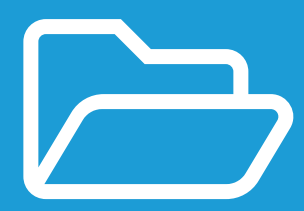




A FIRM FOUNDATION

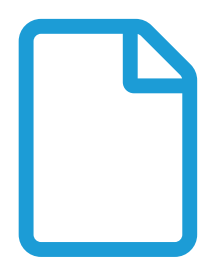


CITY BIBLE
FORUM+



A Firm Foundation

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: God's Vision, Our City

2: Prayer - The Best Thing we can Do?

3: God and Our Stuff

4: Right Place, Right Time

5: Better Together

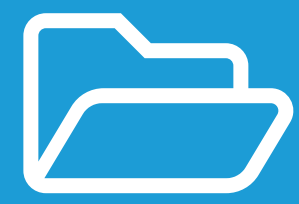
6: Why we Don't

7: Conquer Fear, Find Yearning, Ignite Passion

Each of these 7 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.

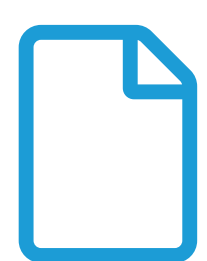


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Lesson 1: God's Vision, Our City



Lesson Introduction

Coke's vision is "refresh the world", Disney's "make people happy".
What's your company's vision?
Vision is a vital aspect of any endeavour. A clear vision helps us discriminate between the good and the essential.



Big Picture

God's vision is to bring every part of creation together under Jesus' rule.



Bible Passage

While you read – What is God's vision for all creation?

He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,¹⁰ to be put into effect¹⁰ when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Ephesians 1:9-10



Key Truths

1. Everything in all of creation, throughout all of history, has a single, stunning focus in God's mind – that everything, everywhere is under Jesus' rule.
2. God's plan from 'before the creation of the world' (v4) is revealed to us in Jesus.
3. The centre of God's vision is Jesus' rule, there is nothing more important.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

There are so many things we can devote our lives to: improving the lives of others, building better systems, releasing capital for vital projects, loving and caring for family or the unloved. And these are all good things. But vision is about discriminating between good and essential. In God's plan, there's only one focus – Jesus is Lord of all.

Our lives need to align with God's vision. What is God's vision for our city?

If Jesus is to be the Lord in your workplace, those who aren't followers of Jesus need to follow him. They need to meet him and submit to his rule.

Who will you invite to meet Jesus this year?



Prayer

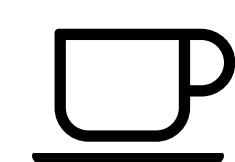
Who will you be praying for in your workplace this year?

Share together about the people you want to pray for this year.

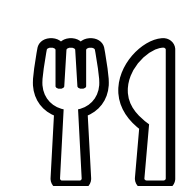
Pray for that next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

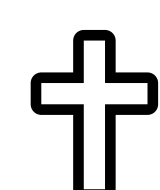
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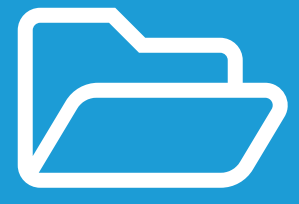
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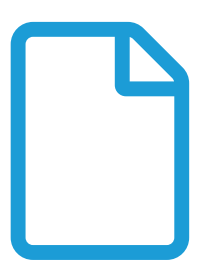
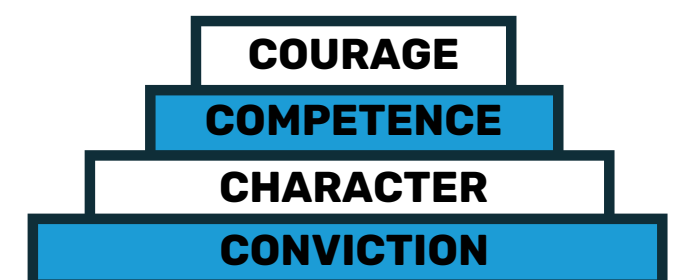


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Lesson 2: Prayer - The Best Thing we can do?



Lesson Introduction

In a hectic world, activism is the only answer – If you want to get anything done, you have to get in and get it done.

How does this resonate with you?

How does this impact our thinking about people coming to Jesus?



