



GETTING AHEAD IN THE CITY



**CITY BIBLE
FORUM+**



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WHAT'S INSIDE

Working as a Christian is not straight forward. We often have competing priorities, values, and cultures buffeting us as we navigate our careers. Here are four studies from Philippians that explore the apostle Paul's life goals and instruction about how to live as a Christian.

STUDIES

Life goals

Risky business

Not sinning and a whole lot more

Getting ahead in the city

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HOW TO USE THESE STUDIES



These studies are short modules to help workers think more deeply about different areas of your workplace witness. They are designed to be used in Evangelistic Prayer Teams (EPTs), but can also be used in any small group setting.

If you aim for nothing, you will surely hit it!

What are the life goals of your work colleagues?

What are your life goals?

**BIG
IDEA**

The apostle Paul's hope and goal in life is *to live is Christ and to die is gain*. That is, Jesus is the definition and purpose of life.

From the Bible

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰ *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.* ²¹ *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.* ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith,

Philippians 1:18-25

What is Paul's greatest desire?

Key Truths

1. Paul has no fear of being in gaol. Paul looks forward to bringing glory to Jesus, even if it means Paul's death. To live is Christ, to die is gain.
2. Paul's existence *is* Jesus. Jesus is the definition and purpose of his life – his life goal.
3. Paul's goal is in everything, even his death, is to exalt Jesus – he lives out the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 – 'Seek first the kingdom of God.' Elevating Jesus' reputation – declaring his greatness - is priority 1, 2 & 3.
4. If Paul were to die, it would be gain, not loss – for he would be with Jesus.

Application

If all our life was about declaring how great Jesus is, what might be different?

How would work be different if our life goal was to exalt Jesus in everything?

Prayer

Pray that exalting Jesus would be our top priority.

Pray for each other that you would in no way bring shame to Jesus while you work.

Pray for that next step for our colleagues seeing the greatness of Jesus.

What is your biggest fear?

What is the worst thing that could happen to you for being a Christian?

**BIG
IDEA**

Paul has risked everything because the most important thing for him is that Christ is preached, and so he rejoices in chains.

From the Bible

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. ¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ *But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.*

Philippians 1:12-18

How does Paul's attitude demonstrate his priorities?

Key Truths

1. Paul is in chains in gaol for preaching about Jesus. Imagine that! Chains around your wrists or ankles. Paul has taken a risk.
2. And yet Paul rejoices! Is he crazy? Is he nuts?
3. Paul rejoices because Christ is the most important thing in the world. And preaching Christ is therefore the most important thing and so he rejoices in his chains.
4. Paul is prepared to risk everything. Being a Christian is risky business.

Application

How important is it to you that others hear about Jesus?

How much are you willing to risk for others to hear about Jesus?
(Your income? Your job? Your reputation?)

What risks are you taking (or could take)?

Prayer

Pray for God to give you a heart to risk things for him and a confidence in him that he is in control when we suffer consequences for speaking about Jesus.

Pray that we would rejoice to suffer hardship because we have shared about Jesus.

Pray you would take the relational risk of taking the next step towards inviting a colleague to meet Jesus in the pages of the Bible.

NOT SINNING AND A WHOLE LOT MORE

3

What are the top 3 things you would tell a new believer about living the Christian life?

BIG IDEA

The Christian life is about contending together for the gospel of Jesus; it is suffering for Jesus – and not sinning while we suffer.

From the Bible

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved-- and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Philippians 1:27-30

What does suffering without fear show to those who oppose us?

Key Truths:

1. God grants to the Philippians to believe in Jesus, and to suffer for him. This means suffering isn't outside of God's control.
2. Suffering is an intrinsic part of being a Christian. Remember the words of Jesus, "No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15:20)
3. We tend to have this default view that being a Christian is about being nice and not sinning, but it's bigger than that – we need to be prepared to suffer and contend for the gospel together – and not sin while we suffer.

Application

Why do so few Christians in Australia suffer for belonging to Jesus in our culture?

What actions in your workplace do you think would bring glory to Jesus, but might also result in suffering?

What does it mean for you that God is in control even through suffering?

Prayer

Pray that we would have the courage to embrace suffering if it brings glory to Jesus.

Pray that you would be aware when you make decisions in order to avoid suffering.

Pray that you would have courage to risk suffering in order to go the next step with your colleagues for them to know Jesus.

**What is the best advice you've heard for getting ahead in the workplace?
How do your colleagues try to get ahead in the workplace?**

**BIG
IDEA**

The core of true leadership in God's world is service, and so the way to get ahead in God's world is to serve people; to put their needs ahead of our own.

From the Bible

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. **Philippians 2:1-5**

What does it mean to consider others better than yourself?

Key Truths:

1. The 4 "if any" qualifiers are essentially describing our relationship, but are designed to draw us into a deeper connection to the implication of having such an incredible bond in Jesus...
2. If you have benefited from being in Christ, then consider others needs over your own in humility – this is what Jesus has done for us.
3. We all by nature consider our own interests first, but Paul wants us to overcome our broken nature and put others ahead of ourselves. We need to get ahead by getting behind others.

Application

Usually in the workplace people will help each other out as long as it benefits them or the particular project they're working on. Rarely will people take a genuine interest in the lives of others. Have you experienced someone who has?

How were they perceived?

How could you benefit those with whom you work for their good?

Are there areas in your life where you need to put the interests of others before your own?

Prayer

Pray God would grant you the humility to put the needs of others before your own.

Pray God would grant you the wisdom not to fear exploitation as you get behind others.

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