

Christian women in the work place

Genesis 1:1 states "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." In the first part of verse 26 we read "then God said let us make man in our image, in our likeness", verse 27: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Have you ever thought of what God looks like? What His image and likeness is and therefore what image of Himself He gave to us? How would you describe God's image?

Jesus said in John 4:24 that God is Spirit and his worshippers must worship him in spirit and in truth. If God is Spirit and not flesh and bones we would have to look at how the scriptures describes Him as we cannot see Him.

1 John 1:5 – God is light, in him there is no darkness at all.

Fills the earth, All knowing, Eternal, Immutable (does not change) Malachi 3, All powerful.

Character: Exodus 34: 5-7.

"And He passed in front of Moses proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the COMPASSIONATE and GRACIOUS God, SLOW TO ANGER, ABOUNDING IN LOVE and FAITHFULNESS, maintaining love to thousands and FORGIVING wickedness and rebellion and sin".

1 Peter 1: 15-16 - Holy

1 John 4:16 – GOD is LOVE.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 – tells us what love is: patient, kind, does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, not rude, not self seeking, not easily angered, keeps no record of wrong, does not delight in evil, always rejoices with truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, never fails.

Hebrews 12; -disciplines; Knows us intimately (even no. of hair on our head, our tots);

2 Peter 3 – patient;

Listens, Attentive, Bold, Calm (in mist of chaos)

Always Busy

His Spirit: Helpful, intercedes (speaks to the Father on our behalf), reminder, comforter; Heals;

Sense of humour; Puts others first.

All these qualities and much more make up the character or image God has given us of himself apart from having a soul that is eternal.

Sin is disobedience to God. Since sin came into the world and each of us has sinned we fall short of God's glory and therefore his image in us (Romans 3:23).

The effects of sin are all around us and are the opposite of the character and image of God, letting darkness be the norm rather than light.

Galatians 5:19-21 and Ephesians 5:3–6, Rev, lists them and states sin is obvious and: Matthew 5–7 shows us the differences:

Sexual immorality (fornication, adultery, living together first, homosexuality); impurity, obscenity; foolish talk, coarse joking, greed, debauchery, witchcraft, hatred, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, anger, murder, not sorting wrongdoings out quickly, adultery, divorce, not speaking truth (lies) and not swearing (touch wood), theft of time, stingy & not overly generous, sharing with expectations of something in return, favouritism, enjoying

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men's praise, self focus, primary focus on getting the things of this life eg wealth, designer things (Gucci, Prada); worry (rather than trust God), make wrong judgements, cowardly, magic arts.

Discuss

Hebrews 4:3-16 tells us that Jesus as a human was able to let **all** God's light and character in him shine: "Therefore since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – **yet was without sin**. **Vs 8-9**: although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

What about us? Can we still display God's image in us even in our place of work?

Ephesians 2:1-10 READ

As Christians we decided to turn our backs to the sinful ways of the world, not to be disobedient, have been immersed in the waters of baptism, given God's Spirit and added to God's household. We are now created in Christ Jesus to do the good works God had prepared for us to do right from the start.

We were once darkness but now we are light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8). We are to live as children of light, for the fruit of the light consists of ALL goodness, righteousness and truth and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. **(Ephesians 5:8-10)**. We are now more than conquerors in Christ.

We are described in 1 Peter 1 and 2 as: holy, a people belonging to God, His royal priesthood, part of a holy nation, sojourners, and individuals with God's spirit in them. We are to declare the praises of him who called us out of this dark sinful world into his wonderful light. **2 Peter 1:3-4**: we walk with God; we have his divine power, participate in God's nature and great his promises so we can escape the corruption of the world caused by evil desires.**We are seated in the heavenly realms!!!**

We HAVE the SPIRIT of GOD in us and when we follow His lead, the result is fruit of the Spirit seen in us **(listed in Galatians 5:22-26; 2 Peter 1:5- 7)**: love, joy peace patience, kindness, gentleness, self control, goodness, faithfulness, knowledge, perseverance and godliness.

Jesus was the light of the world who came into our world of darkness (John 1:5). Jesus in **Matthew 5:22-23** says we are now **"the light of the world, the salt of the earth."**

When people see us, they are really seeing Gods image in us. **Isn't that amazing!!** God's qualities in us make us stand out wherever we are. We should let Gods light (our light) in us shine. We should also encourage each other to shine and acknowledge it when we do see it. We must recognise who we are, whose we are, the power and light we have to enable us to be the brightly, shining light in the world.

God's character identifies him as God. In the same way ours identifies us as of God and of his light, or of the world, sin and darkness. When we walk as children of light, we cannot help but be different and shine and we should not be ashamed of it but praise God for it!! We must be comfortable with this as we are comfortable in our skin.

