



EVANGELISTIC
PRAYER
TEAMS

QUARTER 4
2023



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PRAYER
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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

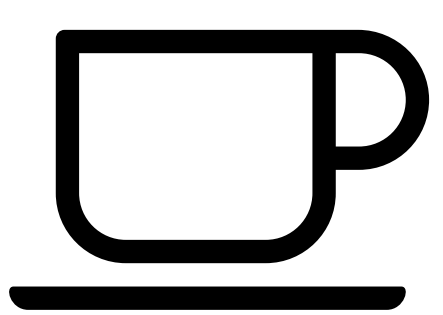


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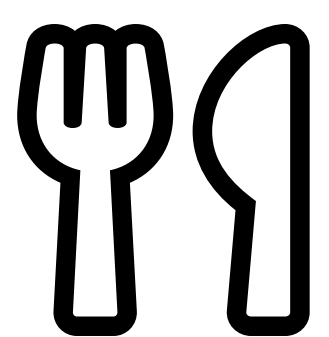
TAKE THE NEXT RELATIONAL STEP

COFFEE



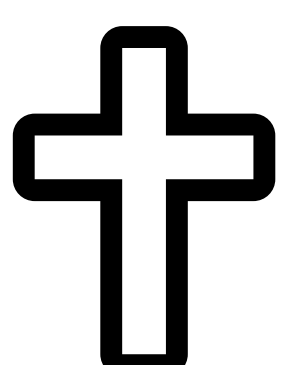
Shared a personal conversation
Knows I'm Christian
Spent social time together

DINNER



I understand their worldview
I've shared the Bible worldview

GOSPEL



Made a clear presentation of gospel
Reading Bible
Become Christian
Joined a good church



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OVERVIEW

INVESTING FOR ETERNITY

DISTINCTIVE LIVES

REFLECTION



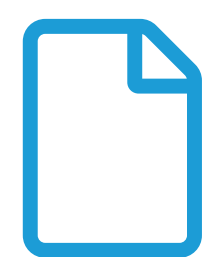
INVESTING FOR ETERNITY



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INVESTING FOR ETERNITY



Course Summary

This study examines how Jesus invests in the future and how we can invest with confidence too.

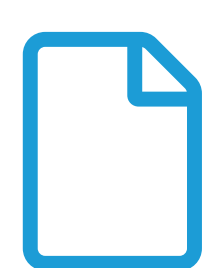


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INVESTING FOR ETERNITY



Introduction

What was your best (or worst) investment?



Big Picture

Jesus invests where he gets the greatest return and so should we.



Bible Passage

Jesus said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

"But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

"He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

"Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

"The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

"His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'



Bible Passage (cont)

“Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’

“His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

“Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’

“‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’

“He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away.’

Luke 19:12-26



Key Truths

1. Jesus is about to leave his disciples alone and wants to prepare them for his absence, and so he tells this story.
2. The master invests in his servants while he is away. He expects a return on his investment. After all he takes out what he does not put in and reaps what he does not sow.
3. The master rewards with bigger responsibilities his servants who perform well in small responsibilities. The master invests more where he gets a return.

Thoughts? Questions?

Bonus truth

When we read a parable like this we often want to tie everything down neatly (ten minas equals.. etc) but we can miss the clear ideas when we do. The clear implication from this parable is we should be like the successful servants. What about that "wicked" servant? The very next verse (v27) deals with the enemies of the master - so the wicked servant doesn't suffer God's judgment - but we don't want to be him either!



Application

Each of us have God-given abilities, wealth, and time to invest for our master Jesus while he is away. When Jesus returns he will ask us to give an account for our stewardship.

Where are you investing God's gifts?

Are you generating a return for your master?

If you want bigger responsibilities, how are you going with the small responsibilities God has given you?

Giving regularly to City Bible Forum helps us to continue to see unbelievers meet Jesus in the pages of the Bible. Have you considered investing in City Bible Forum?

(You can give at citybibleforum.org/give)



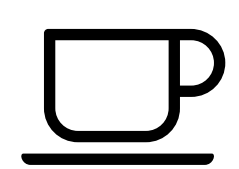
Prayer

Pray for the finances of City Bible Forum. Under God we seek to raise more regular supporters if we want to reach our nation with the good news about Jesus.

