

Introduction

In my short lifetime, man has split the atom, conquered polio, walked on the moon and shrunk the globe through the Internet. But millions of us have yet to master Monday.

Monday carries special challenges. For most, Monday is the unwelcome portal from the weekend to the workweek—the creaky door we have to push hard to open, its hinges made rusty by two days of rest.

“Don’t buy a car made on Mondays,” advise automotive insiders. “Too many assembly plant no-shows; and the ones who do come to work are only half there.”

I’m not immune to Monday’s challenges. If there’s a day in the week when I’m apt to get a headache, it’s Monday. Some fare much worse than me. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta cites nine o’clock Monday morning as the peak period for heart attacks!

Yes, Monday is a unique day—the launching pad for the rest of the workweek. But because work itself is often viewed as a “necessary evil”—to put food on the table and fund nonwork passions—poor Monday often gets a bad rap.

For many, however, this negative Monday stereotype is changing—especially for people of faith who, for the first time, are sens-

ing a genuine “call” to the workplace. From that perspective, Monday becomes the anticipated first day of a rewarding, purpose-filled week.

Some years back I wrote a book on this subject called *Loving Monday*. It chronicled my journey from a skeptical, MIT-trained engineer to an enthusiastic follower of Jesus Christ—a journey that continued with the realization that I could find deep fulfillment in my “secular” work, just as I might in any other more direct form of ministry. I told how, with the Bible as a guide, I began integrating my two worlds of faith and work. Gradually, and, I believe, as a direct result of the faith/work connection, I saw the business I was heading prosper and become highly regarded in our industry and community.

Since writing *Loving Monday* I’ve become increasingly aware of an extensive workplace transformation underway. It’s as though God has focused great favor on many who are in business and the professions. This is undoubtedly the explanation for numerous media reports and more than a thousand books that have been published on faith in the workplace. Further, over twelve hundred organizations and networks have formed to encourage the faith-work linkage—most of these within the past ten years.

My window into these phenomena comes through extensive networking of my own—traveling, speaking . . . listening. From that networking, here are some of the questions I hear people asking:

- What is the purpose of business from God’s perspective?
- How do I reconcile bottom-line financial goals with the needs of employees?

- How do I advance my career in a world that seems to demand that I compromise my beliefs?
- How do I measure success?
- What does it actually look like when leaders bring the two worlds of work and faith together? Are there conflicts with those who don't buy in?

These are vital questions. I hear them repeatedly—convincing evidence that many want their work to be a true calling that draws forth their full passion and yields deep fulfillment. Such questions also reflect a growing hunger people have to deepen their walk with the Lord and apply scriptural truth on the job. They are seeking out role models and practical examples—people and ideas that can help them with the next steps in their journey. My goal in *Mastering Monday* is to help address that growing hunger. It is to assist those who are called to business to apprehend and apply God's ways in their work each and every day.

A ROADMAP

Let me tell you what's coming in *Mastering Monday*. In part one, "My Personal Journey," I recall some of the struggles I've encountered and how these have brought me new understanding of both my faith and my work.

Then, in part two, "Companions on the Journey," I introduce several biblical characters who are tremendous role models for us as we live out our faith in the workplace. I wish I'd had their example as I navigated through turbulent business challenges earlier in my career.

In part three, “God’s Workplace Agenda,” I focus on five themes where biblical truths and business realities intersect. I’ve found from over forty years of experience in the workplace that these practical ideas, will, if embraced, greatly enhance your likelihood of success at work.

Throughout, I weave in three basic concepts:

- *The importance of developing a warm, personal relationship with the Lord.* From that relationship, character is forged, and out of godly character, biblical thought can be applied to business situations in a comprehensive and sustained manner.
- *A closer alignment of faith and work.* If we envision these two worlds as separate circles, our goal is to see those two circles move progressively closer to each other and eventually merge into one.
- *The multifaceted expression of God’s kingdom in the workplace.* Jesus didn’t come preaching religion; he came proclaiming the kingdom. We want to understand how Jesus’ view of the kingdom can affect relationships, perspectives and priorities in our work.

These are broad, challenging issues. But I trust they are on your mind, and that exploring them further is exactly where you want to go next on *your* journey.

HIGHER GROUND

Recently I read in the daily devotional *Streams in the Desert*: “Life is a steep climb, and it is always encouraging to have those ahead of us ‘call back’ and cheerfully summon us to higher ground.” “Be-

ing ahead,” for me, means only having a few more years and mistakes under my belt, with sufficient battle scars to give me great empathy for those heading up the incline.

The devotional continues, “The mountain climbing of life is serious, but glorious, business; it takes strength and steadiness to reach the summit. And as our view becomes better as we gain altitude, and as we discover things of importance, we should ‘call back’ our encouragement to others.”

I hope to encourage you out of the lessons I’ve learned: to press on in your relationship with the Lord; to see where he is working in your midst; to grasp the redemptive dimension of the challenges you’re facing each day; and to hold out a lively hope that God will see you through, building his kingdom in the process. If I am able to help you “reach higher ground,” that will be my greatest reward.