In the workplace we notice we have different values, viewpoint, goals, priorities, lifestyles and ways of living and desires. We cannot compare ourselves to the world or its standard but to God and His standard.

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We are God's ambassadors, his light to the world. Therefore our actions, reactions, words, attitude, hard choices we make speak volumes especially in a work environment where we may be the only light. People are watching us whether we are senior or junior staff or managers or even a one-woman band whether we know it or not.

Our examples:

Noah (and Mrs Noah) and family- the ones out of the world saved.

Abraham (and Sarah) – surrounded by idolatry

Lot (Mrs Lot and daughter) in Sodom- only ones saved.

Jesus (and his disciples)

Gentile Christians - Corinth, Rome, Galatia

Lydia (**Acts 16:11-15**) – dealer in purple cloth, believer in God who lived in the Roman city of Philippi. She was open about her religion, practised hospitality, shared her faith with her household.

Talk about Me: work at LWH, BCH as a manager and choices I had to make:

I tried to be part of them but had to make hard **choices** eg not to laugh at their rude and coarse jokes and bad language; choosing which night outs or leaving dos (meals , Pubs, night clubs) or bible class. Boasting about drunkenness or night clubs, lying, blaspheming (sometimes they apologise), swearing with wood. The list is endless.

Colleagues being **aware I'm a Christian** because I talk about what I do on Sunday, or some evenings (bible class), I also try to apply the qualities above. **Do I fail sometimes?** Yes!! (eg Mindy and I argue). I also have colleagues came to talk in the office, ask for help and advice and they value my opinion. Sometimes I used the things I have been through to help them, sometimes I tell them the difference God makes in my life, sometimes I just listened. I try to encourage where I can.

Friendship level with work colleagues: mixed

Now as a locum I'm learning submission, patient endurance and listening more. I try now to seek opportunities to help out - **on the ward** eg patients, even staff. I try to remember what blessings I have and that brings a smile to my face and I'm always amazed how a smile makes others smile. Just saying hi makes a difference. Taking time out to listen to patients go on about other things apart from their medicines (& colleagues are helped – one had mum with cancer) even when I do not have the time. Sometimes I pray for the opportunities and sometimes I do miss them and ask the Lord to help me see them and know what to do and say.

My encouragement to you

Know and remember how you overcame with the help of God. Keep a diary. (I do now) and I'm amazed whenever I look back and read some of it. Tell your story. Your life is part of God's overall story.

Enoch walked with God, so did Noah, Abraham, Sarah, all the faithfuls of old and today you and I walk with God. We physically have God's Spirit in us and we are seated in the heavenly realms and participate in the divine nature. We are all different but useful to God as His light to the world. E.g. Moses (stuttered, short tempered), Abraham , Sarah (old, fear=lied), Eve (deceived). Do not be afraid to walk with God in the work place. The power to speak / act is the Lord's not ours. We are just his vessel (**2 Corinthians 4:7**)

Be practical. Take time out to help. The opportunities are there to shine. This can be difficult sometimes if we are busy and in a hurry. Let us try to recognise people who need us. I was so busy trying to catch a train that was not there to get to work, I missed helping an elderly woman struggling with a case on the stairs and ran past her. Ward busy with patients wanting to chat , I

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decided some things could wait and listened more attentively helping to encourage some patients eg one whose father was also in hosp. It made me feel good to help.

Pray for opportunities to help someone, to let your light shine no matter how small the opportunity.

You will miss opportunities and make mistakes. Its ok. Stop beating yourself up about it. Talk to God about it, decide what you can do next time so you will be prepared. Always keep going. Silence can sometimes be the best thing, answer or reply.

Encourage and pray for each other especially in difficult work situations when we have to stand up for truth.

Do not ignore opportunities you are aware of, as it tends to result in regret especially when you know what to do or say. Take the plunge.

Prayer is absolute key!! Walking and talking with God about absolutely everything. We need to keep in step with the Spirit, do not go ahead of Him. We should let Him led. He comforts us, reminds us, communes with us and helps us when we are weak and with our prayers. (**Ephesians 6, Romans 8, John 14**). Learn to trust Him. Try Him, let Him work and be amazed.

You are standing on solid ground. Nothing can shake you. Even though many around you do not believe and may even laugh. You know who you are, what you have and where you are going. You can see what they cant and know what they don't. God is in us. Wear God's armour each morning. We are sons of God! Christ has disarmed the evil forces and made a public spectacle of them. Let us walk in confidence and not fear.

"You are the salt of the earth..... you are the light of the world. a city on a hill cannot be hidden.....let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16).

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy, without holiness no-one will see the LORD. Hebrews 12:14

Remember:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I say it again Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus. Finally sisters whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy think about such things. Whatever you have learned, received and heard or seen to light the earth, put into practice and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:4-9)