



Working With Kryptonite

3.9.08 by Heather Goodman

Article:

The numbers fell faster than Superman on Kryptonite.

It didn't make sense. I studied. I planned. I invested. My knees ached from sitting. My eyes teared from staring at the computer screen. My back stiffened from hunching.

With everything I put into this, what had been a mewling baby should now be a Man of Steel.

My business should be successful.

It wasn't.

Being the model Christian I am, I turned to prayer. "Lord, please grow my business. Please make it successful." So that, of course, I could reach people *for him*.

As believers, we know to pray in and for our work, but we often don't know *how* to pray. We pray for a new job, a new salary, or a new position. We pray for fulfillment in our occupation. We pray that we'll be good witnesses to the cubicle next door. We pray that we'll maintain integrity in all we do.

How many of us pray for deliverance from self-service?

While writing a Bible study, I flipped through *The Book of Common Prayer* for inspiration. There, across the page from prayers for the sick and for social justice was a prayer for vocation in daily work.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: Deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Three things struck me about this prayer.

1. **This prayer is about freedom.** I enslave myself with expectations of building a business that will succeed, whether my idea of success is money, fame, or numbers. When I can't meet those expectations, I wallow in failure and self-pity. My service of self alone acts as Kryptonite to my joy. God wants to deliver me from that so I can do his work with truth and beauty. To labor within truth and beauty means working in an environment that focuses on enjoying God.
2. **Our work is for others.** Imagine handing your spiritual gifts to God and asking him to use them how he sees fit. Imagine focusing on the joy of others more than our own triumphs. The job itself would be less meaningful and more meaningful at the same time—because it wouldn't matter what you did occupationally but how you occupationally served others.
3. **We should imitate God in our Work (Eph. 5:1).** Serving others in our work rather than serving ourselves is built on the nature of the Trinity God, in whose image he created us. His creative work of fashioning a world full of daylilies and mangoes and jaguars for our enjoyment and his incarnation into "one who serves" guides us into a love that transcends salaries, positions, and healthy competition.

I don't know how this will change the way I pray about my work this week. It probably won't change any numbers. But it'll change my joy by reminding me who I serve.

After all, being the Man of Steel isn't about getting Lois Lane or having a picture on front-page news. It's about the kid in need of rescuing from Niagara Falls.