to focus your efforts—no more awkwardness or blurting out holy hand grenades in a desperate attempt to bring God into the picture.

Best of all, I want to share some of the true stories of God at work where I work. You see, this is not evangelism theory or theology. This is a very practical account from someone who's been there. I went from being a fellow struggler to a confident follower of Christ who has learned when it's time to speak up...and what to do in the meantime. I've seen the most unlikely agnostics move into a vibrant relationship with Christ. This is not because I'm a great evangelist, but because God came alongside me to show me what to do. I had made "sharing my faith" into a gut-wrenching event. But now I've learned that I am most effective when I follow a slow, natural, even comfortable process. I feel like a load of guilt has been taken off my back and that being an influence for Christ in the marketplace is now something that's doable!

And now I want to show you how you can do it, too. Because you, too, can be a confident, effective witness for Jesus Christ where you work. And when you are, you will have the joy of going to work each day knowing that you are truly about your Father's business.

THE CURSE?

WORK.

It seems destined to be a four-letter word. No matter how you spell it—job, career, calling—it still has *curse* written all over it. Maybe that's just the way it's supposed to be. After all, it was the original curse word, as Adam first lived out the consequences of his cursed life by working the land for food. To this day, work ranks among the leading obstacles in many people's lives.

It seems the dreams of most working people revolve around arriving at a place where they'll no longer have to go to work. That's not to say we don't enjoy some of the challenges along the way. But if you could dig beneath the surface, the primary objective of most people's career is to eliminate the need for it.

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is to eliminate the need for it.

Advertisers play to this sentiment, tantalizing their target audiences with depictions of financial freedom and absolute autonomy. Statewide lotteries are funded, one dollar at a time, by the pipe dreams of would-be early retirees. While money is the number one obsession in our culture, the ultimate end of wealth is emancipation from the workplace.

It is common sentiment that work is something to be avoided.

Work is universally portrayed as something that gets in the way of all the other things we'd rather be doing. Work calls the shots. It's the factory whistle that awakens us each day from the dream of a life of leisure. Work drags us from our homes and subjects us to traffic jams and the shark-infested waters of competition. Work drops us back home in a heap at the end of the day, or at the end of a long business trip. Work tells us where we can live, what we should wear, when we can go on vacation, and how much we can spend in between. Wherever our hearts turn in life, work is there dictating the pace and saying yes or no to our heartfelt passions and desires.

WE ARE WHAT WE DO?

As young children, we are encouraged to dream of what we want to be when we grow up. Our educational system is oriented around shaping us into one of the molds that will define us as bachelors in business administration, economics, English, science, or education. Eventually, we refine our identity to the point that we fit nicely into one of the categories that can be found in the yellow pages, or a title on the organizational chart of the com-

pany where we work. And after all is settled, one of the first questions people ask when they meet us is, “What do you do?”

In our culture, we are defined by what we do. And everything else revolves around it. Wherever the career opportunities take us is where we raise our families, attend our churches, and join the neighborhood pool. What we do precedes who we are.

There’s just one problem. We don’t want anything to tell us what to do. We love autonomy. So, in allegiance to our human nature, we make it our goal to cheat the system. We work for rapid promotions, we invest for early retirement, and we play the lottery to increase our chances of getting our freedom as soon as we can...winning back control of our lives while we are still young enough to enjoy it.

As the headline for a retirement fund ad put it, “Life is two periods of play separated by forty years of work.”

So work is a curse to be endured. At least, that’s how the average person views work.

BUT WHAT ABOUT CHRISTIANS?

Surely, we Christians hold a more enlightened view of work. We have beheld the truth that work was ordained by God even before Adam and Eve invented apple pie. We know that God Himself worked and called it good. We embrace the ideal of working “heartily, as to the Lord” (Colossians 3:23, NKJV). We read the Bible and learn that God uses work to mold our character and meet our needs. We understand that work will be one of our joyous assignments in Heaven, not just the lot of those condemned to the other place.

We have learned that work is not really a bad thing in God's eyes.

And yet, when it comes to being a Christian at work, many believers don't feel that way at all. We understand that work is not quite the curse we once thought it was. But in our quest to be a beacon of light to a lost world, we often see work as something that gets in the way. We long to live out our faith Monday through Saturday, but we have to go to work instead. We dream of how effective we could be for the Lord...if it weren't for this lousy job.

We long to live out our faith Monday through Saturday, but we have to go to work instead.

