

EVANGELISTIC PRAYER TEAMS

QUARTER 3
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 Shared a personal conversation

Knows I'm Christian

Spent social time together

DINNER
Lunderstand their worldview

I've shared the Bible worldview

GOSPEL Made a clear presentation of gospel

Reading Bible
Become Christian

Joined a good church



# OVERVIEW

WORK: BECAUSE OF JESUS...

CHALLANGE AND SUPPORT GROUP INTENSIVE

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

TRUSTING GOD WITH OUR FRIENDS



# WORK: BECAUSE OF JESUS...









## Course Summary

These studies were written exploring concepts raised in a chapter in William Taylor's very helpful book, Revolutionary Work. We highly recommend reading Revolutionary Work, it is a pithy, eminently readable biblical perspective of our work.

These studies explore that because of Jesus, we have a new boss, a new goal, a new reward, and a greater work before us.

REVOLUTIONARY

William Taylor

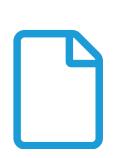


## Course Structure

- 1: WE HAVE A NEW BOSS
- 2: WE HAVE A NEW GOAL
- 3: WE HAVE A NEW REWARD
- 4: WE HAVE A GREATER WORK







Think about your best (or worst) boss. What made them great? (or terrible)



#### Big Picture

Being a Christian means we have a new boss - Jesus! We serve him and so we can work wholeheartedly for any earthly boss.



#### Bible Passage

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Ephesians 6:5-9



#### **Key Truths**

- 1. An employee is not the same as a slave, nevertheless we are under authority as we work.
- 2. Christians have a new boss Jesus. As we work under our current boss, we must never forget that they rank below Jesus
- 3. But, 'you're not the boss of me!' is not our new motto. Rather, understanding our place under authority as we serve Jesus means we sincerely serve our bosses as we would Christ.
- 4. Because Jesus is our boss, we have an increased responsibility to work well with our hearts engaged.

Thoughts? Questions?



# Application

Australian workplaces can often be cynical of people in authority. Across our careers we will have good bosses, bad bosses, and maybe even some absolute tyrants - but they will all be flawed people, just as we are.

As a result often Australian workers are motivated to work well by fear, or by desire for promotion - but rarely from a desire to do good work.

If we are motivated by fear, we will do as much as we can to avoid the sack. But the moment we think our boss isn't looking we slack off.

If we are motivated by advancement, we will work until we've 'made it' and then seek to back off, or else we'll be embittered as we get overlooked, or we discover what we have worked so hard for is really not all that better.

What difference does it make to you knowing that you are working for Jesus and not just your boss?



Pray you would work this week with the service of Jesus in the front of your mind.

Pray as you serve Jesus, that you would have opportunities to take the next relational step to help your colleagues come to know Jesus.

#### Remember

COFFEE



DINNER



GOSPEL









What do you think are your colleagues' goal for their work?



#### Big Picture

Being a Christian means we have a new goal - to do the will of God wholeheartedly.



#### Bible Passage

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Ephesians 6:5-9

**COMPETENCE** 

**CHARACTER** 

CONVICTION

#### 2. WE HAVE A NEW GOAL



#### **Key Truths**

- 1. If Jesus is our new boss, then God's will is our new goal.
- 2. God's will is that we would serve in our workplaces wholeheartedly.
- 3. Our new goal drives us to be better workers. Workers who serve not only for our earthly boss' favour, or out of fear, but by seeking to do God's will.
- 4. Doing the will of God has far-ranging implications to how we work. We have a new motivation to work with integrity, accountability, and service to others.

Thoughts? Questions?



# Application

Think through the implications for wholeheartedly working to do the will of God at work. It will no longer be enough to simply focus on our work tasks, we will also be driven to show kindness to our colleagues as we do so. It will no longer be enough to speak up and carry the day in a meeting if our language or humour dishonours Christ. It would be a travesty to be well liked at work, but also known to betray confidence or engage in gossip.