Pray for opportunities to invest in the future of our colleagues.

Remember

COFFEE



DINNER



GOSPEL





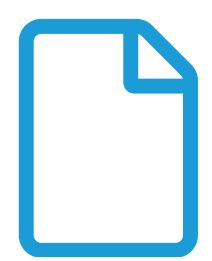
DISTINCTIVE LIVES



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DISTINCTIVE LIVES



Course Summary

Christians live as strangers in a hostile world. In a sense we are best equipped to live in God's world because we know God. But we also live with those who have no love for God - how then should we live?

These studies explore 1 Peter which was written to Christians living in a hostile world. Peter encouraged them to live lives proclaiming God. Christians are to live such good lives that others would join us in the truly blessed life - which may not be what you think...



Course Structure

1: FOREIGNERS IN A HOSTILE WORLD

2: PRAISE GOD AT WORK

3: LIVES THAT MATCH OUR MESSAGE

4: SHARING JESUS IN AN UNEQUAL RELATIONSHIP

5: THE BLESSED LIFE?



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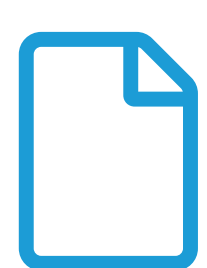
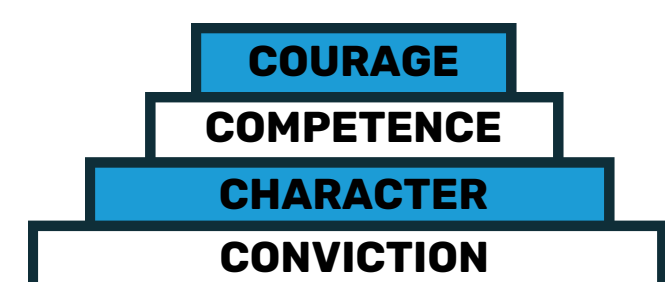
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DISTINCTIVE LIVES

1. FOREIGNERS IN A HOSTILE WORLD



Introduction

Being called fat in Myanmar could be a compliment.

Running a bath in the middle of the night in Switzerland could be illegal.

Being a foreigner can be hard, not knowing the language or customs. You can unwittingly find yourself in trouble. Can you think of a time when you felt like a foreigner?



Big Picture

We are both foreigners in the world hostile to God and God's chosen people - so we should live according to our hope in Jesus.



Bible Passage

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

1 Peter 1:1

...just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1 Peter 1:15-19



Key Truths

1. Christians are both God's chosen people and foreigners in a world hostile to him. We are 'in' with God, but 'out' with our world - a source of tension as we live our lives.
2. We once lived futile and ignorant lives, but we have been ransomed from that life. So, we must embrace our strangeness; trusting in the just judge of all.
3. Our ransom was costly. We were ransomed with the most precious commodity there is - the blood of Christ. So, don't cheapen your life by obeying ungodly passions, but live God's way.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

The first recipients who received this letter lived in hostile times. Christians were distrusted by Jews and Romans alike. They were slandered, accused of cannibalism(!), and would soon face worse.

Australian culture has gotten much more hostile and less tolerant of a Christian worldview. Peter's advice to Christians living in such a culture? "Be Holy!"

To what extent do you think living godly lives is valued by your company and colleagues?

What does living God's way demonstrate to your colleagues?

How does being holy help our colleagues know Jesus?



Prayer

Pray that you would seek to live like a foreigner in a world hostile to God.

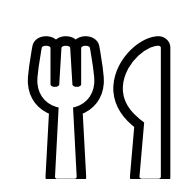
Pray for that next step with your colleagues.

