

EVANGELISTIC PRAYER TEAM

TERM 1
2022



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 the workplace 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

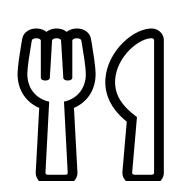
Shared a personal conversation

Knows I'm Christian

Spent social time together

DINNER

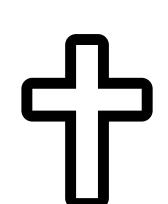
I understand their worldview



I've shared the Bible worldview

GOSPEL

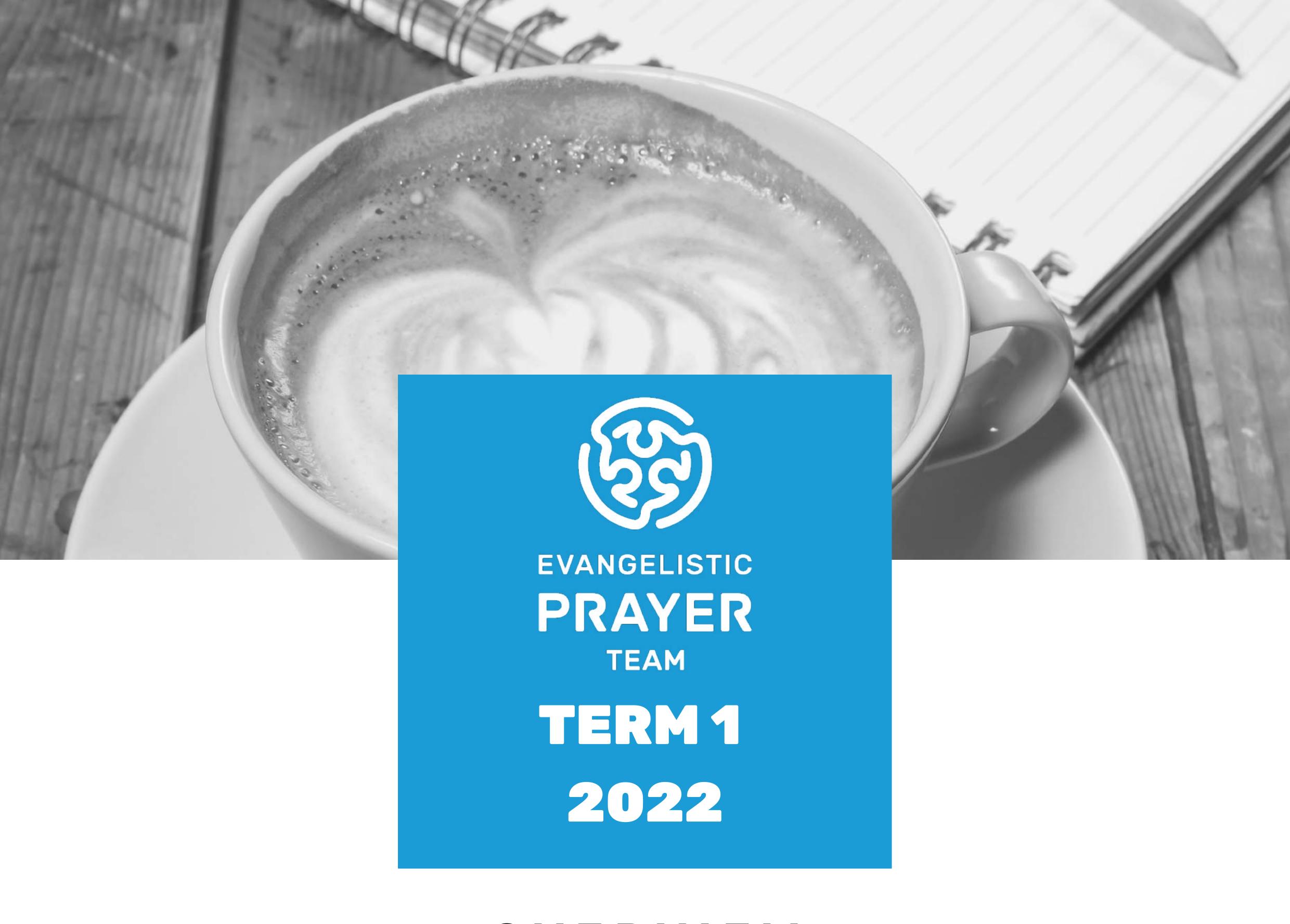
Made a clear presentation of gospel



Become Christian

Reading Bible

Joined a good church



OVERVIEW

PRAYING TOGETHER

HOW WE SHARE JESUS AT WORK

GOD'S VIEW OF WORK



PRAYING TOGETHER









Course Summary

This study looks at how Prayer is vital for our workplace evangelism.



Course Structure

1: GOD'S VISION

2: THE BEST THING WE CAN DO!

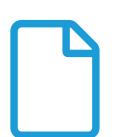
3: GOD IS WORKING

4: GOD CHANGES HEARTS



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



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 purpose for all of creation?

With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹he (God) made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Ephesians 1:8-10



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) to enact his vision is revealed to us in Jesus in the gospel.
- 3. The centre of God's vision is Jesus' rule, there's nothing more important.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

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

Our lives need to align with God's vision. So 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 are the people you know who don't know Jesus as their lord? Would you commit to pray for them this year?

You may like to write their names – and the names of others in your team – into an app like Prayermate so you can pray for them through the week.

Pray for each other's people.

Remember

COFFEE



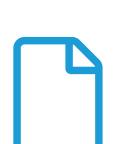
DINNER











Think through your team at work. How many are Christian? How far do they seem from the Lord? What would it take for them to come to trust in Jesus?

COMPETENCE

CHARACTER

CONVICTION

If you're like most Christians, you're probably wondering what you might need to do this year if you are to share Jesus with your team. But consider these words from Martin Luther:

"Work, work from early until late. In fact, I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."

How do Luther's words resonate with you?



Big Picture

While God calls us to share the good news of Jesus with those around us, only he is able to change hearts and draw people to himself. We must pray to God, the great evangelist.



Bible Passage

While you read - How can people come to God?