We have all slipped up at work. But the good news is that when we slip up, it is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate kingdom virtues. How often have you witnessed someone owning their mistakes and sincerely apologising? It is so rare in our culture now that it stands out and demonstrates the humility that comes from knowing that Jesus is our boss and God's will is our goal.

Is there anything at the moment for which you need to humbly apologise? How might you do that?

Or maybe you have been asked to do something by a boss that you know would upset Jesus. What should you do or say in those instances to honour our earthly master and heavenly boss?



Pray you would have the insight to discern how you can work to serve your colleagues and company wholeheartedly as if serving Jesus himself.

Pray that you would go deeper in your relationships with and love for your colleagues so you can serve them wholeheartedly.

Pray for that next relational step with your colleagues.

#### Remember

COFFEE



DINNER



GOSPEL









What do you aim to get out of your work?



#### Big Picture

Being a Christian means we hope for a new reward - the pleasure of our God.



#### Bible Passage

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

#### Ephesians 6:7-9

**COMPETENCE** 

**CHARACTER** 

CONVICTION

You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. 35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

Hebrews 10:34-35



#### **Key Truths**

- 1. We serve the Lord, not people, because we look to the reward he will give to his people.
- 2. Our reward is better and more lasting than anything our jobs could give us. We can even joyfully accept the confiscation of our property, so great is our reward!
- 3. What is our reward? It is the coming kingdom of Jesus. What a wonderful day it will be to see the radiant face of Jesus finally crowned king over all!

Thoughts? Questions?



# Application

"Well done, good and faithful servant"

Imagine hearing those words in your ears as you stand before Jesus. The hope of the reward that will be ours when Jesus returns changes how we work.

If our goal for work is the pleasure of God, we can work - no matter the conditions - with our eyes fixed on the joy that will be ours when Christ returns. The worst job, the harshest boss, the most adverse of conditions - all can be endured because we know Jesus is coming. Such hope is attrative in our increasingly hopeless world.

How does our hope for a future reward change how we work when things are going well?



## Prayer

Pray for each other that our eyes will be on coming reward when Jesus returns.

Pray for the next relational step for your colleagues to come to know Jesus.

#### Remember

COFFEE



DINNER



GOSPEL







Think about these two statements:

"our prime task at work is not to be evangelists. This is not what we are employed to do."

Ken Costa - former Chairman *Alpha International* 

"the primary calling is not in regard to employment, but to Christ. Our primary vocation is to be a disciple, an agent of the kingdom."

Neil Hudson - former Director *Imagine Church, LICC* 

**CHARACTER** 

CONVICTION

#### To what extent do you agree or disagree?



#### Big Picture

Being a Christian means that we have a greater work to do - bringing in the harvest God is developing.



#### Bible Passage

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 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 labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:57-58



#### Bible Passage (cont)

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."

But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

John 4:27-34



#### Key Truths

- 1. Compare the concerns of the disciples and of the woman. The disciples are worried about food. The woman is eager to tell everyone in her town about Jesus.
- 2. Food is vitally important; people knowing Jesus is essential. Jesus says "my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."
- 3. The concerns of Jesus are focused on the work of his father
- 4. We, like the woman, and Jesus should likewise give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord.

Thoughts? Questions?



### Application

Of course we aren't paid to evangelise, nor are we paid to love people, to care for them when they are hurting or sick, to befriend people at work, to advocate for better conditions, or on behalf of those in need. But as Christians, how can we not?!?



# Application (cont)

William Taylor says Christians "have a new master at work, a new goal at work, and a new reward as we work for the Lord Jesus in our workplace. What matters now is not so much what we do but who we are and who we are serving. Furthermore, wherever God has placed us... we have seen there's a greater work going on. The work of the Lord Jesus is to bring in his harvest and, wherever we are, he has given us a privileged part in his great eternal work."

