

The book cover features a central white rectangular area with a slightly distressed, torn-edge effect. This area is set against a background of light beige and cream-colored paper textures. Green eucalyptus-like leaves are arranged in a vertical line along the left and right edges of the white area. The title is centered in a black, elegant serif font.

Maxims for Maximum Grace

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Maxims for Maximum Grace in the Workplace

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CATEGORY I: GOT JESUS?

Maxim 1 - Live Biblically

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13 NIV)

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40 NIV)

The whole point of God’s Living Word, the Bible, is that we understand His desire for relationship with us. That is the reason we were created. Therefore, to live biblically means to live in sound healthy relationships.

What does it mean to live biblically in our relationships? It means to practice the “one another verses”. The Bible is stocked with “one another” phrases that give us direction. We are instructed to love, care for, encourage, edify, exhort, welcome, and be kind to one another.

It’s amazing how many times people in a church, family or workplace have relational issues. Everybody knows about it, talks about it, and worries about it, but doesn’t do anything about it. When we are truly living out the one another verses, we will seek out healthy relationships in our own lives and the lives of others.

Maxim 2 - Ask The Holy Spirit

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6 NIV)

The first thing we should always do when experiencing any kind of tension with another person is pause and pray. Ask The Holy Spirit what’s up. Prayer should be a priority and our first line of defense in all things.

Ask God...

Why do I feel like this towards this person or these people?

Do I have sin in my life that is affecting this relationship?

Am I loving this individual as you love me?

Do I have ill feelings towards them?

Are they dealing with rough stuff in their personal lives?

What should I do about any of it? What is my part in restoring this relationship and bringing your healing?

Maxim 3 - Start With Humility

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit [through factional motives, or strife], but with [an attitude of] humility [being neither arrogant nor self-righteous], regard others as more important than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3 AMP)

To approach relationship with humility, we need to be self-aware. This is why [the Disc assessment](#) or the Enneagram can be helpful. It's amazing how when you know how God's wired you that you can be more aware of your own faults, strengths and tendencies as well as those of others to communicate and love more effectively.

Self-awareness not only makes you humble, it gives you confidence to be humble.

Maxim 4 - Whose Problem Is It? (consider: Is this my problem to solve?)

Whenever you're trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart, and everyone ends up at the others' throats. (James 3:16-18 MSG)

Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced. You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor.

In the vein of humility, self-awareness helps us identify to whom the problem belongs. Is the problem or tension you're experiencing really their problem or yours? If it's yours, then you know what to do to keep the peace. 😊

However, there are times when the source of conflict is not your problem. Is what's happening a pattern with the other individual? What do you sense when you ask for wisdom from the Holy Spirit? If the problem is theirs, it's time to ask God how to serve and love them (and yourself) well. However, remember that you cannot control another person's decisions or relationships.

CATEGORY 2: WE ARE FAMILY

Maxim 5 - Invite Me in/Give Permission

Good leaders cultivate honest speech; they love advisors who tell them the truth. (Proverbs 16:13 MSG)

Give each other permission to help, critique, encourage and even rebuke. This builds trust on both ends. I offer freedom when I say to someone, “I know you have my best interest at heart. If you ever see a bad attitude in me, call it out. If you see me struggling, offer to help. If I seem down, encourage me”. We both have freedom to approach and be approached in order to grow together and strengthen our working relationship – and the organization.

And remind each other often: “please remember that I’ve given you permission to weigh in on what you see and hear from me. Please don’t forget to take advantage of that privilege. It’s the only way I’ll know you truly care and want to see me succeed.”

Lastly, when you’ve been given permission and have been invited into that role for another’s life, make sure you start out with that when you’ve got something to weigh in on. Say, “because you’ve asked me to speak freely into your life when needed, I felt I should share this. Do what you will with it and let me know how I can support you.”

[Crucial Conversations by Joseph Grenny is an excellent resource.](#)

Maxim 6 - Apologize When Necessary

Whether you believe you did or didn’t injure someone or whether you intended to or not, apologize as soon as you catch wind that someone feels you did. Apologizing doesn’t admit guilt or ill intent. Apologizing admits that you see their hurt and it grieves you. Apologizing asks, “what can I do to help you feel safe around me and trust me again?”

