

EVANGELISTIC PRAYER TEAMS

QUARTER 1
2024



EPTs gather Christian workers across Australia to encourage one another in our CONVICTION, CHARACTER, COMPETENCE, and COURAGE so we all can share Jesus with our colleagues and to pray for each other that God may work in their lives to see Jesus known.

Vision: To reach the world through workers with the good news about Jesus.

Aim: 1000 people across Australia meeting Jesus in the pages of the Bible



TAKE THE NEXT RELATIONAL STEP

COFFEE S

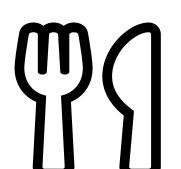
Shared a personal conversation

Knows I'm Christian

Spent social time together

DINNER

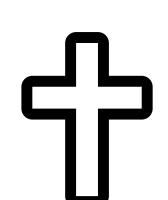
I understand their worldview



I've shared the Bible worldview

GOSPEL

Made a clear presentation of gospel



Become Christian

Reading Bible

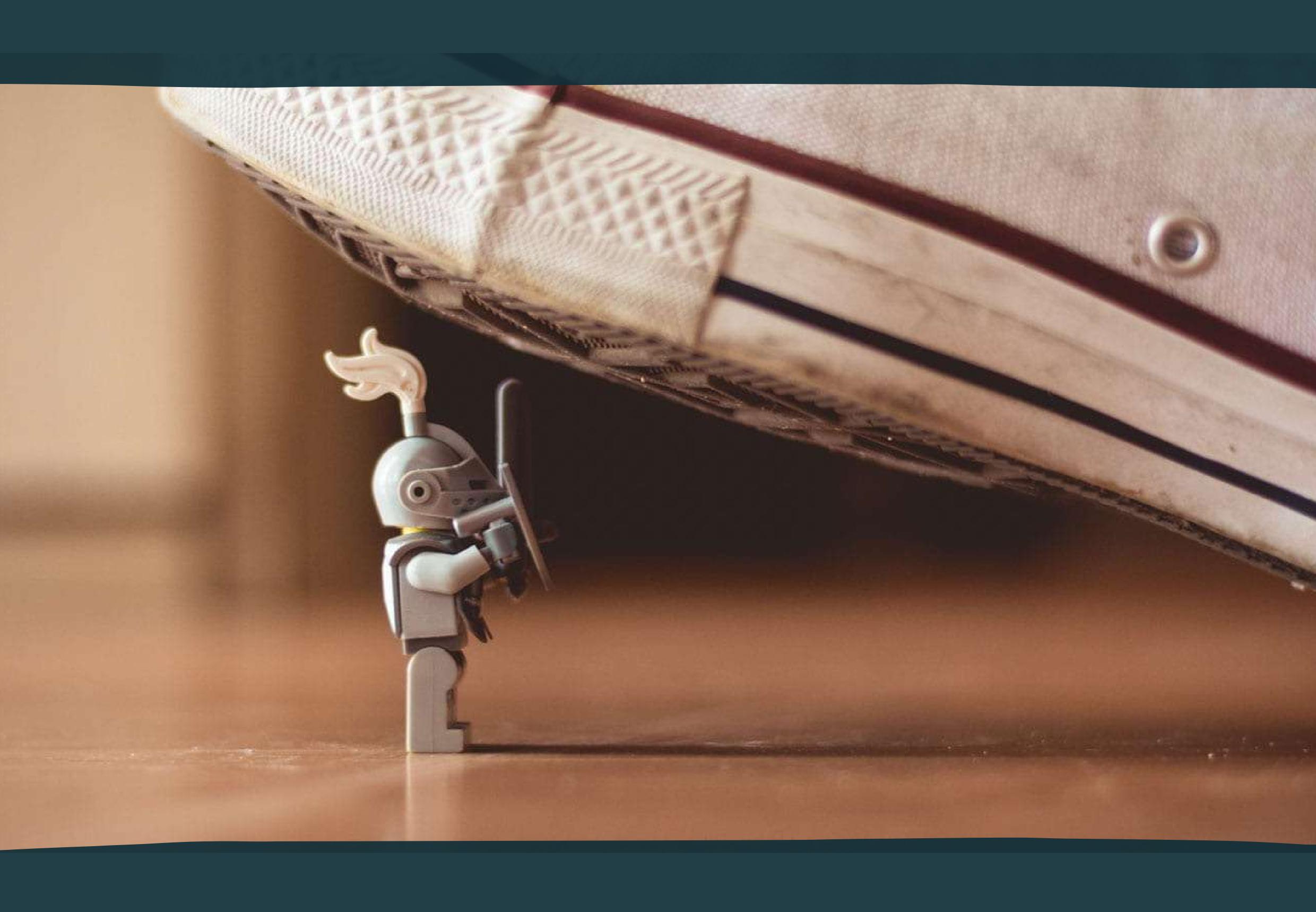
Joined a good church



OVERVIEW

PRAYER IN THE FACE OF PRESSURE

GOD AT WORK



PRAYER IN THE FACE OF PRESSURE









Course Summary

Pressure - we all face hard times at work. Christians face increasing pressure to keep quiet about Jesus. How can we respond?

The apostles found themselves forbidden from talking about Jesus and they responded with prayer and a renewed zeal for speaking about Jesus.





Imagine HR introduce a new policy: religious talk of any kind is no longer permitted. How should we respond when facing pressure to be quiet about Jesus?



Big Picture

In the face of pressure to be quiet about Jesus, it's time to pray that God would enable us to speak even more boldly.



Bible Passage

The Sanhedrin ordered the disciples to stop speaking about Jesus.

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

"'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.



Bible Passage (cont)

They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

Acts 4:24-30



Key Truths

- 1. Peter and John are ordered to stop speaking the name of Jesus. In response the believers in Jerusalem determine to obey God and not humans.
- 2. The same hatred that led Gentiles and the people of Israel to kill Jesus, is the same hatred directed towards Jesus' people, which is why they are forced to stop talking.
- 3. "They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen." Nothing takes God by surprise! God is in control, even when Jesus died. Likewise, God is in control when believers face persecution. So even then we can pray.
- 4. The believers' response to people attempting to shut them up was to pray for boldness in order to speak of Jesus even more! (But remember Peter's instruction in 1 Peter 3:15 we should do so with gentleness and respect).