To what extent should the mission of Jesus impact what we do in the workplace?

Evangelism can be costly. It costs time, energy, money, and courage to develop relationships and seek to help people meet Jesus. What do you think stops you from sharing Jesus more with your work colleagues?



#### Prayer

Pray you would give yourself fully to the work of the Lord.

Pray for opportunities this week with your colleagues to take the next step towards meeting Jesus.

#### Remember

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GOSPEL

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# CHALLENGE & SUPPORT INTENSIVE









#### Course Summary

Evangelism is important, but sometimes we find ourselves too distracted by life to take the opportunities that are potentially around us week-in, week-out.

This is a 6 week challenge, with an introductory week. 3 weeks of encouragement and support, and 2 weeks to focus on the "challenge".

This is an opportunity to work out a personalised challenge, and support one another as we seek to work on our challenges in evangelism.



# Course Structure

- 1: INTRODUCING THE CHALLANGE & SUPPORT GROUP
- 2: ESTABLISH CHALLENGE
- 3: CHALLENGE WEEK SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS (INJECTING GOD)
- 4: CHALLENGE MIDWAY CHECK-IN WEEK
- 5: CHALLENGE WEEK SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS (POWER OF QUESTIONS)
- 6: REFLECTION AND CELEBRATION WEEK





Jazz musicians talk about the woodshed - the legendary story is that after a disastrous session, after which a cymbol was thrown at him, Charlie Parker spent a year in his woodshed practicing and became one of the best saxophonists ever known.

What drove Charlie to such drastic lengths to improve?

It wasn't his shame of failure, it wasn't the fact he had a cymbol thrown at him, it was his deep desire to get better - and a vision that he could be better.

What are your hopes for evangelism?

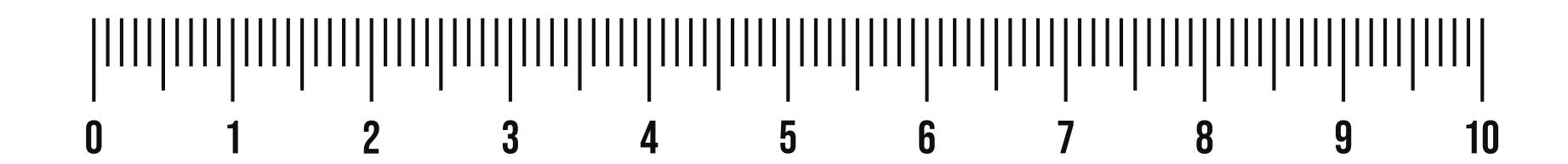


#### Big Picture

The challenge and support intensive is designed to help people quickly take the next step forward in their evangelism.



1. On a scale between 1-10, how do you feel about your evangelistic activity?



(where 1 is "I'm deathly scared people will find out that I'm Christian" and 10 is "my whole office have all become Christians because within a month of meeting me people become Christian.)

- 2. Now imagine for a moment that you wake up tomorrow and a miracle has happened while you slept. How you feel about your evangelism has improved dramatically. How would you know things were different?
- 3. What if you could spend the next few weeks specifically working towards a personalised evangelistic goal while being supported and supporting others trying to do the same? Do you want to commit to the Challenge and Support intensive with your EPT?

Thoughts? Questions?



# Application

The first step is to work out your personal challenge over the next few weeks.

Go to tinyurl.com/evangelismchallenge

Spend 6-7 minutes completing the questionaire that will help you determine your challenge - this will serve as the starting point for working out your challenge. Your challenge should push you, but it should also be achievable. We will help each other assess and finalise our challenge next week.

Your challenge will be one of three options:

- number of spiritual conversations with non-Christians
- number of intentional coffees with non-Christians where you explore deeper issues
- number of non-Christians invited to read through a gospel with you



#### Prayer

Spend an extended period of time praying for one another as we take on this evangelism challenge intensive.

Pray for particular people you may have in mind.