Maxim 7 - Trust is Given/Mistrust is Earned

From an article by Barry Wehmiller because...well...it’s spot on.

Someone violated your trust, and you can’t let it go. You no longer trust them.

Distrust assumes negative intentions. It feels like protection but it’s destruction. Bitterness and self-protection drive distrust.

Distrust breeds:

- Suspicion and paranoia
- Micromanagement and second guessing
- Rules, sign-offs, and bureaucracy
- Apprehension. Fear of taking action without permission
- Skepticism. Distrust assumes negative intentions

The opposite of trust:

The opposite of trust is self-protection. Distrust is fear's response to vulnerability. Self-protection builds walls that limit influence, impact, relationship, and fulfillment. There is no leadership apart from trust.

Important: *if you're living out of self-protection, you may morph into becoming a spiritual abuser.* It is my firm belief that everyone should read [*Bully Pulpit*](#).

Leadership and trust:

- Trust expands influence
 - Successful leadership depends on trust. You're constantly putting your confidence in others. The best you can do, if you don't trust, is be an individual contributor.
- Trust enhances leadership
 - Steven M.R. Covey said, "When trust is low, speed decreases and cost increases." Leadership without trust is micro-management.

Bottom line:

Trust must be offered regardless of the context. In the end, trust is about a choice by the person extending it. If someone violates your trust, you expect them to earn it back. But, the choice to trust them again is really yours. Even when you expect someone to earn your trust, you still must choose whether to offer that trust to them.

Wide is better than narrow when it comes to trust. But how?

- Extend trust first.
- Assume the best.
- Be vulnerable.

- Forgive.

CATEGORY 3: DIE, POISON. DIE!

Maxim 8 - Keep Short Accounts

The start of a quarrel is like a leak in a dam, so stop it before it bursts. (Proverbs 17:14 MSG)

What if trust is broken, even though you offered it in good faith? Unfortunately, this will sometimes happen since we're human. When you find that someone you've freely trusted breaks that trust, you MUST keep the account short.

What does it mean to keep short accounts? It means as soon as you feel trust has been broken, you quickly revisit Maxims 1-4 above and then without delay, approach the person. Hopefully you've been "invited in" like Maxim 5 explains, but if not, you need to approach them none the less.

When we fail to keep short accounts, the list of offenses or *perceived* offenses grows and grows and can seem irreparable. When distrust festers, relationships are broken, people go their separate ways, and "what could have been" is lost.

Maxim 9 - Fight For Unity

A.W. Tozer stated, "one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to one another." What does that mean? Tozer notes that though you and I may drastically disagree on something, as both focus on what Christ wants, we'll be unified.

Look at your situation and ask, "What does Christ want? What is Christ's objective?" It's amazing how we automatically want people to see things from our perspective and agree with our ways. In order to keep the peace, we have to refocus on Christ's goal in the situation. Our unity will come as others do that too. It isn't about getting people on my side, it is about people being committed to what Christ is trying to do. When we're all pursuing Christ and His goals, we're unified.

Important: *There will be times when both parties to a disagreement are true followers of Christ and truly hear from the Holy Spirit but are not landing on the same page on any given term or circumstance. In these times, you must remember we still live on this side of heaven which means our flesh and other brokenness can interfere with how we hear or interpret what the Holy Spirit tells us. However, fear not! If you find yourself in this circumstance, trust that you and the other party are saying your next best yes in obedience*

to Jesus in obedience and praying for each other. In due time, God will work it all out. The Holy Spirit is a truth reminder and truth revealer. Obedience is the secret sauce to success.

Maxim 10 - Go to the Source

There's no doubt about it. It's inevitable that you will eventually hear something about somebody or a situation through "the grapevine". So and so is upset about, or thinking about, or did such and such. Whenever the grapevine reaches you, it's imperative that you take what you *think* you heard straight to the source. That is the only way to attempt to obtain thoroughly accurate information and give the "source" the benefit of the doubt.

