

Living for Jesus at work

Practical pocketbook

Reminders and reflections
for each day of the week



evangelical alliance
together making Jesus known



Good foundations

It's Monday morning. How are you feeling about the week ahead?

Sometimes we go to work excited and enthused by what we do and who we work with – and sometimes we'd rather be doing anything else. What are you looking forward to today? What pressures are you feeling at the moment?

PRAY: Lift those concerns up to the Lord now in prayer. Tell Him what's on your mind. He loves to hear what's on our hearts.

Each week brings a fresh start, and an opportunity to see your work in a new light. Maybe you feel that the person you are at work is very different from the person you are the rest of the time. Or maybe you feel like work is taking over your life – and a work-life balance sounds like a distant dream.

Whatever your working habits, take a moment this morning to carefully reflect: where does your identity and worth really come from? What will keep you grounded on the good days and inspire you to keep going when things get tough?

“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.”

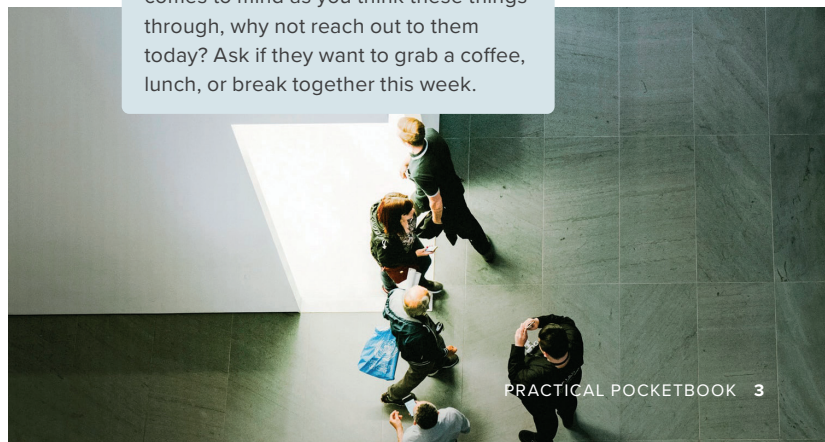
– 1 Peter 2:9

As Christians, we know that our identity, worth and value is unchanging. You are made in God's image, and through Jesus, you are a precious child of God. You are a treasured possession of the One who created all things. In whatever role He has placed you right now, God has a specific purpose for you there – whether that be in sharing the gospel with those who do not yet know Him, sharing something of His love in the way you treat those you interact with in your workplace, or encouraging integrity and good practice in the way your workplace functions.

What purpose might God have called you to at work this week? Who or what comes to mind?

PRAY: Thank God that your identity and worth can be found in Him. Thank Him for loving you so dearly. Pray that He would give you the courage to pursue opportunities that come your way and to live and speak for Him.

PRACTICE: If someone in particular comes to mind as you think these things through, why not reach out to them today? Ask if they want to grab a coffee, lunch, or break together this week.





TUESDAY LUNCH

Sharing life and faith with colleagues

It's lunchtime. Love a good catch up with your work mates? Or do you fear the dreaded small talk and would much rather crack on with work? What are conversations usually about? Is there someone who tends to be on the fringes of these interactions? When was the last time someone asked about your weekend, and you talked about church? Do your colleagues know you're a Christian?

During Jesus' ministry, He loved to share meals with people. He often went into the homes of those people would least expect. He never seemed to rush through meals but took time getting to know people. It goes without saying that lunchtime at work won't usually feel like a relaxed dinner party, but these can still be really valuable times to invest in the lives of those we work alongside and share something of who we are, including our faith.

"We loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well."
– 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Remembering that everyone is an image-bearer of God, we can be interested in people's lives and listen carefully to what they have to say. You will find that the more you invest in others, the more people want to hear about your story, and what makes you tick. Being open about your Christian faith doesn't mean that this is all you talk about all the time. It means praying for opportunities, and when one appears, not hiding your faith but being prepared to speak about it. It means being willing to share our whole lives with those around us, including our relationship with Jesus.

PRAY: Talk to God about your relationships at work. Thank God for the people that He's put in front of you. Pray that you would be interested and compassionate like Jesus, and that you would be wise and bold in speaking about Him.

PRACTICE: This week, if someone asks you about the weekend just gone, or your plans for the weekend ahead, mention church, and one thing you love about your church family – for example, the hospitality, diversity, or unity.



How to be a distinctive employee

Some people say that halfway through is the hardest point in the working week. That Friday feeling is a long way off and we're overwhelmed by everything we have left to do. When we're tired, it's so much easier to let our guard down – just a little – until the idea of living for Jesus at work seems too much to ask on top of everything else we have to think about.

What happens at work that you couldn't imagine Jesus taking part in? Do people gossip about other colleagues? Is there crude humour or coarse language? Do people get away with doing less work than they are meant to? Do people tend to over-work? Do people put others down to lift themselves up? Which of these do you find yourself tempted to join in with?