Remember

COFFEE

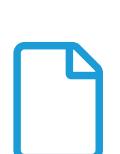
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GOSPEL







When you reflect on your experience of evangelism in the past - what has been your biggest challenge?

**CONVICTION** 



#### Big Picture

God's deep desire to save the lost helps us to keep taking on the challenge of evangelism.



#### Key Truths

Share with the team your challenge you have worked out using tinyurl.com/evangelismchallenge

Given your context and strengths - how motivated are you to step up to the challenge?

Check out this video by Al Stewart on what keeps him going in evangelism citybibleforum.org/challenge1

What are your reactions as you listen to Al?

# 2. ESTABLISH CHALLENGE



# Application

Thinking back over what you've shared today - what do you want to be held accountable for?



#### Prayer

Pray for one another and what you've shared today.

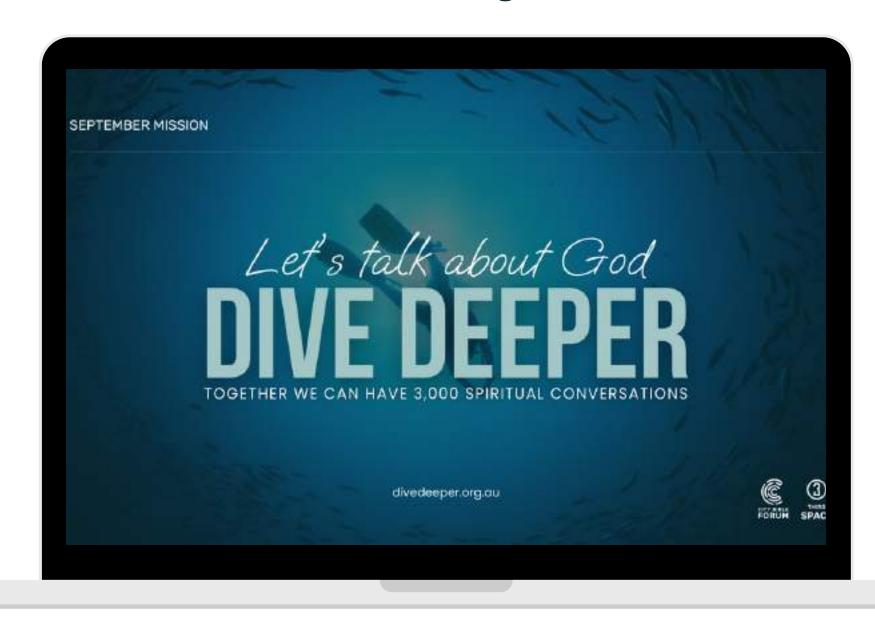
Pray for opportunities and the courage to take them in the next 2 weeks.



This week we're focusing on our individual challenges. To help us out, we have a couple of weeks of studies focusing on how we can have spiritual conversations with our friends and colleagues during the challenge weeks.



You might like to log the results of your challenges on the Dive Deeper website - divedeeper.org.au







In June 2021, Linkedin introduced the option to state your pronouns. The Victorian Government inclusive language guide tells us that a person's pronoun is "not a preference." It is their identity. Our language is being changed in an attempt to shift us away from heteronormality.

**CHARACTER** 

CONVICTION

In a similar fashion, feminists have been agitating for decades to change our language to be more gender inclusive. So, chairman became chair person, or simply chair, policeman became police officer. And there were many jokes about personnel access covers, being vertically and follically challenged (or fat and bald), or terminally unavailable (or dead).

This challenging of our language is meant to change the way we think, so that every time we stumble over a sexist, ableist, or ageist term, the issue is raised again in our conciousness until eventually the lanugage shift has embed itself in our unconscious - and our thinking is changed.

But Christians can do it too!



#### Big Picture

Injecting God into our speech can help introduce God into the thoughts of our friends and colleagues, and makes it easier to speak about him at work.

