



Spiritual Formation during your internship

What was so different about Daniel and his friends? They made up their minds to not defile themselves with the king's choice foods. At the beginning of their service to Nebuchadnezzar they had made a decision to serve God, even in their service to a pagan king. You get a sense that Daniel is in close continual relationship with the Living God. He excelled in wisdom and understanding in the context of managing and supervising people and resources in an extremely politically charged environment that was hostile to his belief system. As you continue to read the Book of Daniel you see other spiritual disciplines that he incorporated in his work.

Here are some short scenarios to help you understand ways you can begin as the "Intern under the supervision of The Master, Jesus Christ."

Rachel is writing the narrative for a grant during her grant writing internship for a women's shelter. She hits another roadblock, uncertain how to proceed. She feels overwhelmed and underprepared for this challenging and important work. The shelter depends on grant funding to be able to keep providing services to these women and children. So she turns to the Master Grant Writer and asks for insight and direction. She acknowledges that Christ is able to help her in every detail of her work. After all he is the best grant writer ever, he invented it. Sometimes the help comes directly through inspiration and sometimes it comes through guidance from the senior grant writer. Her Master enjoys watching her develop the talents He gave her and longs to encourage her. So during her internship she learns to turn to Christ for the work she has been given. She is learning to work under the Master's supervision. She is learning to work as a laborer for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Rachel has submitted the grant. Now she is experiencing anxiety. Will it be funded? She needs a successfully funded grant to propel her into this field. She is a little fearful. She feels like she has no control, that her grant is at the mercy of the Foundation. She recognizes that her words may not be persuasive enough. Did her words adequately express all the necessary components in a way that would influence them to fund the grant? She has no control over the people reading the grant. Rather than be bound in anxiety, she turns to the Master Translator and Persuader who is able to influence the reader of the grant. She also is comforted in knowing that she did her part, she was faithful to write the grant. Whether it is funded or not really is God's responsibility. So Rachel asks for favor in the eyes of the foundation and prays that His will be done. She is now more relaxed knowing that God is in control and she can trust him regardless of the outcome. Because of her developing intimacy with God on this particular task she can actually sense God's pleasure with their joint accomplishment. She recognizes that it is joy she is experiencing. Joy in working with God to accomplish His goals in her and in the world.

Triggers in the Workplace

Begin to recognize your emotional responses to various work situations. Use these emotions to trigger some sort of spiritual activity. Negative emotions may be easier to discern initially. But also be aware of positive emotions and not the context. As you continually turn to God in response to the negative you will begin to experience more consistent positive emotions such as satisfaction, confidence, and well-being.

Below are a few suggestions:

Difficult Co-worker or Client: Pray for that person. Pray for their success. Pray for opportunities to show kindness. The more difficult the person the more triggers you are receiving.

Every email, document, phone call, and conversation requires both a speaker and the listener. God loves good communication. He also recognizes the importance of knowing your audience. But only God knows both the speaker and the listener intimately. He can help the listener "hear" in ways beyond what is written on the page or spoken. He is the great translator and persuader. Just as the Holy Spirit can perfect your prayers so they are acceptable to God the Father, so too can God perfect your communication with others.



Confusing or challenging work assignment: Pray for clarity. Pray for the ability to truly understand the work assignment and your role. Remember there is NOTHING TOO DIFFICULT, NOTHING TOO CHALLENGING FOR GOD. There is nothing that is beyond His comprehension. Ask for God (1) to guide you in prioritization of the work; (2) to equip you with all the resources you need; (3) to give you the energy, stamina, and perseverance to do your job; (4) to grant you favor.

Boredom: A feeling of boredom can trigger other emotions like guilt, shame, anger, frustration and irritation. Yet boredom exists in almost any work experience at some time. It helps to know if the work is important even if it is boring. But people really struggle with work that they feel is both boring and useless. Take your frustration to God first. If the psalmist David can complain to God I think it is okay for everyone. Tell Him you want to do work that is pleasing to Him. And frankly, God doesn't want you wasting your talents either. In this situation I think listening to God is critical. Boredom should be a strong trigger to evaluate yourself. Is there a lesson in humility that is important here? Sometimes people think that certain types of work are below them. You might say, "Wasn't that the point of getting the business degree so I wouldn't have to do this type of work?"

So first approach God, because that can help improve your attitude as you communicate with others. If you don't you may find yourself prone to grumbling and complaining.

Fear: Fear can be an every present companion to people in their jobs. In an internship there is a sense that your career is dependent on how well you do. Do you even recognize when you are fearful? Fear during your internship can creep up in any context. You could be afraid to call a client back, or to ask for help AGAIN, or that your work isn't good enough, or... In fact the areas that you are already typically experience fear can become more pronounced when you are in a new work environment. So are you going to have a spirit of fear or of power? If you recognize a "fear pattern" in your life, your internship is a good time to begin to address that issue. I find this verse helpful: "When I am Afraid, I will trust in you", "In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?" -Psalm 56:3-4