

MONDAY MANNA

10 February 2020

LOVE IN THE OFFICE THAT CANNOT BE DISCOURAGED

By Robert J. Tamasy

When you hear the term, “love in the office,” what comes to mind? A romantic relationship between co-workers or colleagues, perhaps? Some workplaces forbid such “fraternisation,” while others merely discourage it or insist such relationships be kept discreet. But what about a kind of love in the office that cannot nor should not be discouraged, with no cause for discretion?

What I am referring to is the kind of love we often see described in the Bible. For instance, Jesus on numerous occasions told His followers to, *“Love your neighbour as yourself”* (Matthew 22:39). This was preceded by what He called the “greatest commandment” – to *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”* (Matthew 22:37).

Well, that sounds nice and fits well for religious or spiritual settings. But what about the everyday, dog-eat-dog, highly competitive business and professional world? As one song put it, “what’s love got to do with it?” Actually, when we look closer, we see that love can – and should – have a lot to do with how we conduct ourselves and relate to others in the marketplace.

Looking back at what Jesus said about loving God and loving our neighbours as ourselves, this does not refer to the emotional, warm, fuzzy feelings we get when we are around people we care about. This is about revering and honouring God in all we do, and in the process, demonstrating sincere interest and care for others – including colleagues, co-workers, bosses, customers and suppliers.

Think about perhaps the greatest single statement about love in the Scriptures: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). This definitely was not a hugs-and-kisses kind of love. It was an expression of divine love – and sacrifice – that the human mind cannot fully comprehend. Yet every day of our lives, we can benefit from this.

There is no way humanly speaking we can replicate this unfathomable form of love, but at the same time, as followers of Jesus we are called to demonstrate sincere, even sacrificial love to those around us, whether it be where we work, in our homes, or our communities. Jesus said, *“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends”* (John 15:13).

What this looks like in a real-life situation will differ from one person to the next, partly depending on the circumstances we find ourselves in. But here are a couple of examples:

Loving others by putting them first. Often in the business world, the mantra is, “Looking out for No. 1 – look out for yourself,” This is not the admonition we receive from the Scriptures. *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better (more important) than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others”* (Philippians 2:3-4).

Seeking to give rather than to receive. The natural tendency is to seek whatever we can get out of a situation, but the biblical command is to instead, seek how much we can give.. *“...the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’”* (Acts 20:35).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

Thinking of the phrase, "love in the office" (or the workplace), what immediately comes to your mind?

Has this "Monday Manna's" different perspective about love expressed in a marketplace setting changed or challenged your thinking on this? If so, in what ways?

Have you ever seen "love" demonstrated in a workplace setting, as it has been described here? If so, what did that look like? If it was shown toward you, how did it feel?

How would you go about trying to communicate and display an others-oriented, unselfish kind of love in your own working environment today? How difficult do you think it would be for you to do so? Explain your answer.

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about principles it presents, consider the following passages:

John 13:34-35

1 Thessalonians 3:12

1 Peter 4:8-10

1 John 4:7-12