Somehow, we develop an either/or mentality: I can either be in the secular work world or I can be in ministry, but not in both. We have bifurcated work into these two distinct realms rather than seeing the both/and possibility. What if we could be in the marketplace *and* be in ministry at the same time? Suppose we saw our workplace as our church and our jobs as our ministry. Suppose we went after our workplace ministry with the same fervor and passion as a twenty-six-year-old youth pastor just out of seminary.

The idea of being in ministry at work was something I had shied away from. I had been a pretty good church member, but work was a whole different ball game. Let me tell you my story, and you'll see why ministry was pretty far from my thinking in my early career.

I was a rising star at AT&T. At age thirty, I was promoted to

division level, one of the youngest ever. At thirty-three, I was to be nominated for the company's Sloan Fellowship Program, a key prerequisite for moving up the corporate ladder.

But on the heels of a transfer from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Atlanta, I experienced a major disruption. What had been a smooth career path suddenly became rocky. At the same time, my marriage was in trouble, the consequence of eleven years of putting my career above everything else. Realizing that I couldn't hold my life together by myself any longer, I turned to God for help. On a starry night I will never forget, I walked out in the backyard and told God I was finally His. I gave it all up to Him. "It's You and me, Lord," I said. "I am going public with my faith. I'm going to stand for something. Whatever happens, happens!"

I was changed forever that night. God gave me a new heart and a new attitude based on a deep gratitude for His forgiveness and His acceptance. I knew that I was loved for the first time in my life. I was ready to live for Him 24-7, but from that point forward, it got even harder to live a dual life.

Away from the office, I devoured Christian books and Bible teaching to feed my spiritual growth. At work, however, I struggled to live out my faith in a world that seemed completely disconnected from the God I was getting to know. I don't mean I was struggling with sin and backsliding. For once, that wasn't the problem. It's just that I lived in a spiritual place that had meaning and purpose, yet I worked in an earthly place that now seemed antiquated and irrelevant. I wanted to move on to my new life, but this old environment—work—kept getting in the way.

As much as I tried, I couldn't seem to reconcile those two worlds. Attempts to tell my story and share my faith at work were awkward. And my efforts to operate by biblical principles seemed hypocritical in light of the old reputation that still

followed me around. I wanted people to see a reflection of God in me, but I was convinced all they could see was the same old me on a new religious kick. I felt shackled to my past.

I was so grateful for God's forgiveness, I could hardly contain myself. He had started to restore my marriage; I was in love with my wife and kids in a way that I hadn't known before. And I was in love with God. I needed to do something bold. I kept dreaming of how effectively I could serve Him, if I could just get away from my job.

Inevitably, I concluded that I should leave the old world and relocate permanently to a different one. After all, the disciples left their nets to follow Jesus.

So I left the world of AT&T behind and started a consulting business where I could live out my new life-purpose statement: "to glorify God by teaching biblical principles to sales and marketing executives."

At last I was free to be the new me without the constant reminders of what I once was. I could freely talk about my faith without apprehension that I might look like a hypocrite on religious dope. I was free to play on my Christian playground without fear of interruption.

At least, that's how I saw it.

But as I look back on that experience, I've come to realize I may have walked out on an incredible opportunity. What better place to fulfill my new life-purpose statement than as Division Manager of Sales at AT&T Information Systems? We had thousands of employees, hundreds of offices...there was unlimited potential. The more I understand about how God uses Christians in the marketplace, the more I realize that I had been sitting on a spiritual gold mine back at AT&T. I just didn't recognize it.

I had been sitting on a spiritual gold mine back at AT&T.
I just didn't recognize it.

TWO LIVES BECOME ONE

Over the past two decades, I've had successes both in business and in helping business people come to faith. Ironically, it took only one year for God to use the consulting business I started to lead me right back to a leadership role in the marketplace—the world of profit and loss, hiring and firing, performance reviews and sales incentives. God was faithful to bring me back to these work environments because that's where effective ministry can occur. And after being in several situations that more closely resembled the one I left, I eventually figured out how to reconcile those two worlds into one.

Surprisingly, God didn't need me to be a perfect Christian with a long history of faultless integrity. He just wanted me to seek His kingdom and His righteousness while I excelled at my work, family, church, and community life. Sometimes it's enough if we're willing just to stick around and let people watch God take over our hearts. That simple example, with all its awkwardness and blemishes, can be the most convincing evidence of God they will ever see.

