

A photograph of a small green seedling with four leaves growing out of a crack in a city sidewalk. The background is a blurred city street at sunset, with warm golden light and out-of-focus cars and buildings.

Called to Flourish

Identity in Christ, Purpose, and Faith for
Christians in the Modern Workplace

RUTH RANCY

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Faith for Christians in the
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Work isn't a Necessary Evil: It's Part of Your Divine Calling

Sunday night often brings a quiet tension. You start to feel the weight of another workweek settling in. Somewhere along the way, work began to feel like something you endure rather than something that matters. However, Scripture tells a different story. Before deadlines, performance reviews, or even sin itself, work existed. And here is the surprising part: it was good.

When God created the world, He did more than speak it into existence. He worked intentionally, creatively, and purposefully for six days (Genesis 2:2-3). Then, He placed Adam and Eve in the garden with a meaningful work to do: to cultivate it and to care for it (Genesis 2:15).

Think about that. Work wasn't a consequence of sin, it was part of the original design, woven into what it means to be human and to reflect God's image.

Later, when God gave the Ten Commandments, He didn't just say "rest on the Sabbath." He said, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD, your God" (Exodus 20:9-10). Working is part of the rhythm God established for human flourishing.

So when Monday morning feels heavy, remember this. You're not stepping into something meaningless. You're participating in something God designed from the beginning. Whether you build spreadsheets, teach students, write code, manage people, or serve customers, your work echoes that first calling to bring order, beauty, and care into the world.

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Practical Steps to Identify Your God-Given Gifts

Discovering your unique strengths isn't always straightforward. Sometimes it's exciting. Sometimes it's confusing. Sometimes you feel like everyone else has obvious talents while yours remain mysteriously hidden.

However, here's the truth: God has designed you with specific abilities meant to serve others and display His character (1 Peter 4:10). You're not starting from scratch. You're uncovering what's already there. Here are practical steps to help you identify and develop your gifts:

Step 1: Ask God for Guidance

Before you take assessments or ask for feedback, start with prayer. Ask God to reveal the gifts He has given you and believe He will respond to your prayer or ask Him where He wants you to focus your development.

Solomon writes, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and don't lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6). God wants you to discover your gifts even more than you want to find them. Trust that He'll guide you as you actively seek His direction.

Step 2: Notice What Energizes You

Your gifts are often connected to activities that make you feel alive. Pay attention to what energizes you rather than drains you. What tasks make time disappear? What problems do you enjoy solving? What would you do even if you weren't getting paid?

Sometimes your strengths are obvious. You've always been the person people turn to for a specific kind of help. Other times, your gifts show up quietly: being unusually dependable, encouraging others without even thinking about it, noticing details everyone else misses, or staying calm when everything falls apart. Don't overlook the "small" things. What feels ordinary to you might be extraordinary to someone else.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God declares, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). Even when your career journey feels slow, uncertain, or off-track, you can trust that God is working everything together for your good, or perhaps the good of others around you. (Romans 8:28).

This doesn’t mean every job will be perfect or that you’ll never face challenges. It means God is in control of the bigger picture, and He’s using every season, including the ones where you feel unqualified or lost, to prepare you for what’s ahead.

Lessons from Scripture: Humble Beginnings and God’s Preparation

Case Study #1: Humble Beginnings of the Shepherd King

When you think of King David, you probably picture the shepherd who killed Goliath, the king who united Israel, or the man after God’s own heart who wrote the Psalms.

However, David’s story didn’t start with any of that glory. It started in a field. Alone. Watching sheep. If you’ve ever felt stuck in a job that seems beneath your potential, if you’ve ever wondered why you’re doing work that feels insignificant, David’s early years are for you.

The Invisible Season

Shepherding wasn’t glamorous. It was lonely, repetitive, and low-status work. David’s own family didn’t even think to call him in from the fields when the prophet Samuel came looking for Israel’s next king. When Samuel asked Jesse if he had any more sons, Jesse essentially said, “Well, there’s the youngest one, but he’s just out with the sheep” (1 Samuel 16:11). David was so overlooked that his own father forgot about him when it mattered. However, God saw what everyone else missed.

What David Learned in the Fields

While David was out there doing work nobody else saw, he was developing capabilities that would define his entire life.

He learned courage under pressure. Shepherding was more than watching sheep graze peacefully. It also meant protecting them from predators. David later told King Saul, “Your servant struck both the lion and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God” (1 Samuel 17:36). Those life-or-death encounters with lions and bears weren’t interruptions to his real calling. They were preparation for it. Every time David defended his flock, he was building the courage he’d need to face Goliath.

He developed his relationship with God. The long, quiet hours in the fields weren’t wasted time. David used that solitude to worship, to play his harp, to write songs, to pray. He built an intimacy with God that would sustain him through every crisis of his life. When King Saul later needed someone to play music and calm his troubled spirit, David was chosen specifically because of his musical skill and his heart for God (1 Samuel 16:18-23). What seemed like a private hobby became his entry point into the palace.

He practiced faithfulness when no one was watching. Here’s what’s remarkable: after Samuel anointed David as the future king, David didn’t quit his job. He didn’t announce to everyone that he was destined for greater things. He didn’t start acting like the position was beneath him. He went back to the fields and kept doing his work faithfully. He didn’t try to force his way into the palace or rush ahead of God’s timing. He trusted that God would open the right doors at the right time.