3



Christian Talk - There is a Christian way of speaking. There is the obvious: there should be no lying, anger, slander, filthy language, foolish talk, and coarse joking - rather we should be people full of thanksgiving (Colossians 3:8-9, Ephesians 5:4). We are not grumblers, rather our words should be full of thanks, grace, and praise.

At Work? - Further, when we are together, Christians have a comfortable language which we shy away from when at work. When we are together we speak about God's provision of rain, give thanks for the food we have to eat, thank God for his good gifts, and present our requests to him. We're at ease asking God to direct our paths, to save us from temptation, and to forgive us our sin. But once we're in other contexts - like work - we pretend that we also share the spiritually dead, materialistic worldview of our colleagues (at least in our speech). Why do we do this?

Talk like everyone else? - If you've ever travelled overseas, you will have found yourself adapting your speech patterns to the culture around you – perhaps changing our accent, adapting local phrasing. A similar thing happens at work, we adopt the way those around us speak. We assume that most people don't want to hear us speak of God.

God at work - Another reason we don't speak of God in our work is we haven't spent a lot of time reflecting on how God operates through our work. Budgets are set, cases are written, reports are filed, all seemingly without God's help. But a moment's reflection reminds us that, of course God is involved in every aspect of our worklives! Why not start acknowledging that with thankfulness? Out loud! At work!

Thoughts? Questions?



# Application

We can learn from the feminists and LGBTIQ+ advocates. We need to inject God into our speech. It will mean gently pushing back against the flow of our culture, but it can start to raise God on the agenda of our friends and colleagues.

Why not start in a small, safe, and acceptable way?

4



# Application (cont)

Consider:

When someone asks you about your plans for the future,

"I'm praying about it and hope that I may..."

When someone asks you about your weekend,

"I went to church where the preacher..."

When something goes well or someone congratulates you,

"Thank you, God was very kind, he..."

When someone shares their difficulties with you,

"I'm so sorry to hear that, can I pray for you?" (And if appropriate pray there and then)

You may feel more comfortable starting to inject this kind of talk into your speech with Christians first, but the goal is to start injecting this God talk into your work speech - so that it becomes a part of the subconscious of your language - and so God becomes part of the thinking at your work.

Why not start this week?



#### Prayer

Pray for courage to start injecting God into your talk at work.

Pray that your colleagues will notice your demonstrated trust in God by how you talk about him in your life.

#### Remember

COFFEE



DINNER



GOSPEL









Reflect on the first two weeks of your challenge so far. What's <u>one word</u> you would use to describe how you feel about the challenge at this stage?



#### Big Picture

When sharing the gospel of Jesus, pray for the opportunities to speak, the words to speak, and the courage to say them.



#### Key Truths

Explain why you chose the particular word you did just now.

What have you been learning about God, evangelism and yourself?

Check out this video by Al Stewart on praying for evangelism citybibleforum.org/challenge2

What are your reactions as you listen to Al?

# 4. CHALLENGE MID-WAY CHECK IN



# Application

Thinking back over what you've shared today - for what do you want to be held accountable?

Remember to pray as you approach your evangelism challenge



#### Prayer

Pray for one another and what you've shared today.

Pray for opportunities and the courage to take them in the next 2 weeks.





How comfortable are you to bring up Jesus before unbelievers?



