Have you ever asked yourself, “Am I lukewarm in my Christian life?”

In Revelation 3:14-22, Jesus says, “… I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot…because you are lukewarm…I am about to spit you out of my mouth… Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am!”

Being lukewarm clearly displeases the Lord. Up until two years ago, I would not have characterized myself as being lukewarm, but then my eyes and ears were opened. The Lord got my attention and began a real conversion in me.

My life as a Christian had become comfortable and I was coasting spiritually. As a result, my life had become centered on me. I thought I loved the Lord, but he was certainly not Lord of my life. He had been relegated to a subsidiary role. My prayer life was poor.

I owned a large commercial landscape business with an exceptional management team and culture. Because the company was doing so well, it did not require much of my personal attention. So golf, travel, and entertainment became the masters of my calendar.

Little did I know there was a time bomb ticking. In the summer of 2015, I was introduced to the FBI and learned that I was part of a grand jury investigation involving one of my customers. Boom! The Lord got my attention.

I had faced other adversities, but nothing compared to that. I never imagined being in such a vulnerable position, totally humiliated, with my reputation in ruins. I was, and still am, in a battle that has brought me to my knees. But because Jesus loves me, he “rebuked and disciplined” me to help me turn from my lukewarm ways. He was right there, standing at the door knocking, waiting for me to open it and invite him in. My battle would have been lost without the help of the Lord.

God used this traumatic situation to draw me back to him. Like the prodigal son, the Father joyfully welcomed me back into his arms. He used my weakest and most vulnerable moment to strengthen me and convert me back to living more fully for Christ. As stated in 2 Corinthians 12:10, “That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Because of my conversion experience, I was motivated to begin a CIC Challenge Group in Indianapolis this past January. For years I had considered beginning a group but was too lukewarm to do so. Participating in my weekly Challenge Group has increased my sensitivity to the Holy Spirit working in me and in the lives of the other 20 men.

The cure for being lukewarm is friendship with Christ. He stands at the door knocking, always ready for us to invite him into our lives. The more we know and love Jesus, the more we will effectively build his Kingdom here on earth.

When you think about leaders, do you think of yourself as capable of being one? Or do you only see others in that position?

We are often encouraged to be more Christlike in our walk with the Lord. In order to do this, each of us needs to think and act more like a leader; to become “a person of influence,” as John Maxwell would put it, because, “leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less.”

I’d like to challenge us all to become better leaders. We have each been given certain gifts and talents. We are responsible for using them. In CIC, this means engaging in the works and supporting the efforts of our mission.

Our mission in CIC is focused on the workplace. When we behave more as leaders, we become more influential, both at home and at work. Let us be docile, humble, and willing to minister as true servant leaders.

Join us at our 2017 Annual Conference this October as we strive together to learn more and to become more Christlike. We are all Coworkers in Christ!
We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

As a young financial advisor, I try to get out and network in the community. Several networking groups provide me good opportunities to meet other young professionals, grow my practice, and build my network. I seek opportunities to grab lunch or a cup of coffee one-on-one to get to know them and hear their unique story. When I started using this approach, it was purely a way for me to build my professional network.

Ever since I experienced the Working for Our Father series, my perspective on my business and career has changed. In the series, there is an emphasis on not just approaching your workday with what you can gain from it, but viewing it as an opportunity to serve the Father and those he cares for and loves. Instead of thinking about how I can use a lunch meeting or conversation to benefit my own personal career or business, I have been trying more and more to view these meetings through the eyes of our Father.

Yes, the Father wants us to be successful in our careers and businesses. But he also wants our eyes and ears to be attentive and open to opportunities to be witnesses to those around us. If we are always focused on business or personal gain, we might miss opportunities to share the love of the Lord with others. When the topics of faith, religion, or church come up in a networking lunch meeting, I try to explore them a little more.

Recently, I have had some meetings with new acquaintances where there were opportunities to share about God. They mentioned going to church over the weekend and the conversation grew from there. In one meeting, we discussed our faith lives; Am I viewing all aspects of my career through the eyes of our Father? Are there ways in which I can be better at bringing Christ into my work?

Joe Cramer is a financial advisor in South Bend, IN. He has been a part of CIC in the South Bend/Elkhart Men’s Chapter since 2015. He hosts a Challenge Group discussion every Tuesday evening at the Healy Group after work. Joe can be reached at joeycramer@gmail.com.