Remember

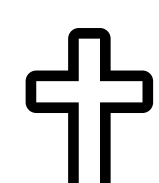
COFFEE



DINNER



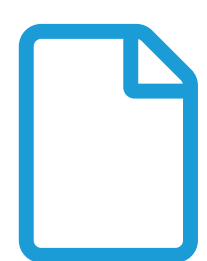
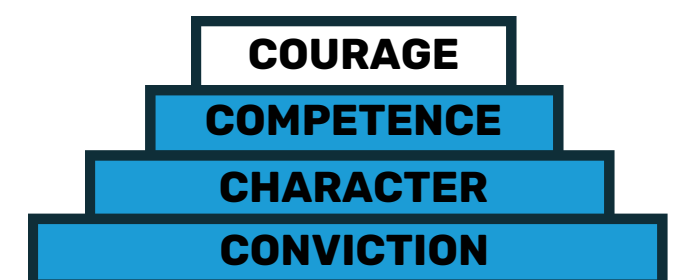
GOSPEL





DISTINCTIVE LIVES

2. PRAISE GOD AT WORK



Introduction

Praise the Lord!

What actions and images come to your mind when you think about praising God?

What might it look like to praise God at work?



Big Picture

We are God's people for the purpose of declaring God's praises as we share Jesus with those who don't know him.



Bible Passage

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10



Key Truths

1. God has chosen us to be his own possession. We have a purpose – to declare God's praises as our rescuer from darkness into his marvelous light.
2. Did you notice God rescues us from darkness into his wonderful light? It's not from one extreme to the other, it's from one extreme to and overabundant extreme; darkness to wonderful light! Our new position is much better than our old was bad.
3. Praise for God should overflow from our lips. Proclaiming God's praises is a verbal matter; it involves speaking.
4. In a world hostile to God, proclaiming God's praises means sharing the good news about Jesus.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

Does it feel too hard to praise God? How about some reasons?

- * God is generous
- * God has brought us out of darkness
- * God has chosen us to be his
- * God has brought us into his light
- * God has made us holy
- * God has given us a new identity
- * God is merciful
- * God has included us in his royal priesthood

What might it look like to proclaim God's praises around our work colleagues?

Has something gone well?

Why not thank God out loud? - "Thank the Lord! I've found..."

Has someone thanked you for your work?

Why not give God the glory? - "Thank you, God was very kind..."

Has God answered your prayers?

Why not let people know? - "I'm so grateful, God has really answered our prayers..."



Application (cont)

By adjusting how we speak, we can normalise praising God with our work colleagues and friends. That way, when we do start talking about God, it's not so strange - we've been doing it already. It might feel strange at first, but it will feel less so as you continue to praise God.

What words or phrases could you start using in your everyday life - including with work colleagues - to start acknowledging God at work?



Prayer

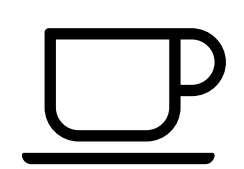
Praise God for what he has done and continues to do at work.

Ask God for his help in proclaiming God's excellencies in your work - with your work colleagues.

Pray that your colleagues would notice your praise for God and may one day join with you in also praising God.

Remember

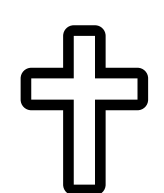
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DINNER



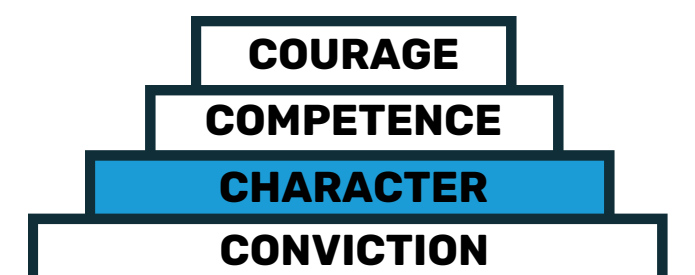
GOSPEL





DISTINCTIVE LIVES

3. LIVES THAT MATCH OUR MESSAGE



Introduction

When it comes to sharing Jesus with our friends and colleagues, what's more important - a great message or a great life?



Big Picture

As foreigners in this world we are to ignore our worldly passions and instead live lives that lead others to also glorify God.