Big Picture

God calls us to share the good news of Jesus with those around us, but God is the great evangelist who calls people to himself. Therefore, prayer is the best thing we can do!



Bible Passage

While you read – How do people come to Jesus?

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."

⁴¹*At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."* ⁴²*They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"*

⁴³*"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered.* ⁴⁴*"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.* ⁴⁵*It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me.*

John 6:39-45



Key Truths

- 1.No one comes to Jesus unless God draws them. People come to Jesus as they hear from the Father and learn from him. (v44-45)
- 2.A close relationship with a Christian is a good start for sharing Jesus, but it doesn't guarantee someone will accept him as their Lord. The grumbling Jews knew Jesus and his family personally and they still didn't come to Jesus.
- 3.It is God who calls us, it is God who saves us, and it is God who saves our friends – not us.
- 4.No one is outside of God's ability to save, and everyone is someone we could potentially invite to meet Jesus in the pages of the Bible.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

We can sometimes fall into the thinking that as we share Jesus with our friends and colleagues, how they respond depends on us. When have you noticed yourself sliding into this kind of thinking?

What changes, if any, do you need to make to your prayer life?



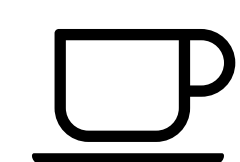
Prayer

Pray for a greater urgency to come to God in prayer for people.

Pray for that next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

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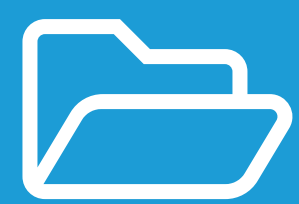
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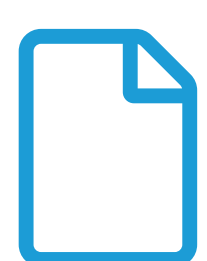


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Lesson 3: God and our Stuff



Lesson Introduction

Former Primer Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, once said, "I don't believe my wealth... is entirely a function of hard work. Of course, hard work is important but... there are taxi drivers that work harder than I ever have and they don't have much money."

To what extent can we take credit for our success?



Big Picture

God doesn't need anything from us but gives us all things. When we give to support God's mission, we're not doing God a favour, it's a chance for joyful worship!



Bible Passage

While you read – What does it look like to inherit eternal life?

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

Acts 17:24-25

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7



Key Truths

1. God made everything and gives to everyone impartially.
2. God isn't short of cash – he doesn't need our service, or our giving.
3. God gives life, breath, and everything. There's nothing we can give to God that he doesn't already own.
4. When we give to the growth of the kingdom, we're not doing God a favour. It's a chance to joyfully worship.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Can you give to the work of City Bible Forum?

City Bible Forum exists due to the generosity of God expressed through his people. More than 90% of our support comes from individual Christians giving regularly or at our appeals.

We know there are many great ministry opportunities to support, however we hope your involvement will lead to you also regularly financially supporting City Bible Forum as you see God working through your workplace.

How might you be able to support City Bible Forum this year?

(You can give at citybibleforum.org/donate. Tax deductible options are available, talk to a staff member plus.citybibleforum.org/about-us)



Prayer

Pray for the financial needs of City Bible Forum.

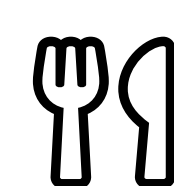
Pray for your taking the next relational step with your unbelieving colleagues.

Remember

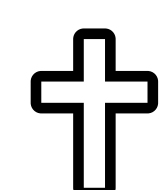
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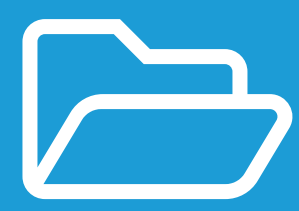
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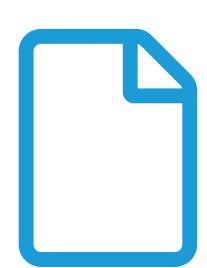
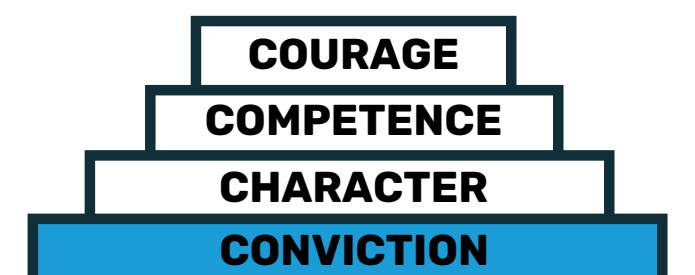


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Lesson 4: Right Place, Right Time



Lesson Introduction

“Life is what happens to you when you’re busy making other plans.” John Lennon. So often our attention is drawn to the next thing, our future; or else we dwell on the past. It can be difficult to notice what is happening right now.