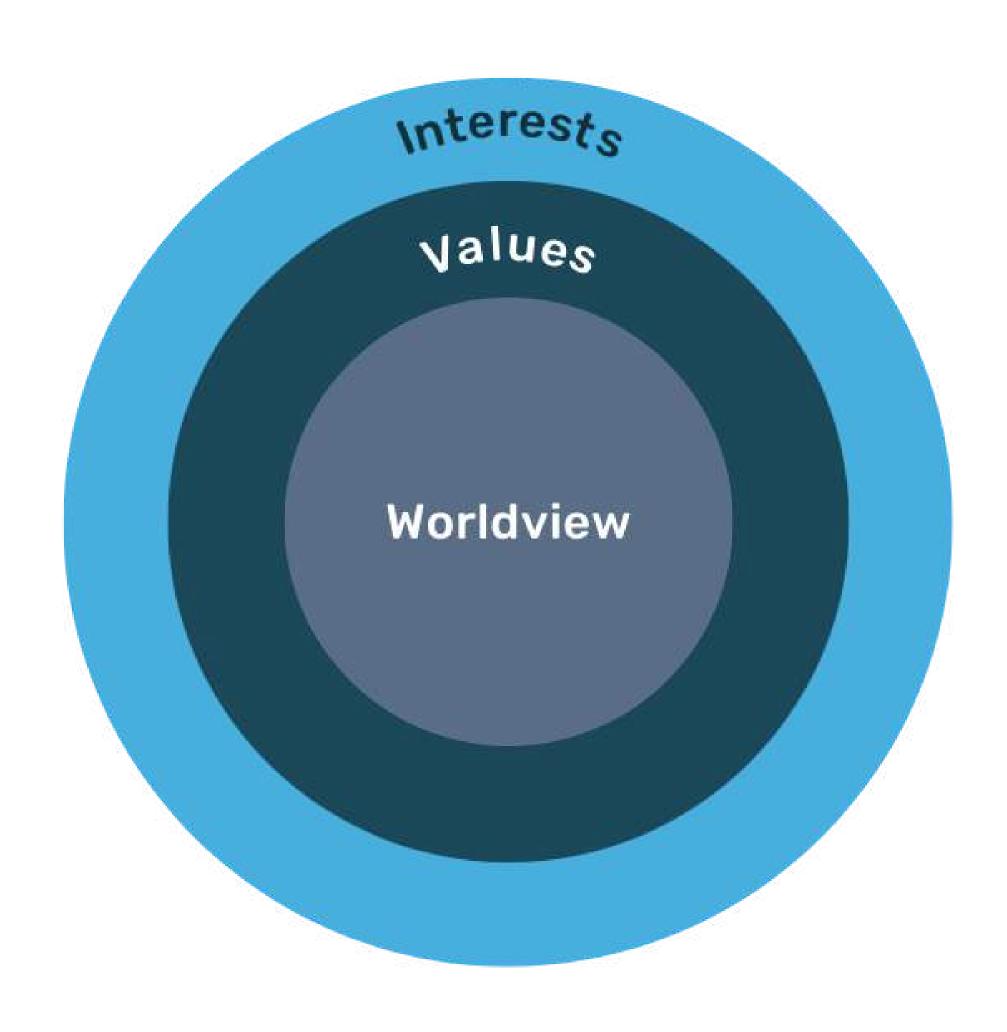
#### Big Picture

People in our culture are resistant to talking about Jesus, but questions can help us go deeper with them.



#### **Key Truths**

People tend to be comfortable speaking in 3 different layers of communication, depending on their relational comfort level: Interests, Values, Worldviews.



6



*Interests* – conversations tend to be superficial and stick to undeniable facts. eg "It's warm today."

Values – conversations start to express preferences, ethics, values, and beauty. From "Caramel is better than chocolate." to "There's nothing more important than family."

Worldviews – now we are speaking about what we truly believe about life, what's wrong with the world, and where we find meaning. When talking about Jesus, we're speaking at the Worldview layer. Our culture tends to resist talk at this layer. However there are ways of going deeper into this layer with people...

#### **Nudge Questions**

A catalyst is a substance that you add to a mixture to start a reaction.

A nudge question acts like a catalyst to our conversations with our friends. And just like a catalyst, a nudge question needs the right ingredients to work - relational trust, interest etc. When these are present, a nudge question can help us move deeper with people quicker. They invite our friends to speak about themselves, often in factual ways, but on topics that begin to expose their worldview.