Bible Passage

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

1 Peter 2:11-12



Key Truths

1. We are in a war! The passions of our flesh wage war against our soul. As foreigners in this hostile world, we are to abstain.
2. Instead we need to conduct ourselves so well that those who don't know God may also declare his praises.
3. Remember from last time - we have been called out of darkness into his wonderful light and so we are called to praise God. So why are the pagans around us glorifying God? Probably because they have become Christians.
4. We have a great message and our lives should match it.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

A great message with lousy living, or great living with a lousy message are both a disaster! One is a turn off, the other leaves people without God.

Which of these is your greater danger?

If you live Christianly before your work colleagues it will be noticed. How would you respond to someone who said, "I noticed you act differently to the rest of us"?



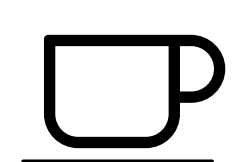
Prayer

Pray for each other that your lives will match your message about Jesus.

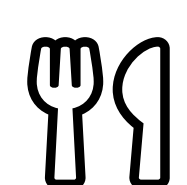
Pray for your work colleagues. Pray they will see your good deeds and one day glorify God.

Remember

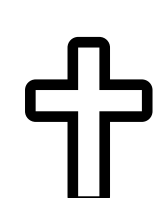
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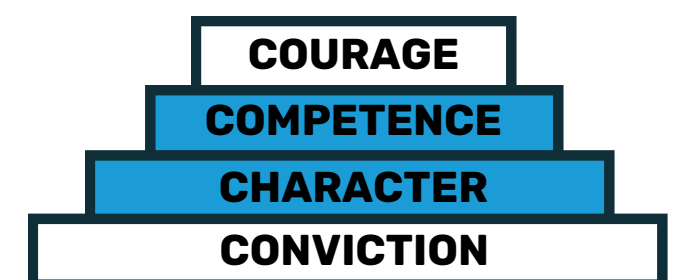
GOSPEL





DISCTINCTIVE LIVES

4. SHARING JESUS IN AN UNEQUAL RELATIONSHIP



Introduction

Despite our egalitarian culture, Australia is still a country of unequal relationships when it comes to our workplaces. Think about the power imbalances in your workplace.

What are the difficulties in trying to share Jesus across a power imbalance?



Big Picture

In an unequal relationship our actions need to speak, but it is the word of God that ultimately saves.



Bible Passage

1. Consider this unequal relationship from 1 Peter:

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

1 Peter 3:1-2



Bible Passage (cont)

2. What is the word the husbands don't believe?

*...you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring **word of God**. For,*

*"All people are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of the Lord endures forever."
And this is the **word** that was preached to you.*

1 Peter 1:23-25

The word of God that causes us to be born again, that was preached to you - in other words the gospel of Jesus. These husbands are unbelievers - they have heard the word, they just don't believe it.

3. What about believing husbands?

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Peter 3:7



Key Truths

1. Husband and wives are in an unequal relationship.
2. Wives are to win their husbands without a word. But this is no instructions against preaching - we are born again by the word. These husbands have heard the gospel, but now it's time to show the difference the gospel of Jesus makes. The wives are to commend the gospel by their good behaviour with their unbelieving husband.
3. Husbands are to be considerate with their wives, treating them with respect.
4. In an unequal relationship, once the other knows you are a Christian, how you live your life needs to back up your words.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

“Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary use words” - an aphorism attributed (falsely) to Francis of Assisi. Or to put it another way, “Live such good lives as a quiet Christian at work and just hope your colleagues somehow guess that is has something to do with Jesus.” Doesn’t have the same ring to it does it?

But this isn’t what Peter is talking about. Instead, our words need to make clear that our lives are good because we trust in Jesus. But once people know - our good lives should do most of the talking.

Bear in mind, we need to remember in an unequal relationship we are not their saviour. It is possible God could use someone else in their life to speak the gospel in a way that you cannot. Your example of the way Jesus makes a difference in your life is no less a part of God working. Maybe praying for someone else to become a part of their life could be a good way forward.



Prayer

Pray for your unequal relationships.

Pray for opportunities to be clear about what you believe.

Pray for a clearly attractive life to match your faith.