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

How do we respond to pressure to be silent about Jesus?

What is the difference between keeping quiet about Jesus in fear, and being wise about when to speak boldly about Jesus?

Coffee - Dinner - Gospel is an approach to sharing Jesus with work colleagues which means seeking opportunities to share Jesus with work colleagues through hospitality - spending social time with people to go deeper in relationship.



Pray for when you face pressure to be silent about Jesus that we would instead speak all the more boldly about him.

Ask God to work his miraculous power to bring people to faith in Jesus.

What is the next step with your colleagues?

Remember

COFFEE

DINNER



GOSPEL







GODAT WORK









Course Summary

These studies help Christians think about why and how God is with us in our work - and in us - to see his kingdom grow.



Course Structure

- 1: MAKING PROGRESS IN 2024
- 2: LOVE AT WORK
- 3: WORK AS SERVICE AND WORSHIP
- 4: WORK AND IDENTITY
- 5: A PUBLIC FAITH
- 6: BUILDING REAL RELATIONSHIPS
- 7: PRAYING FOR WORK
- 8: SHARING JESUS WITH A SUPERIOR
- 9: MISSING OUT IN LIFE?





We all get stuck some times. What is a barrier that you have had to overcome in your life?



Big Picture

When it comes to making progress in sharing Jesus, we can get stuck at a number of barriers. What bariers will you seek to overcome this year?



Bible Passage

"Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

1 Peter 3:14-16

CONVICTION



On our journey in sharing Jesus with unbelievers, we can get stuck on the following barriers:

1. Who has the time?

When it comes to our time, or our lack of time, experts tell us it's not really a time issue - but a matter of priorities. We always make time for what we think is important. If you're not convinced in your bones that Jesus is lord and has called each one of us to make disciples (Matthew 28:19), then you'll never start sharing about Jesus. If you recognise that you have hardened your heart to this particular command of Jesus - the start of the year is a good time to repent and start afresh!

2. Fear

Many Christians feel the current climate of hostility towards the church means the best course of action is to stay quiet in public - lest their head be bitten off (or worse). As long as we fear others more than we regard Christ as lord, we will stay quiet. But if we revere Christ as the true lord of all in our hearts, we will be determined to overcome any obstacle so others will also come to know Christ as their lord too.