Going to the Source:

- Stops gossip in its tracks
- Creates trust in people around you because they see that you value truth rather than conjecture.
- Fosters unity
- Shows respect

Maxim 11 - "That's Not What They Meant"

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NIV)

Once again, self-awareness helps BIG time with this one! Sometimes we'll be offended. The goal then, is to not be *easily* offended as 1 Corinthians talks about because we are bearers of the love of Christ and love is not easily offended. How do we do this?

We learn about our tendencies and bents. We remember how we tend to view the world and we learn the same of others. We take that into consideration when we're hurt by someone and remind ourselves, they didn't mean it that way. Because they very honestly, probably didn't! They very truly may be surprised to find out they've offended!

Once we tell ourselves they didn't mean it, we revisit Maxims 1-8 and then determine whether any further action is necessary.

CATEGORY 4: FINAL FACTS

Maxim 12 - If You Don't, I Will

An evasive eye is a sign of trouble ahead, but an open, face-to-face meeting results in peace. (Proverbs 10:10 MSG)

Many times, whether we're aware of it or not, we pick ourselves out a workplace bestie. It's this person we go to when we're excited about an upcoming promotion or upset that the copier is down again. It's also the person we complain about co-workers to.

When you discover you're someone's workplace bestie because they're unloading their frustrations to you, there are some things you must do:

- Support them without taking sides
- Remind them of or share with them Maxims for Maximum Grace
- Be clear that if they don't exercise Maximums 8 and 10, that you will.

Why do we tell them that if they don't we will? Because once you know of a potential issue, it is absolutely *your* responsibility to help stop, heal and restore before it gets out of control. If you don't, you can *very definitely* consider yourself an accomplice to any fallout that happens because of it.

Be supportive. Be understanding. Then, encourage them to take helpful action for the benefit of everyone.

Maxim 13 - Gossip is a Virus

Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness.

(Exodus 23:11)

Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.

(Proverbs 10:19)

With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbors, but through knowledge the righteous escape. (Proverbs 11:9)

Important Definitions:

SLANDER – lies told with intent to harm

GOSSIP – private or discreet info meant to entertain hearers or information given by someone other than the person who should be giving it.

**Remember it IS NOT gossip or slander if it is true, shared with a loving intent, and kept to a need-to-know audience only. Share information ONLY after you've exhausted the one on one portion of Matthew 18:15 and need to move on to Matthew 18:16.*

If we're being diligent about exercising Maxims 8, 10 and 12 this one will hopefully never be needed. However, it cannot be stated enough that gossip is a virus that leads to diseased organizations.

What gossip does:

- Fosters distrust
- Creates discord
- Makes people feel self-conscious and vulnerable
- Makes all suspicious
- Thrills Satan

If you find yourself gossiping:

- Stop and repent
- Admit it to your direct report
- Apologize to whomever it may have affected.

If you hear gossip:

- Revisit Maxims 8, 9, 10, and 12

Maxim 14 - Keep an Open Hand/That's Nacho Church

When it comes to what we do in our churches and secular organizations, we must remember that this is *not* our church or organization and therefore, we must keep an open hand.

Scenarios where this can come into play include:

- One of your volunteers or employees wants to work in another department and you're bummed because you "raised them up"
- An area of ministry you've overseen has been handed off to another team member
- A system other than the one you implemented is now being adopted.

Ask yourself, "when it comes to God's stuff, even stuff that He's entrusted to me, am I keeping an open hand or grasping for control to the point that I lose circulation in my fingers?" "Do I understand that this is God's church? Or do I seek to gain control and have things my way no matter the cost?" "Am I part of the mission or do I have an agenda?"

These questions asked regularly will keep light on the motives of your heart and a healthy perspective of your perception and reality.

This is not our church but boy are we blessed to get to take part while God allows and enables. If ever the time should come that He calls us elsewhere for any reason, keeping an open hand and remembering that the church is His will:

- Make any and all transition so much sweeter
- Keep relationships intact. You never know how God will shape your future with your current or past coworkers.
- Keep your excitement for the future of all involved vibrant and expectant for the future of everyone involved.

In closing, I bid you "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, in the name of Christ and the power of the Spirit."

