



UNDER PRESSURE



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Under Pressure

Course Overview



Course Summary

"The important thing is that you've got a strong foundation before you start to try to save the world or help other people." - Richard Branson

These studies seek to lay a firm foundation for sharing Jesus with our work colleagues and friends. They explore the why and the how of workplace evangelism, especially considering how being a part of an Evangelistic Prayer Team will aid us in reaching the world through the workplace with the good news of Jesus.



Course and Lesson Structure

Lessons

1: Faultless

2: Faithful

3: Fearless

Each of these 3 lessons has an introduction, a big picture, a bible passage, key truths, application and a time to pray. We hope you enjoy A Firm Foundation.





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Lesson 1: Faultless



Lesson Introduction

Whether it's "Wear it purple" day, rainbow lanyards, or other measures in the name of diversity – there is increasing pressure on Christians to assent to secular values in the workplace.

Where have you faced pressure to speak or act against your conscience?



Big Picture

When it comes to facing pressure to act or speak contrary to your Christian conscience in the workplace, it pays to have a faultless reputation.



Theme

No Character in the Bible understands our predicament more than Daniel who was one of the top administrators under the pagan king, Darius. Daniel was so exceptional, Darius planned to make him the prime minister of Persia. The others in the public service, in their jealousy, sought to find dirt – but finding no corruption due to his faithfulness, so targeted his religion.

They set up a rule to ban praying to anyone but the king, and then sprung Daniel praying in his room, and dobed him into the king.



Bible Passage

While you read – What is Darius' demeanour towards Daniel? Why?

Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day."¹⁴ When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

¹⁵*Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, "Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed."*

¹⁶*So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed.¹⁸ Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.*

¹⁹*At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den.²⁰ When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"*

²¹*Daniel answered, "May the king live forever!²² My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."*

Daniel 6:13-22



Key Truths

1. Darius knows Daniel disobeyed him, but far from being angry, he's greatly distressed. He tries everything to release him, but in the end he can only hope that Daniel's God will deliver him.
2. Darius is distraught because he knew Daniel was faithful and blameless and has been caught in a legal loophole.
3. In the end, it didn't matter if Darius threw Daniel to the lions with guilt and anguish, or glee and anger – God decided if Daniel was to suffer at Darius' hand or not.



Key Truths (cont.)

3. Likewise, it doesn't matter if your boss, or if HR, like you or not – only God's opinion of you matters. Nothing can separate us from the love of God expressed in Christ. If God is for you, who can stand against you?

4. While we are sinners saved by grace and will never be perfect, we can still strive for a faultless reputation in the workplace.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

What do we do when our workplace culture is at odds with our Christian beliefs?

There are 3 options: We can either run away, pretend we're on board, or give an answer that lessens our colleagues' opinion of us.

Whatever our choice, if people are going to despise us, let it be despite what they see in the rest of our life.

Wear it purple day is 27 August. What relational capital can you build before then?



Prayer

Pray for open eyes to see where you can be loving our colleagues and building relational capital.

Pray that we would trust in our forgiveness in Jesus and seek to see our blamelessness before God as more important than what others think of us.

Pray for that next step for our colleagues also finding forgiveness in Jesus.

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Lesson 2: Faithful



Lesson Introduction

Think of the last time you've been put on the spot. The adrenaline, the fear, the panic. How did you respond?



Big Picture

You don't suddenly become faithful overnight. The way we respond to a moment of crisis is a reflex of our everyday faithfulness.



Bible Passage

While you read – Despite the harsh decree from Darius, why does Daniel pray?

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Daniel 6:10



Key Truths

1. Daniel's response to the unfair, targeted edict could have been to run and hide, or outwardly comply but inwardly remain faithful, or defy the edict. Daniel does what "he had done before." He prays three times a day, giving thanks to God.
2. Daniel responds in faithfulness because it was what he had always done. There was "no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy" (Daniel 6:4) It is much easier to respond in faithfulness if you have been exercising faithfulness consistently.
3. We can often think of prayer as a last resort. But for Daniel, it's his first! We can quickly forget that we have access to the king of the universe – always! When a moment of crisis hits, the faithful get praying.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Too busy! We often tell ourselves we're too busy getting things done to pray. We respond to the (relatively light) pressures of deadlines and responsibilities by getting busier. How do you think we will respond to a moment of crisis?

We need to build a habit of faithfulness. By God's grace, he doesn't leave us to do that on our own. We have the gift of other Christians to help each other, build each other up. This EPT is a place to build spiritual resilience to moments of crisis, and to build a kingdom focus so when the moment of crisis comes we can respond with God's kingdom in mind. We make time for that which we decide is important. Will you be too busy for prayer this year?

How would you respond to a moment of crisis that would make you proud?



Prayer

Pray for faithfulness to God at all times

Pray for the determination to prioritise prayer this year.

Pray for that next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

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Lesson 3: Fearless



Lesson Introduction

“Can I just speak with you for a minute?”

On the lips of a manager, or an HR rep, potentially the most terrifying words you could hear in the workplace.

Are there people or circumstances that you fear in your workplace?



Big Picture

Being fearless in the workplace is not about having no fear – but having our fear in the right place



Bible Passage

While you read – What does it mean to fear God?

At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den.²⁰ When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?”

²¹ Daniel answered, “May the king live forever! ²² My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.”

²³ The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.



Bible Passage (cont.)

[...]

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth:

"May you prosper greatly! ²⁶ "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

"For he is the living God

and he endures forever;

his kingdom will not be destroyed,

his dominion will never end.