3. Spiritual Conversations

Once we're convinced that we should be sharing Jesus, often Christians feel that unless they can deliver a compelling Billy Graham (or insert your favourite evangelist) talk, they have nothing to say. But every Christian has a story to tell. This is the Coffee stage of relational evangelism.

4. Hospitality

Once Christians discover that unbelievers are not that scary, and going deeper spiritually can bring joy, they catch the bug and soon are having spiritual conversations with anyone (if not everyone!). The gospel of Jesus is for everyone! However, going deeper with people often means choosing a small number of people to focus upon- to pray for them and to show hospitality towards. This is the Dinner stage of relational evangelism. Who are the 2 or 3 people who you could focus upon in 2024?

5. Meeting Jesus

Spending time with unbelievers can be fun, but once the bridge has been built, Christians can struggle to cross it. We become fearful of endangering the relationship, unsure if it is strong enough to withstand inviting someone to consider Jesus - or too close so as to be devastating if they say no. The experience of many has been that people are far more willing to say yes than we are to ask, and few are offended to be asked to read part of a Gospel with you. Is there 1 or 2 people you could invite to read a Gospel with you this year?

1. MAKING PROGRESS IN 2024



6. Joining God's people

When we meet people through work, helping them join a church can be complex. They may not live near your church, Sundays may be full up, they may not see a need for meeting with other Christians (aren't you enough?). The gospel of Jesus calls upon each of us to respond – and eventually each of us needs to – and that includes becoming one of is people. Some people will avoid the personal implications of Jesus' call on their lives forever – our job is to call on all to respond to Jesus – and inviting them to come to church is an important part of that response. Is there someone you need to challenge with the call of Jesus on their life?

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

We all get stuck sometimes, and knowing the barrier currently holding you back can help us move forward. As you were reading through the key truths, did any barrier resonate with you in particular?

Challenge and Support Groups (citybibleforum.org/challenge) are a new initiative of City Bible Forum to deepen our evangelistic impact. It is a 5 week programme where teams of people gather to encourage one another in achieving individually set goals. Perhaps 2024 will be a good year to challenge yourself in your evangelism - why not consider a Challenge and Support Group?

I. MAKING PROGRESS IN 2024



Pray for each other - that you will be able to make progress in sharing Jesus with colleagues and friends in 2024.

Pray for reconnecting with people with whom you have been sharing Jesus previously.

Remember

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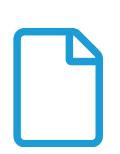
DINNER











What is our main goal as Christians when it comes to work?



Big Picture

Following Jesus pushes us out of ourselves and towards loving God and others.



Bible Passage

One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "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 22:35-40

CHARACTER

CONVICTION



Key Truths

- 1. Out of the 613 commandments in the Torah, Jesus is asked to name the greatest. He can't stop at one, but gives a top two Love God with everything, and love others as yourself. These two commands form the foundation for God's entire law!
- 2. These two commandments have one thing in common it is a love directed outward rather than inward that forms the basis of God's morality.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Have you ever thought about the people you work with - why has God put you together with them?

"The people you work with are people you were just thrown together with. It wasn't your choice. yet you spend more time with them than you do friends or family. But probably all you've got in common is that you walk on the same bit of carpet for eight hours a day."

Tim Canterbury, The Office

The people you work with can be great friends - or increasingly work can be a place of great loneliness. When we *decide* to view our work colleagues from a standpoint of love, and not purely for their usefulness to us in our work, it makes a difference. As we go deeper with our colleagues and learn more about them, it enables us to love them better.

How can you demonstrate love in your workplace this week?

In the end, the greatest way we can love our colleagues is to tell them about Jesus. Yet, often it can feel like a real obstacle to introduce Jesus into our work relationships. This should drive us to prayer.



Pray that we would show real love for God and for our colleagues this week at work.

Pray for the next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

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What's the point of work?

Making money?

Finding our purpose?



Big Picture

God's purposes for work are to serve others and to enable us to worship him with our whole selves.



Bible Passage

So God created mankind in his own image,

in the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 1:27-28

CONVICTION

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.



Bible Passage (cont)

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Genesis 2:1-3

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:1-2

"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



Key Truths

- 1. Our role under God as his image is to lovingly rule creation, bring order out of chaos, produce fruit and benefit for creation.
- 2. All of life is to be lived as an act of worship and God's greatest commandments are to love God and love others. Thus, work is about worshipping God, and loving and serving others.
- 3. Our rejection of God has led to frustration in our work sometimes our work is fruitless.