Sharing a recent experience of how you were able to be Christ to a coworker, client, or customer. Are there ways in which you can be bolder in planting seeds with those you encounter throughout your workday?
**WEEK 2 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS**

### Personal Sacrifice

**By Bill Lupinacci**

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:31)

Doubt enters into our faith lives from time to time. We don’t perceive God with our senses, so when we get too wrapped up in our jobs, doubt about God can grow and derail our faith. Even well-known stories from scripture can test our faith.

For many years, the story of God asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac weighed heavily on my mind. The idea of sacrificing a son for a greater purpose made no sense. The story of Abraham and Isaac began to tear at my faith. For 10 years, it stayed in the back of my mind. Whenever I faced a great challenge in my workplace, the story really nagged at me. Why did I need to work late to protect my job? Why did I have to get on a plane to try to reason with an unreasonable customer? Why was this employee doing something so clearly wrong? Surely a God of love could not ask me to make sacrifices that made my personal life so much more difficult, just for the sake of my company.

**PRAY:**

Lord, help me appreciate more deeply the sacrifice of your son and take comfort in the workplace sacrifices I must make for the sake of those I love.

**REFLECT:**

What does the idea of sacrificial love mean to me? Do I take comfort in the sacrifices and difficulties I must make in my job for the sake of my family?

**DISCUSS:**

How can I, or how can I, live a life of love in selfless service to others? How can I be willing to set aside my own life for the sake of the Father and what he wishes to do in my workplace?

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**WEEK 3 • MEN’S REFLECTIONS**

### Making a Difference in the Workplace

**By Bill Lupinacci**

As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. (Mark 9:15)

My earliest memories are of a special time with my father. I was two and we were living in a home adjacent to the railroad tracks in Pittsburgh. My father sold aluminum siding door-to-door. He would leave the house around 8:00 a.m., and not come home until late at night. On several occasions, he would come into my bedroom, pick me up and carry me outside. Holding me in his arms, we would stare up at the sky as he pointed out various stars, constellations, planets, and the moon.

“Do you know who made all of this?” he asked. “Was it you?” I said. He would say, “No.” Then he would tell me, as if it were a wonderful secret he was revealing only to me, that God made all of it.

To this day, whenever the challenges I face in the workplace prompt me to question if there really is a God, I go outside at night and just stare up at the stars. Sometimes it takes only a couple of seconds and sometimes it takes a long time, but eventually I get back to that place deep in my mind and my heart where I am certain I am loved and that God really does exist. And I am renewed to return to my workplace reinvigorated and ready to be a true Christian in commerce.

With a heart filled with wonder and awe, there is no greater goal than to help others experience that same gift, which comes from the Holy Spirit and brightens our workdays. No matter the demands of my job, I find time to share with my coworkers and my family what my father passed on to me—the wonder and awe of our Lord.

**PRAY:**

Lord, let me live in wonder and awe of you every moment of my workday. Let me realize in a new way that I am a steward of your creation, and help me to make my workplace a place of devotion and respect for what you have put into my hands.

**REFLECT:**

What moments in my job have left me in greatest wonder and awe of the Creator? How can I bring that same awe and wonder into the realities and situations of the workplace?

**DISCUSS:**

How can we help our coworkers experience moments of wonder and awe in God’s creation? What stories can we tell about how God has worked wonders in our lives?
Holding Each Other Accountable
By Bill Lupinacci

The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. (Ecclesiastes 7:8)

How do you respond when you are at a red light, it turns green, and the person behind you slams on their horn? Do you think, “Oh, how nice, the person behind me is letting me know that the light has changed. I wish I could thank them,” or rather, “I’d really like to give that so-and-so a piece of my mind!”

Pride is often referred to as the greatest sin. All of the other sins can be thought of as emanating from pride. Pride allows us to put ourselves at the center of the universe instead of God. Does God love you more than the person honking his horn behind you? No. Throughout the ages, the sin of pride has separated us from God. It took Jesus to completely upend the system of pride at work in our world. He did not come to us a general or a CEO or a king of a nation. Jesus refused to play the game.

So, our response to those playing the game of urgency, fear, anxiety, or climbing a false ladder of success, is not to play along, but to be patient. Jesus spent his life working on the mission that his Father sent him to fulfill. Jesus did not put himself first. That is our guidance.

Let us hold one another accountable to serve our Father and one another as Jesus did. Let the Holy Spirit form humility in us and towards others whether they are our superiors, peers, or subordinates. They are all loved by our Father.