Pray for the next step for our colleagues meeting Jesus.

Remember

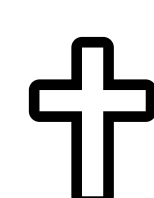
COFFEE



DINNER



GOSPEL





Optional tips

When starting at a new company or in a new team, the sooner you mention that you are a Christian, the easier it is.

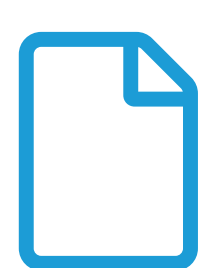
When you are the one in the position of power, things can get messy once religion is mentioned.

One director of a department shared an ingenious solution about how he was able to share his faith with everyone in his office: He invited everyone in his department - no matter their role - to come to morning tea in his office, in small groups and in arbitrary order. They would talk about how they were going in the department, then he would say "I like to learn about people's family - tell me what did your family believe." People felt more comfortable sharing about their parents. Once everyone had shared he would share his story. He was able to share his testimony with everyone in his department. Could you do something similar?



DISTINCTIVE LIVES

5. THE BLESSED LIFE?



Introduction

Think back to a time of suffering (even if it's your last sick day)
What brought you hope at that time?

What, if anything, could you consider to be a blessing from that time of suffering?



Big Picture

You are blessed if you suffer for doing good. So do not fear, instead trust the Lord Jesus and share why you have hope beyond suffering.



Bible Passage

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "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 3:13-16



Key Truths

1. Do not fear those who can hurt the body, but not your soul. You are blessed if you suffer for what is right - like Jesus did.
2. In the face of fear, consciously make yourself aware that Jesus is lord - there's nothing to fear.
3. Instead of fearing, be prepared to explain your hope beyond anything you may suffer in this life - Jesus.
4. But our sharing about Jesus must come with gentleness and respect, so those who might slander us are shamed.
5. In the end, we should want those who might cause us to suffer, or who might slander us, we should want them to also trust in Jesus.

Thoughts? Questions?



Application

When we go for a new job, we pray asking God for it. We ask God for the interview to go well. When we get offered the job, we thank God for the giving us the job - even on the first day we ask God that it would go well. And then, somewhere after our first day we shift to thinking that keeping our job is based on our performance and the pleasure of our boss - not on God's sovereign control. We forget everything is God's - every good gift comes from him (James 1:17). Fear creeps in, we fear our bosses, restructures, HR, not performing...

If you live in fear at work - you'll never share Jesus there - and no one will see your hope beyond suffering.

But if you determine in your heart that Christ is Lord, there's nothing else to fear. You will share Jesus with your colleagues (with gentleness and respect), gladly accepting to suffer for Christ's sake if it should come.



Application (cont)

What do you fear at work?

How do you respond to unfair accusations?

What behaviours obscure your hope in Jesus beyond suffering?



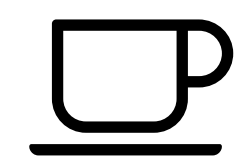
Prayer

Pray for each other for lives that have a clear hope beyond suffering so people around you would want to know the reason for your hope.

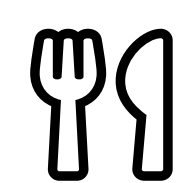
Pray for particular colleagues to notice your good behaviour and hope in Jesus and want to know why.

Remember

COFFEE



DINNER



GOSPEL





REFLECTION



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REFLECTION

It's time to reflect over everything God has been doing this year.

Think back over the year - look over your prayer notes and messages.
What has God done in our lives together this year?

Reflect & Share

How have you seen God answering your prayers?

With whom have you seen significant progress in relationship?

Brutally Honest Time

Where do you want to be in your sharing of Jesus with friends and colleagues?

Are you on your way or no way near?

If you're not where you would like to be:

What would you be prepared to do to get to where you would like to be next year?

Prayer

Thank God for answered prayer.

Thank God for his presence at work.

Thank God for how he has worked in your team this year.

Pray for your colleagues that even now God would reveal himself to them.

Celebrate

If you haven't already done so, why not have a meal together to celebrate your year together?