Some examples of nudge questions are:

- What are you looking for in life?
- Why is this important to you?
- What is one thing you absolutely must have in life?
- What happens if you don't find what you're looking for?
- What do you think it all means?
- What do you believe about God?
- What do you think God wants from you?
- Do you have a faith?
- What religion did your parents raise you with?
- Do you pray?
- What's the best thing about \_\_\_\_\_\_? (eg being a Muslim, being an Atheist)
- Tell me about traditions, festivals, or celebrations that are important to you? (especially when they are near, this could be Eid, Diwali, Christmas, ANZAC Day, Grand Final Day)
- What do people get wrong about \_\_\_\_\_\_? (eg Islam, Atheism)

7



#### Key Truths (cont)

#### The Secret Ingredient - Listening

A great question can be ruined if we're not prepared to listen - so get listening. Show interest. We're not trying to disprove their beliefs, or win an argument. We are trying to understand them and what they believe in hope that they will agree to listen to our beliefs, or to explore who Jesus is for themselves by reading a Gospel with us.

Thoughts? Questions?



# Application

What has been your experience of introducing Jesus into conversations with your friends and colleagues?

Have a look through the list of questions above. Which of these questions do you think you could ask one of your colleagues this week?

You may like to get more training or advice in how to start having spiritual conversations, read Sam Chan's Book *How to Talk about Jesus (without being that guy)* which has formed the basis of this study. Alternatively, you can do Sam's online course, *Sharing Jesus at Work* (citybibleforum.org/courses)



#### Prayer

Pray for courage to ask one of these questions of your friends and colleagues.



COFFEE



DINNER



GOSPEL









Reflect over your evangelism challenge. Which face best represents your experience?









# Big Picture

As we speak with our friends about Jesus, living a life consistant with our message gives us credibility.



#### **Key Truths**

Explain why you chose the face you did just now.

What have you been learning about God, evangelism and yourself?

Check out this video by Al Stewart on praying for evangelism citybibleforum.org/challenge3

What are your reactions as you listen to Al?

6. CHALLENGE WRAP-UP



# Application

Take turns sharing the strengths you have observed in another participant

(something to do with their evangelism - or how they have participated in the process)



# Prayer

Spend time praying for each other and what has been shared.



#### Next Steps

How can we maintain enthusiasm and intentionality together with evangelism?





# TRUSTING GOD WITH OUR FRIENDS









# Course Summary

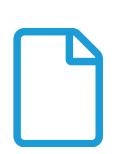
This study examines how our trust in the sovereign God of the universe means we can approach evangelism without anxiety - trusting God with our friends.



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The word 'evangelism' can stir some strong emotions in us. What feelings come for you?



#### Big Picture

Entering the kingdom of God is entirely up to God. We can trust our friends into God's merciful hands.



### Bible Passage

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.

John 3:3-8



- 1. The Spirit blows wherever it pleases and likewise rebirth is according to God's will.
- 2. Spiritual renewal is essential if we are to enter the kingdom of God. Rebirth, just like birth, is something that happens to us we can't make it happen. We certainly can't make it happen for others.
- 3. If we are to see our friends and colleagues enter the kingdom of God, they need to be reborn. We can't make that happen. But God can! (and isn't it a relief that it's not up to us?)

Thoughts? Questions?



#### Application

Often we feel anxious, or guilty or depressed about evangelism because we've started to believe that it's in some way all up to us. But it is God's work! We can't force God to save our friends, but we know he wants to – he sent Jesus after all!

So, we can pray for our friends. We can trust God is active as we are faithful. And we can invite people to meet Jesus in the pages of the Bible. Knowing that God is working by his Spirit.

What happens if my friend moves away? Or they reject me? Or I don't seem to make any headway?

If their salvation was dependent on you, then all these would be tragedies! What difference does knowing God is in control make to how you approach evangelism?



#### Prayer

Pray that we would learn to trust God with our friends' and colleagues' salvation.



#### Remember

COFFEE



DINNER



GOSPEL