PRAY:

Lord, help me be more patient and less prideful in my workplace. Let the virtue of humility grow in me for those I work for, those I work with, and those who work for me.

REFLECT:

What situations at work are suffering because of my pride or lack of patience? How do I tend to prejudge others’ intentions? In the workplace, where do I need to grow in patience and humility?

DISCUSS:

How can you turn your pride into patience in dealing with others? How can you more quickly spot your pride, judgments, and preconceived notions about others?

SNAPSHOT PODCASTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

SNAPSHOT PODCASTS

To complement our Working for Our Father video series, we have created 20 new audio tracks called Snapshot Podcasts. They start with a snapshot of a true experience of being Christ in the workplace and then draw additional insights into working for our Father.

Snapshot Podcasts share the experiences of other coworkers and provide insights designed to help you apply them to your own situation. Listen to them during your commute, or whenever convenient. They are short and easy to listen to. We hope that you enjoy our current series:

- Series 1: Accepting the Father’s Gift of Work
- Series 2: Triumphing over Toil, Trials, and Temptations
- Series 3: Aligning Your Career to God’s Mission
- Series 4: Operating in the Fruit of the Spirit

For more information, go to www.cicintl.org/snapshot.
Personal Sacrifice

By Alyssa Valdez

Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season... (2 Timothy 4:2)

Following my parents’ divorce when I was seven, my dad and I have had a rocky relationship. He moved away soon after, which made it difficult for him to be part of my everyday life. He lived two hours away in Paso Robles, and I visited him every other weekend. I enjoyed spending time with him, but I wasn’t completely happy because it was a strange town and I didn’t know anyone. Over the years, things didn’t change much, but I made the best of it. Now that I’m in my mid-20s, my relationship with my dad has gotten better and I am able to communicate how I feel. I see how God has worked in my life and my dad does too. One weekend when he was in town visiting, he invited me and my siblings to Sunday breakfast. I suggested we go to Mass first. He immediately agreed. After Mass, he expressed how great he felt. Since then, we have gone to Mass together whenever he is in town. On weekends when he is home, he calls to let me know that he has gone to Mass and how good it makes him feel. I continue to pray that he will develop a relationship with God.

To help bring my dad closer to God, I gave him the book Jesus Calling by Sarah Young. I know that he is responsible for finding his way to God but I want to do all that I can to support him. As he grows in his relationship with God, it will also enrich our relationship.

PRAY:
Father, please build the heart of Christ into my heart so that those around me will see him clearly and desire to know him too.

REFLECT:
How can I show Christ in my life to others in my community?

DISCUSS:
How can we invite God to accomplish beautiful works of peace-restoring grace in our lives and our relationships?

Redeeming Our Father’s Creation

By Alyssa Valdez

Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

In my field, there is a lot of turnover among staff members under 30. I know that one of my coworkers is going through a difficult time. A couple of years ago, we attended a church event together and later discussed it at work. I felt compelled to invite her to CIC. Although she accepted my invitation, she was ultimately not able to attend. Now that I have come to know her better and understand her trials and challenges, I’m struggling with the best way to invite her to another CIC meeting. It seems that whenever I try to ask, we get interrupted. I trust in God’s timing and I have been praying that I will find the right time to approach her.

I have faced similar situations with other coworkers. Because of my experience with CIC, I am motivated to bring more souls to God. Millennials face many challenges, and I want to share with my coworkers how CIC has supported me and changed my life.

PRAY:
Lord, thank you for using us to provide comfort, encouragement, and hope to others who are suffering. We praise you for all you’ve done, are doing, and will continue to do to comfort us in our afflictions.

REFLECT:
Has God put someone in my life who is facing difficulties or challenges and using me to encourage them?

DISCUSS:
How have you demonstrated your faith in Christ to others?
WEEK 4 • WOMEN’S REFLECTIONS

The Fruits of Our Relationships as Sisters  By Alyssa Valdez

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Our goal in Christians in Commerce is to expand God's Kingdom in our daily lives. Participating in our Service Council has opened doors to leadership for me in the Fresno Women’s Chapter. As I continue to help build God’s Kingdom, I also want to continue to grow in my faith. Our chapter president suggested that we start a small Challenge Group. I volunteered to lead a group of millennials but I was reluctant because I didn't see myself as a leader. Through prayer, the Holy Spirit has given me that confidence.