 Our ambition is to make a name for ourselves, or to seek security through our work rather than God. As a result our motivation to work is distorted.
- 4. The loving rule of humanity is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. He healed the sick, calmed the storm, overcame Satan, had compassion for others and ultimately sought God's glory through his work. (see Hebrews 2:5-9)

Thoughts? Questions?

WORK AS SERVICE AND WORSHIP



Application

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

Our work - like all of our lives - is supposed to be an act of worship and a source of glory for God. But our rejection of God and desire for our own glory ruins everything. Only in Jesus do we see this true worship finally realised. Now - in Jesus - we too can rightly worship through our work too.

What might it look like to worship God with your work today?

How does it change how you -

answer an email?

complete a spreadsheet?

attend a meeting?



Prayer

Pray you would seek God's glory in your work in everything you do.

Pray this would be evident to all.

Pray you would seek the good of others in your work.

Remember

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"Work becomes the defining activity of man: a human being who does not work is not merely poor – without income – but impoverished, in that he cannot realise his potential and his purpose on Earth...In the [traditional] worldview, work was considered to be a defect, a servile activity...In the modern world-view, it becomes an arena for self-realisation, a means not merely of educating oneself but also of fulfilment and improvement". Philosopher Luc Ferry

Why do you think work is so important to our identitiy these days? Do you think this is changing?



Bia Picture

God's work expresses his identity - and our work expresses our identity. But when we make work the source of our identity things get distorted.



Bible Passage

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:5-11



Key Truths

- 1. God's work in creation displays who he is; however God's work in salvation ultimately reveals him to us.
- 2. Our identity is changed because of Jesus. Our old self is gone, the new one has a brand new life. Our new identity in Christ is manifested through our work.
- 3. When work becomes a *source* of our identity, we run into trouble. Work is a very good thing God is the original worker! But work was never meant to be the basis of our identity.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Imagine the impact on our colleagues if they saw that we were free from worrying about building our identity through our work.

What would this look like in your work?

How might it change how we handle criticism?

How might it change how we can celebrate the success of others?



Prayer

Pray God would grant us to see our identity in Jesus.

Pray we can express our identity in Jesus through our work.

Pray we can see the good in others and celebrate their successes.

Pray for one colleague behind whom you can get behind this week.

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Think about your work colleagues. How would you describe each of your colleagues in a few words?

How do you think they would describe you?



Big Picture

Trusting in Jesus at work means we can be public about our faith with confidence even in a hostile situation.



Bible Passage

Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

Daniel 6:3-5

COMPETENCE

CHARACTER

CONVICTION



Key Truths

- 1. Daniel's colleagues testify to Daniel's faith and to his integrity. But they also know that Daniel is faithful to God first so they plot to exploit his faith for their gain.
- 2. Daniel is exceptional; however his distinguishing qualities are given by God.
- 3. Daniel lived in a pagan Babylonian regime incredibly hostile to his faith and yet he did not hide his faith. He doesn't keep quiet in the hope he'll be promoted to a position of influence before he can be open about being a follower of God. No, Daniel puts God first even if it threatens his safety.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Daniel is a public and zealous follower of God. His work is excellent, and his character above reproach. The only way his enemies know they can trap him is by using God's laws against him.

Imagine the only thing someone could mark you down on is your devotion to God!

Is your faith in Jesus as public as Daniel's?

Is honouring Jesus your first priority above everything else?

How might you start being a more public Christian?



Prayer

Pray your trust in Jesus would be common knowledge at work. (Pray that would be a positive experience)

Pray you would trust God in being public about being Christian.

Pray for the next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

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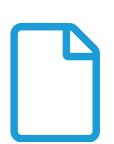


DINNER









The gospel of Jesus is for everyone and has impacts for how we treat everyone. But who and where should we focus our attention?



Big Picture

Great evangelism flows out of expression of love for our neighbour - it means investing in hospitality in order to deepen our relationships with our colleagues.



Bible Passage

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.