How often do you pause to reflect on why you’re in the role you’re currently in?



Big Picture

God has put us in the exact time and place we’re in so that people might find him through us.



Bible Passage

While you read – Why has God put Christians in the place and time they are in?

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

Acts 17:24-28



Key Truths

1. God doesn't fit into our little temples, nor does he squeeze into our little plans. We fit within his grand schemes for all of history.
2. God has set out our exact times and places so that we might seek him, reach out and find him (though he's not far from any of us). This must also include when and where we work.
3. If God has set the places and times unbelievers work so they might find him, it follows that he has also set the times and places Christians work so that through us people might find him.
4. It is no accident that we are working with the people we are, it is part of God's plan to see unbelievers come to know Jesus.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Do you remember praying before you got your current role? Do you remember why you applied and agreed to take the role? Was sharing Jesus part of what you were thinking about?

As we've seen, it's clear that sharing Jesus was part of God's purpose. How does this change how you view your colleagues? When was the last time you considered the eternal destiny of those around you at work? How does it change your prayers?



Prayer

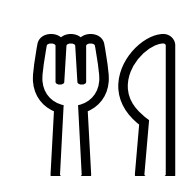
Pray for a fresh perspective of your colleagues, that you would see them as God does – people who need to reach out and find him through Jesus.

Remember

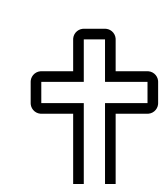
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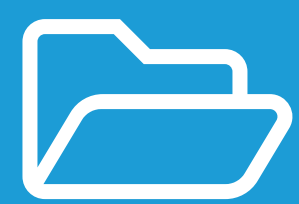
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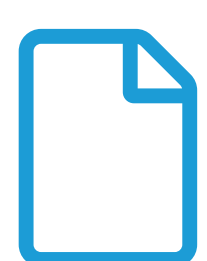


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Lesson 5: Better Together



Lesson Introduction

If you were going to build an international movement, how would you do it?
Recruit a world-famous rapper?
Find an exceptional evangelistic speaker to tour the globe?
Launch a viral advertising campaign?



Big Picture

As we seek to build God's kingdom, we need to understand that we work better together.



Bible Passage

While you read – why are we better together?

*Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labour:*

¹⁰ *If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.*

*But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.*

¹¹ *Also, if two lie down together, they
will keep warm.*

But how can one keep warm alone?

¹² *Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.*

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12



Key Truths

Have you noticed how God chooses to build his kingdom? God doesn't use exceptional people but small groups of ordinary people.

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

1 Corinthians 1:26

Consider this. Jesus gathered twelve unlikely and unknown people to kick off God's kingdom (even more amazing when you consider the infighting, gaffs, and betrayal recorded in the Gospels). When Jesus sent out the 72 followers he sent them out two by two (Luke 10:1). Finally, when Jesus commissioned his disciples before he ascended, he commands them all (plural) to make disciples. Jesus has a pattern of calling teams of people to his mission.

But what of that great evangelist, Paul? Surely he's an exceptional person? He is, but he never operates alone – he's always a part of a team. Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, Priscilla & Aquilla, Epaphras, Luke, Demas (Romans 16:3-21, 1 Thessalonians 3:2, Philemon 22-25, Colossians 4:7,10-17, 2 Corinthians 8:23).

God rescues individuals to be a people for his own possession, a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9) – we become part of a team. We need to understand – we're better together. Even from the start, in Genesis 2:18, God states, "It is not good for the man to be alone." We're better together, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." (Proverbs 27:17) and as the author of Ecclesiastes states in our passage above, "two are better than one" and, "a cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Many use this passage to speak about marriage, but it's actually talking about having a brother or son as a business partner. Being on our own is hard; we're better together.

Thoughts? Questions?



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Application

When it comes to sharing Jesus with our friends and colleagues, we were never meant to go it alone. Evangelism works better when we're a part of a team. We can sharpen one another, we help each other, support one another, encourage one another, and keep each other accountable.