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.'[d] Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. ⁴⁶No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.

John 6:44-47

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- 1. Just as no one can see God unless they meet him in Jesus, so no one can come to Jesus unless God draws them. Our friends becoming Christians is not about us winning an argument, being a fantastic people-person, or having a really deep relationship with people. Evangelism is a spiritual activity.
- 2. If people can only come to the Father through Jesus, then sharing our faith needs to focus on people meeting Jesus. The best way to meet Jesus is by reading a Gospel that's why we seek to help our friends meet Jesus with us by reading through a Gospel with them.
- 3. If people only come to Jesus if the Father draws them to him, then we need to pray. We need to come before God and ask his mercy on our friends and colleagues.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

The name "Evangelistic Prayer Team" is no accident. Prayer is at the heart of the mission in our workplaces. As we pray for friends and colleagues, we are inviting God to work in their hearts, to draw them to him. We are offering ourselves as servants of his mission – to see his kingdom grow with those he has entrusted to us.

Think of the people in your team, or those with whom you have a relationship because of work. Spend some time writing down names of people for whom you could pray this year. Maybe enter them into an app like PrayerMate to remind you to pray for them.



Prayer

Share with each other 3-5 people you would like to pray for this year.

Spend some time praying for each one. Ask God to reveal what might be the next step for them to come to know Jesus.



Remember

COFFEE

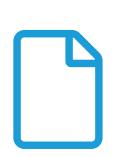


DINNER









Australia seems very resistant to the good news of Jesus. With pushes to remove the Lord's Prayer from the start of parliament, religious education and chaplains from schools, if Australia was a Christian nation, it certainly isn't any more. What is God's desire for Australia? Is it even worth praying anymore?



Big Picture

God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but longs for them to turn from their ways and live.



Bible Passage

While you read - What is God's desire for people?

If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin, they will die for it; because of the sin they have committed they will die. ²⁷But if a wicked person turns away from the wickedness they have committed and does what is just and right, they will save their life. [...] ³²For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.

