



Minding the Gap - February 2016

A Faith and Work Publication

Welcome to Minding the Gap, a monthly thought about faith in the workplace!

"Oh No! I'm Out of Favor!"

I will long remember the morning I was sitting at my desk when in to my office walked one of our company's Co-CEOs and told me to stand-up and come around the desk. A bit nervous, I did what he asked. Then he stepped forward and gave me a **huge hug!** I was truly taken aback. So, what was the deal? For several months our company was in a struggle as to how we needed to address a very significant downturn in business with a resulting revenue crisis. The senior leadership team was asked to write opinions on how to handle the situation. Should we lay personnel off (which we'd never done before), or do a very sizable salary reduction and risk the possibility of losing a number of our best people among other risks? My opinion was based on the written purpose and principles of our corporation. Thankfully, it seemed to give the Co-CEOs valid reason for doing a salary reduction rather than a layoff of coworkers which didn't please everyone.

That was great and I wallowed in the favor I was receiving especially since it came from the two corporate CEOs. Well, it wasn't long before I found myself in a variety of **unfavorable situations** with a number of my coworkers because I had to make an unfavorable decision or enforce some guideline; as the head of HR this was not an unusual place for me. So how do we handle such times of disfavor with our coworkers?

Turning to Scripture we find Jesus in a very similar situation: that of loosing favor with his townspeople. Luke 4 tells the story of Jesus teaching in Nazareth where he is received with great favor, that is until he begins to teach in a manner quite confrontational with what they believed. The story concludes (cf: Luke 4:21-30) with the sentence "They got up, drove

him (Jesus) out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way." In other words, Jesus holding strong to his principle of "**authentic love**" (truth and grace - Jn 1:14) was able to move beyond this pretty ugly experience of falling out of favor with the very folk amongst whom he grew up.

In no way do I want to give the impression of being of similar character as Jesus, because the point here is the importance of remembering what really counts. At work we need to think, speak and act in congruence with the purpose or mission of our organization. Those are the standards that really count. **And**, even more basic for us, as Christians, is to hang-on-to and act from the same 'standard' that Jesus taught us - **to love in truthful and gracious thoughts, words and actions**. For sure this will not always be the warm, inspiring or popular approach for those with whom you work; but it will allow you to know you have done that which is "true... honorable... just... pure... pleasing...commendable" (Phil4:8) for our Lord.

Blessings to you in your world and ministry of work!
- Jim Grubs

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