I've now spent more than twenty years helping people see how relevant God is to our everyday lives. As a friend of mine says, we need to “turn Bible leather into shoe leather”...to get God out of the stained glass and into our relationships.

After all those experiences, I'm left with a haunting question. How many Christians are ignoring the monkey? How

many would like to make a difference, but just don't know what to do? How many are surrounded by a ripe harvest, but just don't know how to recognize it?

I mentor eight young men each year, so I'm continually around young Christians who remind me of myself twenty years ago. They struggle with living out their faith at work. I'll bet I've had a dozen guys ask me about quitting work and going to seminary or starting their own "Christian" business. And others simply settle for the compromise of living a dual life, confining the focus and energy of their Christianity to church activities while keeping a low spiritual profile at work.

They're not alone. As I look across the landscape of believers today, I see a lot of Christians wrestling with what a true disciple of Christ should look like in the workplace. Somewhere along the way, we've lost our vision for how Christ would conduct ministry at work. Over the last century, the business culture has been constantly reinventing itself with new technologies and innovations. But Christianity, it seems, has been left behind. That's not to say there aren't Christians in the marketplace. It's just that they lack the zeal and confidence that's truly representative of what God is doing inside them. Or they just don't know what God would have them do.

We've lost our vision for how Christ would conduct ministry at work.

The problem is that when a person begins to grow in his passion for God, it creates tension at work. We know how to express our true feelings in church or in private, but how should

we act around the office or in the field or in the factory? What does it look like? Should we come on strong and risk offending people? Or should we take the long road and hope our faith just rubs off on others over time?

It only takes one or two awkward experiences for Christians to realize that an enthusiasm for God doesn't exactly blend seamlessly into the American business culture. We learn quickly that you can't be careless about it. Subconsciously, it's easier to suppress our kingdom calling in order to ease the clash of cultures we face each day. When we're not sure what to do, it's safer to do nothing. Why rock the boat?

Eventually, Christians tend to adopt one of two solutions to relieve the tension they feel at work. They either run or they hide.

The *run* response comes from the idea that it would just be easier to make a clean break—to start over in a new environment or to withdraw completely by enrolling in seminary and going into ministry full-time. There was an element of this driving my decision to leave AT&T and start a consulting business. Rather than make my current workplace my ministry, I ran away to create an environment that was more comfortable and controllable.

The *hide* response is nothing less than a subtle surrender of the mission. Unsure of how to interface our exuberance for God with a workplace that may not appreciate it, we tone it down around the office. And the fervor we feel on Sunday gets squelched a little from Monday to Friday. Essentially, we hide our true self from the work world.

Somehow we can't quite grasp the vision of our work as an opportunity to share our faith. I'm the first to admit that it

doesn't come easily. But after twenty years of practicing marketplace ministry and teaching these principles to others, I've come up with an approach that will give you a clear vision for your calling to be about our Father's business at work.

You see, regardless of how uncomfortable the tension may seem now, God doesn't call us to run. And He doesn't teach us to hide. Chances are He wants to use you right where you are. How else will people who don't go to church find out about the relationship their Heavenly Father longs to have with them? It's not like it's talked about in the places they frequent. But because of your unique position in their lives, you have the opportunity to be someone God can use to tell them. And it doesn't have to feel awkward. When you understand your role in the process, it can be one of the most natural and rewarding experiences you will ever know.

The disciples may have dropped their nets, but they didn't run *or* hide. They spent the next several years living and ministering among many of the same people that already knew them. Often, we must prove faithful in our current mission field before God will entrust a new one to us. And as we'll see, sometimes God does powerful things when we simply hang around long enough to allow others a chance to witness the transformation in our lives.

In the pages that follow, I'd like to give you a step-by-step plan for how you can begin the work of ministry right where you are. You will learn a strategy for assessing your workplace, identifying your opportunities, neutralizing the primary obstacles, and boldly enjoying the mission God gives you.

Work is not a curse for Christians. It's a place where you live out your faith, reflecting what God is doing in your life. In light

of eternity, the ministry you accomplish at work can be more important than the money you earn or the career you sustain. And once you see the impact God can have through you on the job, you will never look at your workplace the same again.

*Work is a place where you live out your faith,
reflecting what God is doing in your life.*

If you want to experience true joy in your life (both this one and the next), if you want to do work that really matters, if you want to have peace in your life all the time, and if you want to have a fulfilling work life, commit yourself to the process that I'm going to show you.

Go to your job and do great work, but while you're at it, be about our Father's business.

You can do this!