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# Gleanings



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## Sympathy Hires

The current high unemployment and rising foreclosures is producing more and more financial difficulty for many people. This can lead to a sense of urgency—in some cases desperation—as people seek to avoid losing their homes and/or vehicles.

Urgency to find work impacts both workers and employers. Desperate workers often will take any job they can find. The few employers who do have positions open face the challenge of whom to hire.

Employers are aware of the stress of the times and many are moved by compassion for the unemployed. Hence, some may compromise wise hiring practices and allow sympathy to overly factor into their decisions.

Sympathy sounds like something magnanimous and virtuous; and it can be. What a noble act—putting a hurting person to work so that they can pay their bills. It feels good to help someone avoid losing their home and/or car. But is it wise to hire someone based on sympathy?

Consider, for example, the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32). The rebellious son wanted money to do his own will, which his earthly father granted him. The son discovered that doing his own will did not bear good fruit. Clearly, it was the objective of the heavenly Father to teach the prodigal this lesson through the consequences of his poor choices.

In contrast to the prodigal is Jesus, who was focused not on His will but on the will of His heavenly Father (Luke 22:42; Hebrews 10:7). If anyone ever lived with the singular focus of obeying God, it was Jesus. He clearly is a model of success for all of us.

If Christians are by definition “followers of Christ,” and therefore imitators of Christ, we must live as He lived. We must base our lives on the words Jesus spoke when He submitted to death on the cross: “Not my will but thy will [referring to His heavenly Father] be done.” Clearly, this is the polar opposite of the prodigal who was seeking to do his own will, not his father’s will.

Employers are charged with seeking the will of God in their work activities (James 4:13–17). This means that organizational leaders should be following the same principle as Jesus—“Not my will but thy will be done.”

Given this mandate to both employees and employers to obey the will of God, employers must be circumspect about hiring. Each hiring decision must be a decision rooted in a desire to discern and obey the will of God. Discernment of the will of God is the result of submitting to spiritual transformation (Romans 12:2).

This transformation is a process by which we no longer *think*—and, by implication, *act*—like the world. Rather, we learn to think and act like Jesus. This is a process of growth and maturity in Christ that requires work, commitment, and tenacity. It is a process of discipleship that requires transparency and accountability to others. As a result of engaging in this process, the text says that we gain insight into the will of God. In other words, transformation is the process of moving from being focused on our will to being focused on God’s will. And as we engage in this process, we discern the will of God with increasing clarity.

How can we apply this truth to the hiring process?

We must recognize that the world’s way of hiring is not God’s way. The world would suggest that sympathy hires are good—a way to help others. But the reality is that the world is clueless, and really doesn’t even care, about what the Lord is doing in the lives of people. For example, suppose a sympathetic well-meaning employer had rescued the prodigal son from the pigpen—before he had learned the lesson that God wanted to teach him. Dennis Peacocke, my dear friend and Christian philosopher, would note that such action would interfere with God’s feedback system. Would this have been best for the son? Clearly not—this act of sympathy would have done nothing more than prolong the



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prodigal's rebellion.

God is working a plan to teach each of us to do His will, not our will. Therefore, any hiring decision should be centered on discerning God's will. Hiring someone because of sympathy or compassion is a decision that is, most likely, not aligned with the will of God.

How does an employer, who desires to follow Christ, stop thinking like the world and start thinking like Christ regarding employment decisions? Scripture provides some wonderful tools to help us engage in the transformation of our minds and thus to discern the will of God.

One of the best tools is the C4 model. C4 stands for *calling, character, capability, and commissioning*. C4 is the biblical principle of hiring that God used to employ people to build the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:30—36:2). Scripture applies the C4 principle in other situations as well, such as, qualifying church leaders (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9) and civil leaders (Psalms 78:70–72). In fact, C4 seems to be the biblical criterion for hiring.

In addition to applying C4, an employer seeking to discern and obey the will of God should use the “ask-seek-knock” principle (Matthew 7:7–12) and prayerfully engage advisors (Proverbs 13:10) to gain wisdom—alignment with the will of God.

There is another facet of hiring that employers engaged in discerning the will of God should consider, namely, stewardship. Since the earth is the Lord's (Psalm 24:1), God owns every organization (Colossians 3:23). Men are simply stewards (1 Corinthians 4:7). Good stewards seek to be efficient (Luke 19:11–27, especially v. 17). When hiring based on sympathy, without regard to other biblical principles, the employer most likely will hire a non-C4 person. In this case the employer assumes the responsibility to help that person become a C4 worker. A wise employer knows that he or she does not have the right to take on that assignment unless the Holy Spirit gives it to them.

Jesus never presumed to define His life; the Father was the sole definer of Jesus' life (John 5:19). So also it should be with us. Non-C4 people require copious amounts of management and impair an organization's ability to operate efficiently. Employers must seek the Lord's will to discern clearly if they have been authorized to hire a non-C4 person.

Sympathy is never the right reason to hire. The only right reason to hire a person is obedience to the Lord. In some cases employers will be directed to hire non-C4 people for the purpose of discipling them to become C4 people. But employers must never presume to make this call on their own; this is the purview of the Lord.

Seeking the will of God is about walking by faith, not by sight. Employers who make sympathy hires are generally moved by what they see in the natural more than by what they discern about God's will. Hence, most sympathy hires do not bless anyone. They simply delay lessons that God is seeking to teach individuals and disrupt the faithful stewardship of organizations.

May God grant us the grace to submit to the process of transformation; that is, to live out a biblical worldview in order to live as Jesus lived and truly be able say “not my will but thy will be done.”

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<b>More Help to Discover Your Life Purpose</b>	<a href="#">Webinar</a> : Strategic Life Alignment Alumni Event	September 8, 15, & 22 2009
Fulfill Your Life Purpose	<a href="#">Seminar</a> : Kingdom Management II	October 23, 2009 in Texas
	<a href="#">Webinar</a> : Kingdom Management II	November 5, 12, & 19, 2009