“It’s So Hard to Be a Christian on My Job!”

I am a commercial airline pilot and a born-again Christian. I am frequently confronted with a very in-your-face, sexually explicit, lewd, and immoral environment from the crew members I fly with. I let people know that I am a Christian, that I attend church and that I attend a men’s group. However, it seems the barrage of sex jokes and immorality just keeps coming even though they know I am not into those things. I know that I am not the morality police and I try very hard not to be critical and judgmental. I try to find other “common ground” and try to serve my crew members and get to know them. But sometimes, I feel like maybe I need to let them know more emphatically that I don’t want to participate or be a part of those types of conversations and jokes. I don’t want to come across as judgmental and holier than thou but I also would like to establish healthy boundaries and establish a clear identity so people know who I am and what I am and am not about. Sometimes, I feel so frustrated about how to handle a situation that I just say nothing but then I feel like it’s not healthy to just sit there and listen to garbage all the time. I was wondering if you have any suggestions that might help me approach future situations with maturity and clarity. I truly desire to serve God on my job. I have a heart for people and would like to find the balance between being judgmental and just sitting back and saying nothing.

I asked my friend Mike Cleveland, the writer and webservant of Setting Captives Free (www.settingcaptivesfree.com), who is also a commercial pilot, how to answer your question.

> *Dear Sue, I’m glad to see him desiring to be in the world but not of it. Of course I’m in these same situations as he is. I do not normally let them know, with my words, that I am a*

born-again, blood-bought child of God, but I do try to show it in my actions hoping that doors will open that I can speak of Him with my words. Normally when the crew goes down to eat in the hotel together is where most of this coarse joking takes place. People get together, have a few drinks and the foul speaking begins. I don't partake of it at all, I get silent and don't laugh at the filthy jokes whatsoever but simply turn away and look out the window or read the menu, or find some other way to disengage from the conversation. I have discovered that the strong man can be around that stuff and neither have to laugh at it nor declare how juvenile it is and how spiritual we are, but rather we can be silent and strong. For the past couple of years I haven't had this type of joking go on around me; though I don't get "in your face" about my beliefs, there is the "aroma of heaven" that accompanies a child of God who knows who he is in Jesus. If someone does slip with a bad word they normally look at me and say, "oh sorry Mike" yet they may not have even heard me say I'm a Christian. It's called silent intimidation, letting them "hear" our character by having them watch our deeds and the way we live. We are the light of the world, and a light cannot be hidden. A light "speaks" simply by its presence. Help him to learn to enjoy the presence of the Lord and wherever he goes he will BE a light. The enjoyment of God is what we have that the world doesn't, and that joy in the Lord can't be hidden. "They took notice of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Of course every now and then God opens a door where we can be bold with our words and proclaim the gospel freely. I love those times. But they are few and far between because the road to life is narrow and few find it. Mike

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

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