Evangelistic Prayer Teams seek to help Christian workers to share Jesus with their friends and colleagues. They help us focus on evangelism, we depend on God in prayer, and they also get us working together towards seeing people meet Jesus in the pages of the Bible.

How could you work together as a team to help each other share Jesus with your friends and colleagues?

(Maybe spend some time brainstorming how you can support one another in sharing Jesus)



Prayer

Pray that God would form you into a solid team and that he would bear fruit through you.

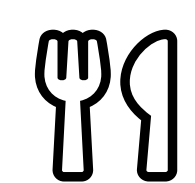
Pray for that next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

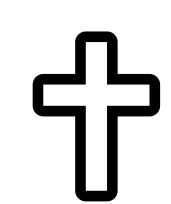
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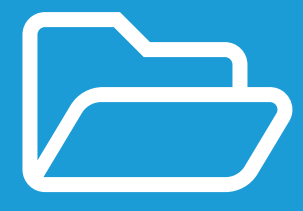
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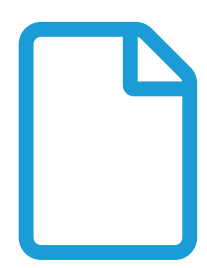


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Lesson 6: Why we Don't



Lesson Introduction

Think back to a moment where you had an opportunity to share Jesus with a colleague and you let it slip. What kept you from sharing in that moment?



Big Picture

Evangelism is the expression of love for God and love for others that Jesus calls every Christian to.



Bible Passage

While you read – What does it look like to be someone who is inheriting eternal life?

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

Luke 10:25-28



Key Truths

1. Above all else, Christians are called to love God with everything and love our neighbour as our self.
2. Jesus deserves our absolute devotion. He is the very God, who in love willingly gave his life for us. If we are captured by Jesus' glory, we can't help wanting the world to sing his praises – we will want everyone to join us in our devotion to Jesus.
3. Our love for others means we love them enough to want them to share in our certain future in Jesus, and avoid the terrible, fixed, and final reality of hell. Do we love our colleagues enough to speak up even when it is hard?

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

In a culture increasingly hostile to Jesus, if you're going to share Jesus with someone who doesn't know him, you're going to get 'hit'. It's more likely the 'hit' will be a negative comment or at worst a loss of relationship rather than a physical 'hit', but if we are to share Jesus there is a painline that needs to be crossed. We all want to stay on the comfortable side of the painline, because we're wired to avoid pain. It means something has gone wrong – so we stop, or we change what we say. But nothing has gone wrong, we're following the crucified one – the world hates Jesus (John 7:7, 15:18) and it will hate his followers. While we live in fear of getting 'hit' we'll never share Jesus.

Does this sound familiar?

So why would we ever risk getting hit? Because we might find hunger! God is calling the lost to himself – God is working to build his kingdom!

But even knowing this we can still shy away from sharing Jesus – because our hearts are disordered. An idol is anything we love more than Jesus and our hearts are idol factories. We are built to worship, but the tragedy is we worship anything other than Jesus. Often when we balk at crossing the painline in sharing Jesus, it's because we have replaced our love of Jesus with something else – wanting to be liked or to remain comfortable perhaps. We need to recognise when our hearts have gone astray and renew our love for God and our neighbour.



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Application (cont.)

Rico Tice says

'I've come to see that I can have all the understanding I need, I can have a great way of explaining the gospel, I can talk the talk with other Christians, I can read (or even write) books about Evangelism...but unless I have identified and am uprooting the idols of my heart, I still won't actually get across that painline and tell people about Jesus. And neither will you.'

Honest Evangelism

What do you think?



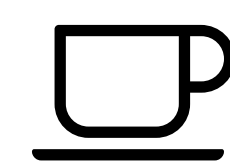
Prayer

Pray for boldness to resist the urge to shy away from sharing Jesus.

Pray for that next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

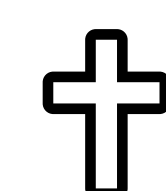
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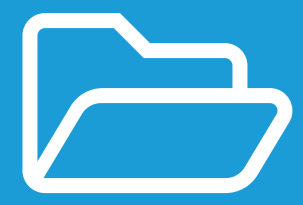
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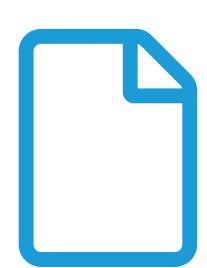


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Lesson 7: Conquer Fear, Find Yearning, Ignite Passion



Lesson Introduction

Christians love Jesus, they love people, they desire to see Jesus honoured by all, they love to hear of people becoming Christians. In other words, we love evangelism. Yet many Christians find evangelism too hard – why is that?