At this point, there are five of us in the group. My goal is to meet once a month and discuss a topic from our Workday Reflections. By having a small group, we are able to focus more on our individual needs and support one another. The group is strong in faith and we all share the goal to grow in our faith and build God’s Kingdom.

Recently I attended our Service Council weekend retreat. Through our talks, I discovered my God-given gifts. One of them is to pastor, which confirms my role as leader of our small group.

Through my continued role in CIC, I feel like the gaps in my life are being filled and this is just the beginning of God’s plan for me.

Alyssa Valdez lives in Fresno and is a behavior therapist who works with children with autism. She has been a member of the Fresno Women's Chapter since 2015. She was a panel member for the “Personal Mission: Fulfilling My Call and Vocations in the Workplace” workshop at the 2016 Annual Conference. Alyssa can be reached at alyssavaldez2010@gmail.com.

PRAY:
Father, please show the wonder of your great love through me to others today so that they might know they need not walk through life alone. Let my heart experience and display your care.

REFLECT:
Have you experienced an unexpected encounter that revealed God working in a situation?

DISCUSS:
What can you do to edify the Kingdom of God?

WORKING FOR OUR FATHER: WORKSHOPS BEING CONDUCTED

Many of our men’s and women’s chapters have now reviewed our Working for Our Father workshop. The workshop is designed to assist baptized Christians in integrating their work life into their Christian faith. In addition, chapters have facilitated either four one-hour sessions or a single four-hour gathering.

Written and produced to impact all age groups, particularly the next generation, this series utilizes professionally developed, engaging videos that have captured the imagination of attendees, opening up to them a world of possibilities in working for their Father by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Working for Our Father shows how Christians can align their careers with God’s mission. It can be jointly presented to men and women.

There are four presentations:
• Accepting the Father’s Gift of Work
• Triumphant Over Toil, Trials, and Temptations
• Aligning Your Career to God’s Mission
• Operating in the Fruit of the Spirit

For more info, visit www.cicintl.org/wfof.
WHAT’S HAPPENING AT THE 2017 CIC ANNUAL CONFERENCE?

This year’s CIC Annual Conference will be focusing on the theme of leadership and underscoring the idea that everyone can be a leader. The conference scripture, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.” (Psalm 32:8), challenges us to trust in the unique gifts God has given to each of us as Coworkers in Christ. What does it mean to be Coworkers in Christ? It means working together as members of one body to build the Kingdom of God, whatever our role, wherever we happen to work, even after we have retired. It looks like godly leadership, each leading in our own unique way according to the tools and talents we possess. Because the purpose of this conference is to encourage all of us to step into the role of leading others, there will not be a traditional Leader’s Workshop, which in past years has been focused on supporting chapter leaders only. The format will instead consist of five general sessions followed by roundtable discussions where everyone will work together to take ownership of the materials presented.

We will begin the conference by reviewing the original vision for CIC as presented by the Founding Fathers: Louis Grams, John Mooney, and Bud Rose. We will also hear talks about what the Board of Directors has discerned our call is today and where we are headed in the future.

One exciting highlight of this year’s conference will be a session with Julie Foudy, daughter of long-time CIC members Jim and Judy Foudy from the Palm Desert chapters. Julie is a two-time FIFA Women’s World Cup champion and Olympic gold medalist who has been inducted into the U.S. National Soccer Hall of Fame. She played on the United States women’s national soccer team from 1987–2004, founded the Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy for young women, is an ESPN affiliate, and has authored a book on leadership called *Choose to Matter*, which focuses on everyone developing their own unique leadership skills.

Come hear what Julie has to share with all of us!
I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Galatians 2:20

CHRISTIANS IN COMMERCE PRAYER

Father,
You are my Lord and Creator.
You entrust me with a place of stewardship in your creation.
Fill me with your Holy Spirit:
That he may teach me to pray and live in Christ and as Christ;
That he may teach me love for family, friends and all people.
    A love that is selfless, humble, and wise;
That he may teach me stewardship of the talents, time, money and possessions you have given me.
        A stewardship that serves, is generous, and brings honor to your name;
That he may teach me faithfulness to your call to Christians in Commerce.
        A call that unites us and builds your Kingdom in the marketplace.
Through Jesus Christ who is Lord.
    Amen

VISION: Being Christ in the workplace
MISSION: To encourage and equip Christians to be God’s presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence
VALUES: Christians in Commerce is an ecumenical organization committed to:
    • Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
    • Manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit
    • Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
    • Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives