

This Truth Module addresses the workplace issue of:

**Do I avoid the pitfalls of compensation and position discontentment to maximize my impact for Christ?**



# Living in the Black



In Stephen Albrecht's book, *Fraud: Bringing Light to the Dark Side of Business*, he highlights these statistics:

- 3 in 10 employees will look for ways to steal from their employers.
- Thirty percent of all business failures are caused by white-collar crime, with 80 percent of these crimes being committed against small businesses.
- Only 4 in 10 employees are likely to remain honest if given the opportunity to commit fraud.
- By 1995, 45 of the nation's 100 largest defense contractors had been investigated for over billing the federal government.

Other studies suggest the following:

- Fraudulent employees are **3** times more likely to be married; **4** times more likely to be men; **16** times more likely to be managers and executives;

**5** times more likely to have post graduate degrees.

- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates employee fraud costs businesses in America between \$40 and \$60 billion per year.

Specialists in employee fraud detection talk about the "Fraud Triangle." This triangle is often described as

- (1) a real or perceived need that causes employees to look for ways to ease their fiscal pressures;
- (2) the opportunity to commit fraud to satisfy that need; and
- (3) the ability to rationalize the behavior.

Do you think these statistics are different for workers who consider themselves religious? Why or why not?

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What are some pressures that tend to create the real or perceived needs that make up the first part of the fraud triangle?

What are some ways Christian employees rationalize committing fraud against their employer?

Statistics also show employees who arrive early, stay late, and take fewer vacations are more likely to commit fraud. Why do you think this is true?

## In Depth

Make a brief list of the ways our Western culture determines if a person is successful.

### SCRIPTURE PATH

Genesis 25:27 – 34

Genesis 27:2 – 10

Genesis 25:18 – 24

I Timothy 6:6 – 12

Now make a list of the ways businesses differentiate between levels in organizations. (For example, corner offices versus cubicles.)

Why do businesses increase the value and attractiveness of perks as a person advances in an organization?

Why is this sometimes useful?



What potential problems can it create?

What temptations can this create for a workplace Christian?

What effect can the temptation of our ever-increasing perks have on our relationship with God?

*There is no such thing a victimless sin. Not only are there consequences in our lives, but others around us suffer from those consequences, including our coworkers.*

In what way can the system of rewards in the workplace cause us to be distracted from the central mission God gives us in each season of our life?

**Read Genesis 25:27 – 34; Genesis 27:2 – 10; and Genesis 27:18 – 24.** Describe some of the things Jacob, Esau and Rebekah were willing to do to get what they wanted.

Describe the collateral damage (damage that occurred to other people) you see in each of their lives resulting from their acts.

Think of your own workplace. Describe some of the subtle things people are willing to do to get what they want.

List some big ways people in the workplace ignore right and wrong in order to get ahead.



What makes some people (including Christians) willing to cheat, fudge, lie, steal, etc., to get what they want?

**Read I Timothy 6:6 – 12.** What ideas do these instructions from Paul to Timothy give you for guarding your own heart from the pursuit of more?

*When we are discontent with what we have, we begin to sow the seeds of rebellion and ingratitude toward God.*

Remember as you read this passage that these are some of the final words Paul will ever write, since his death occurs soon after he writes I and II Timothy. While Paul is offering Timothy instructions for how to carry on the work of the church, he is also stressing an even bigger concept; godliness is not enough. We must be godly and content. Why is that an important concept for Christians?

What problems does it present for you as you examine your own relationship with God?

Examine your career and your life this week prayerfully. What things which other people have cause you to be envious or jealous? Ask God to help you see clearly the things you want that you shouldn't be coveting. Take steps now to correct any shortcuts you may be taking to get things you want.

Consider finding a spiritual mentor in the workplace who can help you sort out the career decisions and career temptations that threaten your relationship with God.



## Common Sense and Eternal Principles

- ◆ When we are discontent with what we have, we begin to sow the seeds of rebellion and ingratitude towards God.
- ◆ The competitive nature of the workplace can tempt us to be envious of what others have, or to cause us to focus on obtaining rather than on serving.
- ◆ Even rewards we rightfully earn can be damaging to our relationship with God when we view them as our possessions and not as gifts from God or tools for reinvesting in His people and His Kingdom.
- ◆ There is no such thing as victimless sin. Not only are there consequences in our lives, but others around us suffer from those consequences, including our coworkers.
- ◆ Learning to be content with our position and our possessions is an important ingredient in a healthy work ethic, as well as a healthy relationship with both God and our coworkers.