This is a study based upon material from Rico Tice's *Honest Evangelism*



Big Picture

Few people have actually read the Bible for themselves. Offering to read the Bible together allows the gospel to speak for itself with you there as a guide.



Bible Passage

While you read – What is the power of Paul's message?

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. ⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

1 Corinthians 2:2-5



Key Truths

1. Fear of crossing painlines

We live in a culture that is apathetic, and even increasingly hostile towards Jesus. No matter how charming, smart, or funny you are, it doesn't matter how right your answers are... you are going to be hit if you share Jesus. The hit might be a snide comment, relationships ending, it might be your reputation, your career, or even being hit.

*"We're wired to assume that if we're getting hit, something's gone wrong. And so whenever I tell someone the gospel message, and get hit (metaphorically speaking), there's a temptation either to stop saying anything, or to change what I'm saying. I know there is a **painline** that needs to be crossed if I tell someone the gospel; but I want to stay on the comfortable side of the painline. Of course I do!"*

Rico Tice, *Honest Evangelism*

To what extent does this resonate with you?

2. Following Jesus – the crucified one

Shockingly, Jesus prepared his disciples for this – things haven't gone wrong, it is just the new normal. Jesus said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves." (Matthew 10:16). Wolves bite sheep. Wolves devour sheep. The world hates us because it hates God. Jesus said, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." (John 15:18). This is why it is so hard to talk about Jesus – the crucified one.

'...I bet that if you have stopped trying [to share Jesus] it's because you've come to one of two conclusions. Either you don't think it's working, because you got hit; or you don't think it's worth it, because you got hit'

Rico Tice, *Honest Evangelism*

If we are going to start (or restart) sharing the great news of Jesus with our colleagues, we're going to have to be willing to cross the painline. Unless we're willing to cross that painline and risk getting hit, we won't share Jesus.

What do you think?



Key Truths (cont.)

3. Hit or Hunger?

While our culture is increasingly hostile, there is also growing spiritual hunger. The endless pursuits of materialism and hedonism are empty and dissatisfying – and people are starting to realise. God is calling the lost to himself, and he calls through his people as they declare the great news of Jesus and him crucified. This is what Paul did – he opened his mouth and spoke, and God worked by his Spirit. Paul crossed the painline and so a church was born.

'Until you cross the painline, you don't know what response you will meet with. Sometimes you will get hit, just as Paul did. Sometimes you find hunger, just as Paul did'

Rico Tice, *Honest Evangelism*

4. Why we share Jesus

So when we cross the painline to share Jesus, we will either get hit, or find hunger. So why would we take the risk? Rico Tice gives three reasons:

1. Jesus glory – Jesus deserves the world's adoration. He is the very God who died to free us from sin and rose again to rule over all. If we're not captured by the wonder of who Jesus is, sharing Jesus will not be a priority for us.
2. The new creation – Jesus has defeated death and will bring about the new heavens and earth. If we're not excited by our future in Jesus, we're not going to cross the painline.
3. The grim reality of hell – Our future is assured in Jesus, but our colleagues' future depends on how they respond to Jesus. Recall Jesus' warning to cut off a hand or a foot or pluck out an eye rather than be thrown into hell – Hell is real, fixed, and final.



Key Truths (cont.)

5. Why we don't

Often when we don't cross the painline it's a heart problem. When we love something more than we love God – that's an idol. When we don't share Jesus, it could be that we've substituted our love of God for an idol – our desire to be liked, our hope to avoid an awkward situation, keeping our job...

We need to rekindle our love for the Lord Jesus, to recognise how wide and long and deep is the love of Christ. There's no secret formula – we need to keep reading our Bible and praying so we can know Jesus better.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

What causes you to shy away from sharing Jesus?

What needs to change in your attitude towards sharing Jesus in your workplace?



Prayer

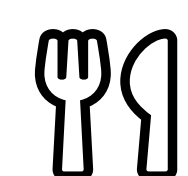
Pray for that next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

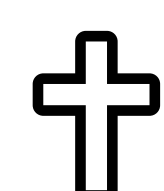
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