²⁷ *He rescues and he saves;*

he performs signs and wonders

in the heavens and on the earth.

He has rescued Daniel

from the power of the lions."

Daniel 6:19-23, 25-27



Key Truths

1. The might of Darius was the mouths of a den of lions, but he rightly recognises the might of the living God who saved Daniel.
2. Daniel is bold to declare his innocence to King Darius, and indeed to keep praying to God in the first place.
3. Darius is captured by Daniel's faithfulness, faultlessness, and fearlessness – as well as God's faithful rescuing of Daniel from his hand. He calls upon all people in the world, in every language, to also fear Daniel's God.
4. Darius becomes the world's most unlikely evangelist for the God of Daniel!

Thoughts? Questions?



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Application

Our jobs, like all good things, come from the hand of our loving heavenly Father. And yet, we can drift into thinking our success or failure rests on the knife-edge of our performance, or our superior’s opinion of us. If that’s the case, we will forever live in fear that it could disappear in a moment. Or else we’re tempted to compromise our beliefs to fit in or at least avoid being thrown to the cultural lions.

But a right view of God helps us see that God is in control and our would-be enemies are people made in his image like us; they are our equals before God. Daniel wasn’t scared of God, but he esteemed God’s opinions more than Darius’.

How might getting a right view of God help us in our workplaces?

Who are the people in your life you need to fear less than God?



Prayer

Did you notice that Daniel’s fearlessness led to Darius declaring that all should likewise fear his God?

Pray that your colleagues would likewise see the wisdom in fearing our God. Pray for boldness in following God before others – no matter what may happen.

Pray for that next step for your colleagues meeting Jesus.

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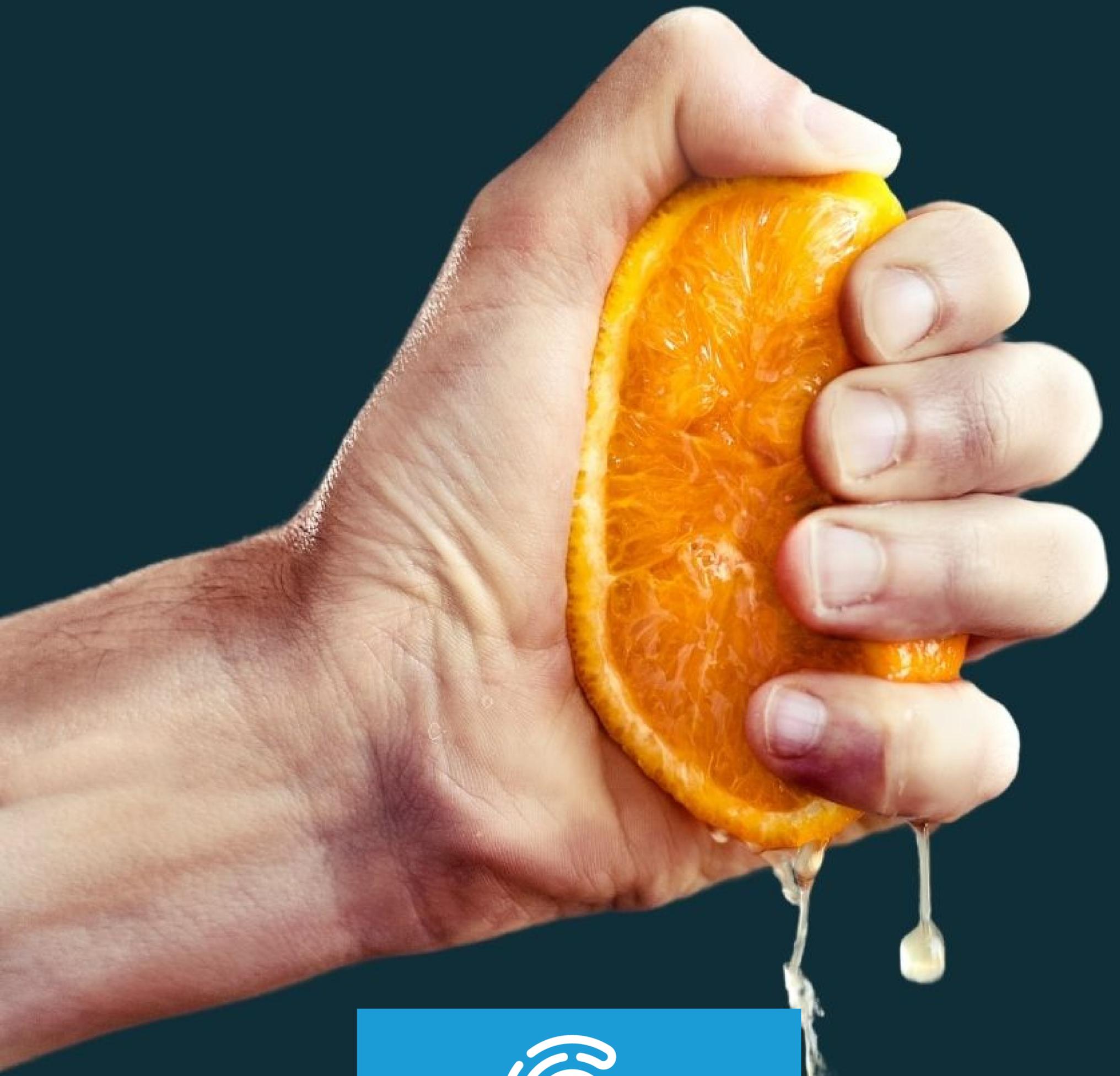
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