Ezekiel 18:26-27, 32, 33:11

CHARACTER

CONVICTION



Key Truths

- 1. God's desire for people is for all to turn from their sin and live. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.
- 2. God's heart is for the good of all people praying for the salvation of our friends and colleagues is praying in line with God's heart.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Think of a colleague, a friend or a family member who seems completely hardened to God and the good news of Jesus. What is God's desire for them?

As we pray for our friends and colleagues we can be assured that we are praying in accordance with God's heart. How is this a comfort?

How sure can we be that God will hear our prayers?



Prayer

Who are 3-5 unbelievers that you see on a regular basis? (include those who you may think would never turn to Christ)

Boldly pray for the salvation of each person on your list.

Remember

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DINNER











"If God saved me then he can save anyone!"
What do you think of this statement?
Is there anyone too far from God, or too hard-hearted for God?



Big Picture

When God saves us he is bringing the dead back to life, if we weren't too hard for God, no one is!



Bible Passage

While you read - To what does Paul compare being saved in Christ?

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 2:1-6

COMPETENCE

CHARACTER

CONVICTION



Key Truths

- 1. Everyone stands dead in their sin before God if they do not trust in Jesus.
- 2. And yet God saved the Ephesians and God saved us, bringing us to life in Jesus Christ. We deserved God's anger and judgment and yet we receive love and mercy in Christ.
- 3. The power of God that brought Jesus to life, also brings us to life. It can also bring anyone else to life in Christ too. No one is too far gone if our starting place is the same dead in our sin.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

We can be quick to give up on someone who seems too far from God, but we are forgetting the power of God to save anyone. If we truly trust God has the power and desire to save, we will never stop praying and inviting our friends and colleagues.

Is there anyone you may have given up on as too hard? Who would you like to start (or



Prayer

restart) praying for?

If you have thought of a new person or two, add them to your list.

Pray that God would work to bring your friends, family, and colleagues from death to life.

Remember

COFFEE



DINNER









HOW WE SHARE JESUS AT WORK









Course Summary

This study is a condensed version of the City Bible Forum 'Sharing Jesus at Work' Course with Sam Chan. To explore further simply go to <u>citybibleforum.org/courses</u>.











There's a saying among Christian missionaries:

"Closed country, open hearts; open country, closed hearts."

Do you think this is true for Australia?



Big Picture

Our society is structured culturally against going deeper and asking the bigger questions, so we engage our friends and colleagues relationally – or – Coffee, Dinner, Gospel.



Key Truths

- 1. We're weird about religion. In Australian culture, we compartmentalise our lives. We talk about work/life balance; recognising that who we are and how we act in our private lives is not the same as at work. This speaks to a deeper reality the sacred/secular divide: which a trip to your local Thai restaurant will tell you is a uniquely western thing.
- 2. Sacred/Secular Divide. The sacred/secular divide says that some things are secular they are public/observable/factual, and there are sacred things which are private/subjective/complex. When the sacred is brought into the secular it can make people feel uncomfortable or even lead to fights so we avoid them, at least until we know people better.
- 3. **And so.** Religion is firmly in the private, sacred realm work is secular. So how do we talk about Jesus?



Key Truths (cont.)

4. **Coffee, Dinner, Gospel.** The deeper we go in relationship, the more willing we are to share about Jesus and our response to him – it's about trust:

Coffee – is public and safe, it only lasts a few minutes and usually is limited to public/secular topics – weather, sport, and news. However, the more we have "coffee" conversations the deeper we can go, and move into:

Dinner – is more private and there is more possibility to move into more private issues, values, worldviews, politics, religion, and opinions. This is the time to actively listen – asking open ended questions (Do you have a faith? Do you pray? What values do you want your kids to have? How did you come to believe that? Notice that these are still factual questions, what and how, not why yet). Active listening involves demonstrating that you have heard the thought, understood the concept, and accepted the associated feeling; I hear, I understand, I feel something of what you feel.

Gospel – once we have explored more private issues we can step into the gospel which impacts our most central part – our autonomy.