# What's Breaking your Rhythm at Work?



- ▶ **We all have a Work Rhythm unique to each of us**, but In our busy work lives, our rhythm with God can be overpowered or compromised by issues common to us all. Economic instability, interpersonal conflict, temptation, pride all have a way of rendering us out of tune.

Visit [www.WorkLife.org](http://www.WorkLife.org) for more on Maestro WorkLife Coaching, and pinpoint your own rhythm breakers.

Explore Maestro™ today!



**Maestro™ is a self-directed, web-based coaching system** that helps you target and overcome issues breaking your rhythm—no matter what job faces you Monday morning. Maestro™ Includes:

- ▶ A Work Issues Assessment
- ▶ Weekly email-based Maestro™ Coaching
- ▶ Maestro Truth Modules for in depth study.
- ▶ Maestro Tuning Tools for dealing with specific work challenges.



## ▶ The Top 30 WorkLife Issues

Check out these top WorkLife Issues!

Go to [WorkLife.org](http://WorkLife.org) to learn more.

<b>CLARITY</b>	<p>Do I understand why God created work in the first place?</p> <p>Do I relate to God through my work?</p> <p>Do I connect eternal significance to my actual work?</p> <p>Do I simultaneously serve God and my earthly boss, making sure I don't "turn off" my spiritual life at work?</p> <p>Do I narrow my focus each day by setting clear limits and boundaries on my ambitions, so that work doesn't take over my life?</p>
<b>CALLING</b>	<p>Are my God-given talents, passions and temperament aligned to my present job?</p> <p>Do I see my work calling as really serving society and God?</p> <p>Is my work ethic free from compulsions such as: meaningless goals, accumulating temporary success, and a desire to please everyone?</p> <p>Do I learn from detours, zig-zags, false starts, and dead ends in my job to eliminate self-destructive patterns of behavior?</p> <p>Do I honor my earthly employer with competency and integrity in order to accomplish God's purpose?</p>
<b>BALANCE</b>	<p>Do I manage stress and discouragement by practicing the principle of rest and recreation?</p> <p>Do I manage my time without being distracted by unfocused impulses or becoming a slave to my schedule?</p> <p>Am I keeping a connection with God and my family in the midst of my hectic work life?</p> <p>Do I manage all my resources (i.e., time, energy, talent, money) in a way that reflects God's perspective?</p> <p>Do I avoid the pitfalls of compensation and position discontentment to maximize my impact for Christ?</p>
<b>INFLUENCE</b>	<p>Do I earn the respect of my coworkers in a way that blends a gracious spirit, keen intellect, courageous heart, and cultural sensitivity?</p> <p>Do I look for natural opportunities to talk about God that are appropriate to my workplace?</p> <p>Do I effectively answer the tough questions coworkers ask me about God, life, and faith?</p> <p>Do I feel prepared to present the gospel message in language that is clear, succinct, and jargon-free, yet faithful to the Scriptures?</p> <p>Can I clearly explain the benefits of a relationship with Jesus to those at work?</p>
<b>SKILLS</b>	<p>Do I regularly grow my practical work skills in order to serve my employer and God?</p> <p>Am I seeking and hearing God when making work decisions?</p> <p>Do I operate with virtues that honor God (i.e. fairness, graciousness, and compassion)?</p> <p>Do I keep promises and tell the truth at work when subtle pressure is used to encourage hype, false appearance, white lies and spin?</p> <p>Am I willing to go against the grain at work when biblical values are at stake?</p>
<b>RELATIONSHIP</b>	<p>Do I effectively deal with a difficult boss, serve an unreasonable client, or cooperate with a cynical coworker?</p> <p>Do I resolve conflict involving office politics, gossip, slander, favoritism, and unfounded criticism?</p> <p>Do I effectively deal with lust at work, including everything from travel temptations to office affairs, from risqué jokes to sexual harassment?</p> <p>Do I protect and help the weakest members of my workplace and society in a "survival of the fittest" world?</p> <p>Do I seek out and connect with fellow believers at work for support, encouragement and accountability?</p>