This is crucial. David’s character was formed during the years when nobody was applauding, when there was no recognition, when he could have easily done the bare minimum. But he showed up fully, even when it seemed like his work didn’t matter.

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Integrating Faith and Work: Practical Strategies

Many Christians wonder how to truly live out their faith at work. The good news is that God cares about every part of your day. He is interested in your work life, and He can use your job to shape your character and bless others. Here are practical ways you can integrate your faith into your daily work.

1. Start with Prayer and Intention

A powerful way to begin your day is inviting God into your work. This centers your heart and mind on God. Psalm 143:8 says, “Cause me to hear your loving kindness in the morning, for I trust in you. Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my soul to you.” It could be as simple as saying, “Lord, help me honor You in everything I do today.” This focus helps you see your job as an opportunity to serve God.

2. Work with Integrity and Excellence

The Bible is clear: how you work matters to God. Colossians 3:23 encourages us, “Whatever you do, work from the soul, as for the Lord, and not for men.” Even when nobody’s watching, God sees your honesty, diligence, and effort. Doing your best, even in small or unnoticed tasks, is a form of worship. When you work with integrity, you reflect God’s character to everyone around you.

3. Use Your Gifts to Serve Others

God has given each of us unique strengths and talents, and He wants us to use them for the good of others. 1 Peter 4:10 says, “As each has received a gift, employ it in serving one another, as good managers of the grace of God in its various forms.” Take time to notice how your work impacts your team or your customers. Think of ways to use your gifts to help and support those around you. When you serve others, you’re living out your faith powerfully.

Leading like Jesus

When most people hear the word “leader,” they picture someone with power, status, or an impressive title. In many workplaces and even in society, leadership often means being in charge, getting recognition, or having the final say. The world says, “Be first. Get ahead. Make sure people notice you.” Jesus offers us a completely different vision. His way is radical and upside-down compared to what we see around us.

Jesus spoke directly about this in Matthew 20:25-28 and Mark 10:42-44. He told His closest friends, “You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.” Jesus demonstrated this principle in His everyday life. He washed His disciples’ feet, welcomed outcasts, and ultimately gave His life for others. His greatness was not about being served, but about serving others with love and humility.

This message is especially important for Christians today. Maybe you’re just starting your career, building friendships, or finding your place in church or community. You might not have a leadership title yet. However, leadership, according to Jesus, is shown in how you treat and serve others, and how you show God’s love in practical ways.

As you read this chapter, remember: God has called you to something powerful and different. You don’t need a title to lead like Jesus. Through your actions, attitude, and love, you can reflect Him wherever you go. That is the radical call of leadership: serving others, just as Jesus served us.

The Core Attributes of Christlike Leadership

Leading like Jesus is about what we do and who we are. Jesus models a leadership style built on godly character and practical love. As a Christian professional, these core attributes will help you lead in your workplace, church, and everyday life.

1. Humility

Jesus said, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant” (Mark 10:43). In one of His most powerful examples, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet, which was a task usually done by the lowest servant. He showed us that true leadership means serving others (John 13:1-17).

Humility means recognizing that your talents and opportunities come from God. It is choosing to serve others and lift them up instead of only focusing on promoting yourself. Humble leaders know their worth comes from God, so they do not need to prove themselves by seeking status or power. They are secure enough to admit mistakes, celebrate others’ successes, and do the behind-the-scenes work that truly helps their team succeed.

How Jesus Modeled It:

Though Jesus was God’s Son and King of all, He never acted “too important” for any task. Instead, He chose to serve others in simple, humble ways. He put the needs of His friends and even strangers before His own pride or comfort. By washing His disciples’ feet, He taught that no act of service is too small for a leader.

Practical Application:

- *Invite Input Before Sharing Your Own Ideas:* In meetings or group projects, resist the urge to speak first or dominate the conversation. Ask others for their thoughts and feedback before sharing your own perspective. Try saying, “What does everyone else think about this?” or “I’d like to hear your ideas first.” This communicates that you value others’ opinions. When you do share your ideas, frame them as contributions to the discussion rather than final answers.
- *Own Your Mistakes Quickly and Completely:* When you make mistakes, admit them openly without making excuses, downplaying what happened, or blaming circumstances. Say clearly, “I was wrong,” “That was my mistake,” or “I should have handled that differently.” Then apologize sincerely to those affected and take concrete steps to make things right. Do not wait for someone to call you out. Humble leaders take responsibility proactively. This builds deep trust and shows real strength because it takes more courage to admit failure than to defend yourself.
- *Celebrate Others’ Wins As Much As Your Own:* When your team succeeds, shine the spotlight on others’ contributions instead of taking credit. Be specific about what each person did well and acknowledge their efforts publicly. When you personally succeed, thank those who helped you get there rather than accepting all the praise yourself. Humble leaders understand that success is rarely individual and that generously crediting others builds stronger teams and deeper loyalty.
- *Ask for Help When You Need It:* Admit when you do not know something or when you are in over your head. Say “I don’t know, but I’ll find out” or “I need help with this. Can you assist me?” Many leaders think they need to have all the answers to be respected, but the opposite is true. Asking for help shows humility, wisdom, and trust in your team. It also gives others the opportunity to contribute their strengths and creates a culture where it is safe to be honest about limitations.

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Your career is part of your calling and a part of God's bigger story. And when you live it out with faith, integrity, and love, you become exactly what this world needs: a light in the darkness, showing everyone around you what it looks like to follow Christ in the real world.

