

Ministry Beyond Ministry

Living Missionally in the Marketplace

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Two years into Cru, I can evangelize to a stranger, clearly lay out the gospel, cultivate a discipleship relationship, and lead in short term missions. I know what it looks like to live for Jesus and serve in ministry: internationally, on campus, and places in between. On top of the essentials, I know how to Cru. If I were to join staff tomorrow, I'm confident I could take off with direction and a reasonable amount of success, given the Spirit called me to use my gifts and training that way.

But He didn't.

Instead, I ended up two weeks into my internship, fighting back tears on the bus home from work because I felt so far in over my head. Cru gave me a vision to live life on mission no matter the venue, but this was foreign territory. Hours of small group bible study and retreat content hadn't prepared me for this new adventure.

Looking back at my short three-month internship, I am in awe of how much God taught me about the mission field beyond my campus. Living on mission outside of vocational ministry is a new world, and there are some things I want to pass along to anyone and everyone making that transition:

Slow Motion

Media often portrays business as a bustling world of movers and shakers. And while that may be true for people building their resumes, it's the opposite in building relationships. In the Cru world, staff devote their time to building relationships. In an office, people aren't getting paid to form bonds. When work comes first, people are slow to warm up, hesitant to invest deeply in relationships, and their prioritization often time reflects that. Going deep quickly is a rarity.

Unspiritualizing "Spirit-led"

Coming into my job, I was caught up in making every conversation a conduit to a spiritual conversation. As I prayed for opportunities to know my coworkers more, however, the more I found myself simply letting the conversations go where they may. Good, spirit-led, relationship-building conversations aren't just gospel presentations and emotional breakthroughs. Sometimes, you can feel God working through the most silly moments and inside jokes.

Friends First

Those silly moments and inside jokes are to build friendships. Entering into a new workplace humbly seeking to be a friend is essential. Nobody wants to feel like a project. You are not there to save anyone. That's God's job. Treat people like people and ask God for opportunities to build discipleship relationships as he sees fit. In the meantime, genuinely invest in the relationships He provides.

Deep, Not Wide

A few weeks into my job, I was reminded of the value of investing deeply in a few relationships, instead of staying on the surface with the whole office. With limited time and energy, even the best multi-taskers get worn out. Add to that the full workload of your role, and prioritizing becomes increasingly important. Find who you connect with best and pursue that relationship.

Open Hands

This path that God has called me to—living on mission in a secular office setting—is unpredictable. There's no formula for how to spiritually approach happy hour or board meetings. There's no handbook to reach my coworkers with the gospel. Each day, my job is not to see how many times I can name-drop Jesus, but rather to show my coworkers who He is. With humble urgency, I do want to lay out the gospel to every last one of them, but trust God to steer that timing. In the meantime, my job is to cultivate my relationship with the Lord so that I know precisely when that is.

I regularly thank God for Cru. The people and experiences I've gotten to intersect with have changed my life forever. Cru, though, is not it. I've been blessed with a time in ministry that will serve as a foundation to the rest of my life, but there's still so much to learn. Open-handed I come, and I am so excited to see where God takes this next season of life.