- 5. Sharing Jesus today often means going deeper in relationships. Our culture resists speaking about matters of the gospel of Jesus until we've built relational trust.
- 6. Sharing Jesus takes confidence... in God. In the end it is God who changes hearts and "reveals the deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him." (Daniel 2:22) God knows the private thoughts of our colleagues, even better than they do! We can trust God to draw people out and bring the hidden things to light.
- 7. Sharing Jesus means getting to know people better, but it's not about becoming BFFs. Sometimes we can hold back on sharing Jesus for longer than we should and then it becomes really weird. We are talking about getting to know someone to the point where asking them to have a coffee or to come over for a barbeque isn't weird at that point you're probably able to start inviting them to consider Jesus.

Thoughts? Questions?



Think about the people who don't know Jesus in your circle of friends and colleagues. Where do they stand in the Coffee, Dinner, Gospel scale relationally?

Pray for deepening relationships with colleagues in your team for the sake of the gospel.

Remember

COFFEE

DINNER

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GOD'S VIEW OF WORK









Course Summary

This study looks at the place of work in God's plans for creation and in our Christian lives.

Course Structure

1: THE WORK OF THE LORD

2: WORK - NOT JUST A FOUR LETTER WORD

3: THE TEETH-GRINDING FRUSTRATIONS OF WORK

4: THE SHEER JOY OF WORK

5: WORK - #BLESSED?



COMPETENCE

CHARACTER

CONVICTION



Introduction

"Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last." *C.T. Studd* What do you think of this quote?



Big Picture

In light of eternity, while what we do – and how we do it – in the workplace is important, only our labour in the Lord has eternal consequences.



Bible Passage

While you read - What is the labour in the Lord?

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:57-58



Key Truths

- 1. The victory over sin we have in Jesus changes how we live now; we are to prepare for how we shall be raised incorruptible with Christ.
- 2. In the light of our resurrection future, our labour in the Lord is principally about seeing the kingdom of God grow. When it comes to our workplace, more important than what we do is how we do it that is our character. However, principally our labour in the Lord is sharing the good news of Jesus so his kingdom might grow.
- 3. We are to excel in the work of the Lord; to help our colleagues meet Jesus.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

C.T. Studd was a man of great privilege and promise. He was a graduate of Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He played cricket for England – his name is on the Ashes urn. Studd turned away from cricket and all that could have been to be a missionary in China, India, and the Congo. Together with the above poem, he also said "Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell." For Studd, excelling in the work of the Lord meant leaving all to pursue overseas mission. For most of us, we will stay in our jobs, but see the priority of God's mission with the people God has put across our path.

There are many ways that the priority of the work of the Lord has implications for how we work. One example is lunchtime. It is prudent to save money by no longer buying take-away lunches or coffees. However, the priority of the work of the Lord might mean you budget for regular coffees and/or lunches so you can develop relationships with colleagues to share Jesus with them.

How might excelling in the work of the Lord change your priorities or how you work?



Pray that you would excel in the work of the Lord and see the mission field in which God has placed you.

Pray for opportunities to share Jesus with friends and colleagues this year.

