



THE PASTOR'S VOICE

Insights from Church Leaders

The Pastor's Voice Podcast: Episode 16

Transcript: Bringing Christ to Work

Reuel Sample: Now, Tom, your circle of influence extends outside of the church, you are the CEO of a research and a Q&A firm there in Iowa. How have you been challenged or have you been challenged to bring these tenets of scripture into your role as a business owner?

Tom Vander Well: Oh, of course they do. You know, intelligent is the name of the company. It was actually founded back in nineteen eighty seven by a gentleman who disciple me when I was in high school and also my business partner, and his idea was to have a consulting firm. That would be based on biblical principles, not that we, you know, we don't shy away from who we are, but we also don't kind of beat people over the head with it either. But what's happened over the years and in 2005, I became a partner in the business and for the last three or four years I've been CEO, I've been leading it. What I have found and what has been so exciting for me is that I just recognize that every time I step, I step foot in my client's. Place of business. I have an opportunity to be the light of Christ, the salt of Christ, the aroma of Christ to the people in that business. By the way, that I help them understand what it means to be a customer servant and isn't customer service about being a good servant the every time we talk about. The the things that can make them better at taking care of their customers. These are all I mean, these are all biblical principles.

Reuel Sample: And I like I like how you just said, I'm sorry for interrupting. I like how you put something. Is that most people would say, Well, I am a Christian. My business

is based on Christian principles, so I have an obligation. And you say, no, I have an opportunity to bring that message, that idea that that worldview to the customers I serve.

Tom Vander Well: Right. And what's really interesting is that I don't I don't really have to say it at all. If I am, if I am being who God calls me to be. And that's what Paul meant when he said, Hey, look, I'm the aroma of Christ. To some people, I am this beautiful fragrance of life. And to some people, I am the stench of death and. I have found that's just been amazing, because when I am working with a client, I'm amazed at how many people. Just know it. They just they see something, they hear something. I've had people come up to me after a presentation and say. But are you were you ever in the ministry, are you are you a pastor? And I'll go, Well, you know, I did that for a few years before I went into business, and they'll just go, I knew it. I just knew it.

Reuel Sample: And that demonstrates that people really are hard wired and sort of hungry. For the message message of Christ in whatever form, whether it be through the preaching, but even more so just through the one to one contact as somebody living out their faith.

Tom Vander Well: Well, and here's the thing so as part of what I've done for the last 30 years is I do a lot of one on one coaching a lot of one on one mentoring. I have clients that hire me to like mentor their young managers who may be in their first supervisory or management role and to teach them good leadership skills. I do a lot of front line coaching with with customer service representatives, and we'll listen to their calls together and then we'll talk about how they can. They can do a better job of communicating with customers. And what I've discovered is that when you get into a room alone with another human being. It is amazing what they will tell you. I I have people, though, I had people break down in tears and tell me about their family problems. I remember I remember one guy who broke down sobbing this 50 year old guy because he just found out he hit the glass ceiling and his career wasn't going to be going anywhere. He's having this existential crisis. And why is he telling me this me this? Why is he breaking down in front of me? What is it that he senses in me that this is a safe place to do this? Those are all holy moments. Where I had an opportunity to show love and empathy and compassion, I get to be, I can be Christ to those people. I don't need to share with them the four spiritual laws. I can just show them love and

compassion and follow up with them and ask them how they're doing. And that's a powerful thing. Hmm.

Reuel Sample: And our churches are pastors, and our church leaders need to help our business owners and are our folks who are business leaders to bring that message that they hear on Sundays, and that that lifestyle and that worldview that we encourage into their businesses and help them find ways to be the salt and light throughout their business week.

Tom Vander Well: Absolutely. And here's the other thing that I will tell you I have the rare opportunity with a lot of clients where I might spend the morning working one on one with their front line minimum wage, customer service reps. And then that afternoon I walk into the CEO's office and I have to have a completely different conversation at a completely different level. So I've been able to touch people at every level of our client, clients, organizations. And what I can tell you is this the person in the CEO's office is typically the most lonely and sometimes the most confused person in the organization, but they can't really say it or admit it and the opportunity to come alongside them and become a friend and a confidant. Because you're right, we need CEOs who can approach their jobs with confidence and and with the understanding that. I can lead with Christ likeness and have an impact on my people and on this business and a lot of people, it's just not there.

Reuel Sample: And to bring this back to what you and I have been weaving through our conversation is if we bring this concept of scripture into our daily lives, if we bring this idea of devotion into our daily lives, then those kind of conversations can naturally take place because we are always in the word of God and learning how God would have us interact not only with him, but with others around us.

Tom Vander Well: Like, you know, it's like when scripture says, know when to speak and when to be silent. That in and of itself is a great leadership principle that every CEO needs to know. And there's so many times every day that I have to go, All right, is this my time to speak or is this my time to just shut up? There's so many scenarios where that applies.

Reuel Sample: Tom, you have probably finished up your blog and your podcast. So what is your message for the people of God today?

Tom Vander Well: But yeah, today's today's post, I'm finishing up Genesis and the thing that came out of Genesis. First of all, real quick. One of the things that I have found in reading scripture every day for 40 years is that. Every time I go back through a book of the Bible. It's different, not because it's changed, but because I've changed. I'm in a different place and it's amazing how I just see new things every time I go through, so my time through Genesis this time. One of the things that's been really apparent to me is all of the family system issues within Abraham, Isaac, Jacob Joseph, his 12 sons. I am seeing just how flawed and dysfunctional and how generational issues keep repeating themselves. And so today? My wife and I are big fans of the show, Yellowstone. We've been watching it now for four seasons and family, friends, we talk about it and for those who don't know about it, it's kind of The Godfather meets Montana and it's really about a patriarch who has a really messed up family and he's trying to protect his ranch and he's trying to perpetuate the family legacy. But in doing so, it's just his family is tragically flawed.

Reuel Sample: And that's Kevin Costner in the lead role.

Tom Vander Well: Yes, it is. And it's funny because our daughter who lives with her husband and our grandson in Scotland, just email this last week, she said, Yeah, we always watch Yellowstone. And there's another show called Successor, which is about another wealthy baron who's dying and his children are all positioning themselves for the inheritance. They said, We watch Yellowstone in succession and we call it up family night. And so that was that was the title of my blog post this morning because as I'm as I'm as Jacob is blessing Joseph sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, there are just so many recurring themes in the dysfunction that I have seen, from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob, and now we're in the fourth generation of family. But the thing that I love about it is that. These are the patriarchs, these are the people that God chose, and that should be good news for me because I got my own issues in family. And it also reminds me that when Jesus said, Look, I came. So that anyone can be my child, can be my co-chair, can get in on the father's blessing and the father's inheritance. And and that's the good news, no matter what kind of situation I found myself in and my own family system. The son of God is there to say, Hey, my dad wants to adopt you into the family and make you not

only my brother, but my friend and my co-chair with the entire Aaron's the inheritance that God has to give. So that's my word for today.

Reuel Sample: Tom van der Reuel He is the host of The Wayfarer podcast. He's also the author of The Wayfarer blog. You can find him at Tom van der Well. You could find his podcast on Apple and Spotify or any of the major and minor podcast platforms. Tom, so great to have you here and blessings in your ministry.

Tom Vander Well: Oh, thanks, Raoul. I've loved it. Let's do this again sometime because I have a feeling that you and I could find lots of different things to talk about.

Reuel Sample: Exactly. Exactly. Thanks again, Tom, and merry Christmas to you.

Tom Vander Well: To you as well. Take care.