

CLOSING DAY – 3 Ways to Live Out Your Faith in the Real World

Negotiations can be challenging. Especially when it is over something emotional like buying a new home. We found a house we really liked during our move to Atlanta, but it was overpriced. After a long back and forth with a stubborn seller and a rude real estate agent, we finally agreed on a price.

It seemed that we gave a lot more than we got during the negotiation process, and I wasn't willing to budge anymore. We went through the due diligence period and conducted an inspection. All went well until the day of closing.

Before closing, I walked through the house and noticed water damage and a big hole in the laundry room drywall. I was furious. Somehow the damage was missed in the inspection process, and the sellers didn't disclose it to us.

This was the last straw!

I called my agent and told her I was very frustrated with the seller and agent's unethical behavior. I demanded that the hole be fixed, or I'd delay closing. My agent conveyed the message to the seller.

Then, I went to closing.

Closing is always interesting...You have the sellers and their agent, you and your agent and the closing attorney around a big table. I've found that the meeting can be brief and transactional, or it can be contentious.

I had a decision to make. Would I be forceful and ensure my demands would be met, or would I try to connect with the folks in the room to help the process go smoothly?

Here's what I wrote in my journal to record the closing events:

Before the seller and their agent arrived, I told the closing attorney that I would withhold the equity check until we got the laundry room drywall issue resolved.

The sellers and their agent came into the conference room about 30 minutes later. Obviously, the seller's agent came loaded for bear. The first thing she said to me was, 'okay, what's this I hear about not signing papers until the drywall issue is resolved?'

It was the moment of decision. How would I handle this situation?

I write and talk to others about Christian leadership in our communities, workplaces, and schools. Honoring God in all that we do, being a witness, making a positive difference, treating people with dignity and respect. Would I walk the talk?

I decided to take the high road.

Walk the talk. Be who I say I am.

Connect with the people in the room.

Defuse the situation.

Immediately, I redirected the conversation, spent time complimenting the sellers on the beautiful home, and said that we loved the neighborhood.

The mood instantly lifted, and we began getting to know one another.

I discovered that they go to Johnson Ferry Baptist Church (where we attended) and their kids went to Walton High School. She worked at Publix. He went to a small college in Mississippi.

After this, I asked, "so, tell me a little bit about the laundry room."

They profusely apologized for the water damage and non-disclosure (not sure how they missed this as they had the room re-tiled a couple of months ago). They said it should cost \$100 to repair.

I said, ok. No contingency is needed.

I told them that I trusted that they would take care of it. Then the seller's agent sat back with a sense of relief and uttered in disbelief, "thank you."

This is an excellent example of being a Christian and treating people well. The Lord allowed me to defuse the situation quickly. This was not manipulation but understanding and connecting with people. This was a hard negotiation but no need to hold a grudge at the end of the game. As the seller put it, "it's a win-win for everyone."

Three Ways to Live Out Your Faith in the Real World

1. **Walk the Talk.** Be integrous. Let your actions demonstrate your faith. Be who you say you are. Live out your Christian beliefs. The Bible says, "The integrity of the honest keeps them on track; the deviousness of crooks brings them to ruin" (Proverbs 11:3 – The Message). In a flash moment, I decided to walk the talk, to live what I believed, and it kept me on track.
2. **Defuse Contentious Situations.** Dale Carnegie taught me that the best way to win an argument is to avoid it. To prevent molehills from becoming mountains and win people to your way of thinking, begin in a friendly way. I recommend connecting with people through compliments or humor. It's amazing how quickly the ice breaks and tension eases. The Bible says, "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones"

(Proverbs 16:24 – New American Standard Bible 95). When you defuse contentious situations, it will clear the path to alignment or agreement.

3. **The “How” Matters More Than The “What.”** How you achieve a goal is often more important than what you do to get there. How you treat people matters. Deal with others well, and you will be dealt with well. Care about others. Take a genuine interest in them, and they will reciprocate. The Bible says, “Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all taught in the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12 – New Living Translation). I always remind people that we will be remembered not for what we did but for how we treated others.

If you walk the talk, defuse contentious situations, and know that the “how” matters more than the “what,” you will become a leader others will want to follow.

Do you want to level up your leadership skills? Visit my website, prestonpoore.com, today!

Cheers,

Preston