Remember

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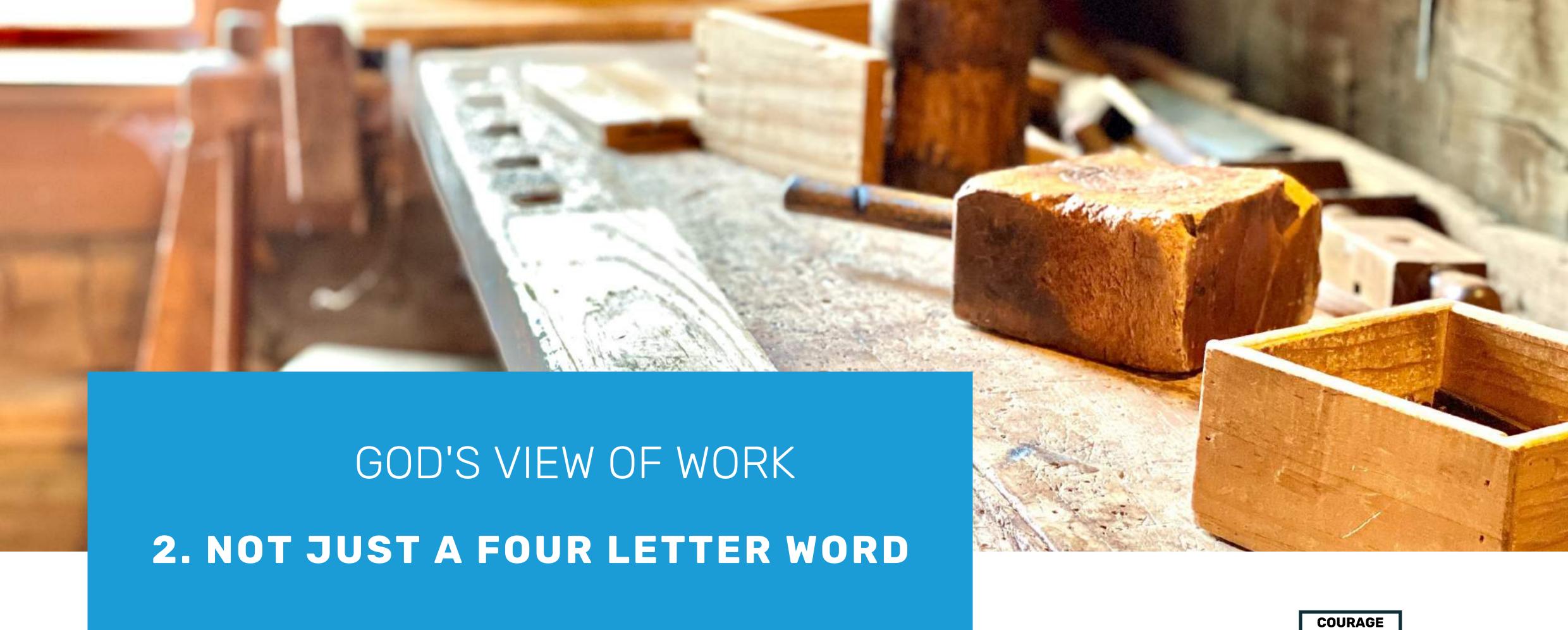


DINNER











What do you think Australians think about work? Is work important or are we just interested in the results of work (income, lifestyle etc)?



Big Picture

Work is valuable in and of itself. God is a worker, he gives us work as a part of his good creation. Our work is good and valuable.



Bible Passage

While you read - What is the place of work from before the fall?

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ 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.

¹⁵The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Genesis 2:2-3, 15

COMPETENCE

CHARACTER

CONVICTION

2. NOT JUST A FOUR LETTER WORD



Key Truths

- 1. God works. He made the world and just to underline the point, Genesis repeats the word 'work' three times. Work is a profoundly good thing; a God thing.
- 2. God gives work to humanity. It is not a result of the curse, it is a part of the good creation.

 Our work is part of what it means to be in the image of God.
- 3. The word 'work' in Genesis 2:15 is usually translated 'serve' such as when a priest serves in the temple. Work is strongly linked to serving God.
- 4. There is no sacred/secular divide, work is a vital part of our Christian life.
- 5. The word 'care' in Genesis 2:15 reminds us that work is a loving activity for God's creation on his behalf.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

How do you view your work? Is it valuable in and of itself?

Work is a service to God, to others, and to the creation. How does this concept change our view of our work and how we work?



Prayer

Pray for a changed attitude to work - to see work as a service to God, others, and the creation.

Pray that your attitude to work would be evident to your colleagues.

Remember

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DINNER











What is your biggest frustration in your workplace? How do you cope with frustration at work?



Big Picture

The curse of the fall means that work is now difficult and full of toil – and this is the mercy of God.



Bible Passage

While you read – How does the fall impact work?

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Genesis 3:17-19

CONVICTION



Bible Passage (cont.)