Bible Passage (cont)

The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'
"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10:29-37



Key Truths

- 1. Who is our neighbour? Jesus' story highlights the Samaritan man acted as a neighbour to the bashed man. A neighbour is the person God puts in our path even if we don't like them, or they are an enemy!
- 2. Our work colleagues, however we feel about them, are our neighbours. They are people God has brought across our path.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Most people don't turn up to work looking like they've been beaten up. Physically they may appear fine, but emotionally it's a different story. What's more, most people in our workplace are spiritually dead and in danger of God's wrath. Loving our neighbours will include caring for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Loving our colleagues means seeing them as people made in God's image, worthy of our love and concern.



Application (cont)

Our workplaces are places of high-performance, everyone seems to have it all together - but for most people this is a thin veneer of competence covering fears of being found out. But we can't love people effectively unless we know them well - and they trust us enough to be vulnerable. We need to be hospitable with our colleagues.

If we are to penetrate the corporate veil, we need to model openness and vulnerability, as well as invest time and resources into getting to know our colleagues. Loving our colleagues involves a sacrifice of time, inconvenience, patience, perseverance, and even money. We need to foster hospitality at work – coffee, lunch, after dinner drinks might be a good start.

With whom could you start spending social time to build deeper relationships?



Praver

Pray for the next step in developing deeper relationships with our colleagues.

Remember

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Prayer is not a support activity to mission. Prayer is itself a frontline missionary activity"

Tim Chester & Steve Timmis

What do you think?



Big Picture

God is the one who ultimately changes hearts and minds, so we need to ask him to give people new spiritual life. Prayer is central to sharing Jesus at work.



Bible Passage

He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Luke 10:2

As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.

Acts 4:29



Bible Passage (cont)

Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Ephesians 6:19-20

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:14

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.

1 Corinthians 3:6



Key Truths

- 1. Jesus commands us to pray specifically about evangelism. Paul also has a pattern of asking for prayer to accompany his missionary work.
- 2. We should pray for God to give us boldness and opportunities to speak.
- 3. God is the one who ultimately changes hearts and minds, so we need to ask him to give people new spiritual life.

Thoughts? Questions?

7. PRAYING FOR WORK



Application

What do you think keeps you from praying for your colleagues?

Having spent some time thinking about prayer, let's spend some time praying.

If you haven't already done so, can you identify 2-3 names of people you can pray for?



Prayer

Pray for the next relational step with our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

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GOSPEL





Sharing Jesus with people in authority over us can be tricky. What has been your experience?



Big Picture

When sharing Jesus with a superior, often our actions speak louder than our words - but in the end people respond to words.



Bible Passage

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

Titus 2:9-10



- 1. Paul wants slaves to put themselves under the authority of their masters, be courteous and demonstrate they can be fully trusted.
- 2. The result of slaves behaving well with their masters is to make the teaching about God our saviour more attractive.
- 3. Living God's way makes the teaching about God more attractive but the teaching is essential.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

The master-slave relationship is not the same as employer-employee or manager-team member relationship. But we can learn from this passage. When sharing Jesus with a superior, our actions are important - and may make up the majority of our interaction. But in the end the teaching about Jesus (the content of the gospel) needs to be shared. Not necessarily by us - but the message of Jesus is what saves - not our actions.

What have you seen work well in sharing Jesus with a superior?

Sharing that we are Christian is often easier the earlier we do it. How could you introduce yourself in a new team or to a new person so that they learn that you are a Christian?



Prayer

Pray for opportunities to be clear about being a Christian with a superior.

Pray that your actions would demonstrate your faith.

Remember





DINNER









When you compare your life with your unbelieving colleagues, do you sometimes feel like you're missing out because you are a Christian?

Do you ever wonder if your life might be easier or better without Christ?



Big Picture

In Jesus we've got more than we could possibly imagine or understand. We have every spiritual blessing that exists.



Bible Passage

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Ephesians 1:3-6



Key Truths

- 1. In Jesus, we have every spiritual blessing there is.
- 2. Our blessings in Christ include:
 - a. though we were sinful and wicked people, we are now considered holy and blameless before our Holy God, because of Jesus.
 - b. we are adopted into God's very family we can call God, "Father", and Jesus, "brother".
- 3. Our blessings in Jesus should create incredible thankfulness to God in our hearts and fuel our prayers.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Our times of prayer can be dominated by asking for things. How much does thankfulness to God for what he has done in Jesus shape our prayer lives?

What spiritual blessings can you name?

What can you be thankful for this week?



Prayer

Pray for thankfulness for our many blessings through Jesus.

Pray for the next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

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