And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis 3:17-19, 22-24



Key Truths

- 1. The ground is cursed by God making gardening work hard, but work itself is not cursed. Work is still a part of God's good creation, it's just harder; damaged as a by-product.
- 2. The consequence of being out of the garden and the presence of God is death we will return to dust.
- 3. Being out of the presence of God and destined for death is perpetually brought to our attention by the constant frustration and difficulty of working to live.
- 4. God's mercy is that he helps us long for the new creation by subjecting this creation to frustration including our work frustrations. God's mercy points us to the gospel true life is only found in Jesus! (check out Romans 8:18-25)

Thoughts? Questions?





Application

Our world tells us that work ought to be easy if you are working with the right people and in the right job. But God tells us to expect frustration since the fall and that we need to work hard, by the sweat of our brow, to get good things out of creation. So, when work is frustrating and difficult, remember to thank God, for he is reminding you that we are outside of his presence and we need his salvation.

How could we use a conversation about the difficulties of work to share your hope in Jesus?



Prayer

Praise God for making work frustrating so that we might seek satisfaction in him alone.

Pray that work frustrations might be a signpost to God's grace in Jesus.

Remember

COFFEE



DINNER













"Good old-fashioned hard work brings its own reward." Do you agree? (And what is that reward?)



Big Picture

One of God's amazing gifts is the joy of hard work.



Bible Passage

While you read - What positives come from working? How?

I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

¹⁰ I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure.

My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil.

¹¹ Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve,

everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 2:9-11





- 1. The teacher is reflecting on his career undertaking great projects of houses, vineyards, gardens, parks, fruit trees, reservoirs etc. (v4-6). He concludes that his work led to greatness.
- 2. However, all that he had achieved came to nothing it failed to deliver the pleasure he sought. (v11)
- 3. Despite this meaninglessness, his heart takes delight in his work this was the reward for his toil. (v10) Pleasure in work is a gift of God whether it's as majestic as creating a great cathedral, or as mundane as mowing the lawn, God can give us pleasure in our work.
- 4. When we look to work to give us ultimate meaning, status, greatness or protection against death then work is like a puff of air, a vanishing mist. Our death and the failings of those who follow us strip away our legacy.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

How do you view work? Is it the necessary evil that enables you to do what you really want? Or is it your purpose in life? Do you hold back from work, or pour yourself into the toil?

How does your attitude to work need to change?

When was the last time you thanked God for your work?

How could you express your thankfulness to God for your work? What opportunities could that create in your workplace?



Prayer

Pray for opportunities for displaying thankfulness to God at work.

Pray for a positive attitude towards your work that would be apparent to

your colleagues.

Praise God that we can find pleasure in our work.



Remember

COFFEE



DINNER









As our society thinks about their work and the benefits that flow from work do they see them as a right, a privilege, and expectation or something else?



Big Picture

We often think that the work and benefits of work are directly related. However, benefitting from work depends on God's grace.



Bible Passage

While you read - Where does enjopyment of work come from?

A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, ²⁵for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? ²⁶ To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26

CHARACTER

CONVICTION



- 1. The phrase 'from the hand of God' and 'for without him' show that enjoyment in toil and the benefits of the toil eating and drinking depend on God to bring the enjoyment and the benefits.
- 2. In other words, what seems like a direct cause and effect between working and benefiting is actually what comes only by God's grace to us to all humanity. This common grace is given so abundantly it looks like cause and effect.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Grumbling about work is almost the quintessential Australian pastime. Thankfulness and praise is counter-cultural. How can we turn our grumbling into praise for God instead?

Often phrases such as "Thank the Lord" or "Praise the Lord" can be uttered sarcastically in our workplaces. Can we reclaim those phrases for genuine appreciation for our work?



Prayer

Praise God for your work. Praise God for the joy that it brings.

Pray that you might help your colleagues see the joy of their work too.

Remember

COFFEE



DINNER







Course Summary

If you would like to explore further theology of work; how our identity has been caught up in our career, how we can be freed from this to perform in our work, you can enrol in one of our online courses. To have a look at a free sample, simply go to citybibleforum.org/courses.