PRAY: Thank God that we are saved by grace alone. Say sorry for the ways you have represented Him poorly in the past and thank Him that you are not defined by your mistakes, and that His mercy is new every morning. It is never too late to resolve to live for Him in any area of our lives!

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.” – Colossians 3:12



We seek to represent God to those around us by the way we speak and act. When our colleagues look at us, we pray that they will see something of the character of God, and be drawn to ask us questions about it, or want to know God for themselves. Jesus calls us to love our neighbour – what would it look like if you treated everyone you interacted with at work like your neighbour? By the help of the Holy Spirit, we can be workers marked by kindness, integrity and a willingness to serve others above ourselves.

PRAY: Ask for God's help and strength when temptations arise at work. Pray that people would see His goodness through the way you speak and act.

PRACTICE: Today, when you go to do something for yourself at work (make a tea or coffee, use the printer, buy some lunch), why not offer to do the same for someone else?

Navigating conscience issues

Some people love to start a debate over lunch – something to add variety to the working day.

Imagine the moment someone casually asks you a tricky question over lunch, or maybe confronts you in a formal setting – all eyes are on you, and you can already feel your hands get clammy and your heart beating that bit faster. When your church leader or that Christian author spoke on that topic it sounded so convincing – but there's no way your work mates would 'get' it if you tried to explain.

As Christians, how do we speak wisely in tricky conversations?

Perhaps more than ever, things that are considered normal or good in our workplaces don't always line up with the convictions of our Christian consciences. We can be asked to take part in, or be associated with, things that the Bible teaches us don't sit comfortably with the Christian faith. Can you think of a time when that has been true for you at work?

"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." – 1 Peter 3:15

The Bible tells us always to be prepared to give an answer for the hope that we have. This isn't just an instruction to be prepared in

attitude, but also in what words we choose. Carefully think through how you might answer questions related to different issues in a gentle and humble way. The wonderful thing is that God promises to give us wisdom when we ask for it (James 1:5), and to help us know the right things to say.

Note: It is not our job as Christians to go looking for controversial debates, or to seek difficult conversations on conscience issues. Often these things can be distracting from what we really want to share about who Jesus is.

PRAY: Pray for wisdom! That you would know when it is right to speak, and when it is right to hold your tongue. Pray that in whatever you say, you would be gentle and respectful.

PRACTICE: Is there anyone at work who you're tempted to avoid, because you know that you likely believe very different things about what is right or wrong? If so, why don't you make an effort to say hello to them today and ask them how they are doing.



Whole life discipleship

For most of us, Friday marks the end of the working week. Got that Friday feeling? Or just plain worn out and stumbling towards the weekend? Give yourself a moment to breathe and reflect on the week gone by.

In the big or the small, when were your words, actions and work ethic in step with the Spirit? Were there moments when you weren't quite living up to who you are in Jesus? Call to mind any joyful or productive moments at work, as well as the less-than-ideal ones (maybe in the way you handled situations, or how your work mates reacted to your efforts to live for Jesus).

PRAY: Lift these feelings up to the Lord in prayer. He knows and cares deeply about how we feel and loves to hear from us. Say sorry, ask for strength, and say thank you, as feels appropriate.

Some of your colleagues might see the end of the week as a chance to go out together and celebrate the weekend. If so, what does that look like? What things do you usually talk about? What is the drinking culture like? Do you find these occasions easy or difficult to get involved with? If your colleagues never do anything social together, why is that? Is that something you could instigate? What might everyone enjoy?

Jesus makes it very clear in His ministry and teaching that as Christians, we are free to invest time and energy into those around

us. We don't need to keep ourselves separate from people who believe different things to us, or who do things we might not agree with – since Jesus Himself spent time with tax collectors and sinners! Jesus is our perfect example of what it looks like to socialise with, and love people well, without necessarily being like them. Jesus calls us to be salt and light, enriching the culture we're in and reflecting His goodness (Matthew 5:13-16).

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." – 2 Corinthians 5:20

If our colleagues know that we are a Christian, the way we speak and act will bear witness to God's character and value. So as we socialise, we want to represent Jesus well, as we seek to be in the world but not of the world. This means we are free to be good friends and have great fun, representing the God of joy who knows and cares deeply about each one of us.

This also challenges us to be distinctive in the way we speak, treat others and in how we interact with alcohol – as we represent a good God, who is never careless or loses control. As we socialise with our colleagues, our lives will bear distinctive witness to who God is, and the hope is that those we do life with might want to know God for themselves.

PRAY: Pray for courage to be a distinctive witness for Jesus as you socialise with your colleagues. Pray that you would have wisdom on how to welcome the outsider and be a voice of compassion in all circumstances – just like Him!

PRACTICE: If your colleagues don't socialise often, why don't you organise something for everyone on one evening this month?

Work/life balance

The weekend has arrived! How do you normally spend your Saturdays? Time to crash, or perhaps you are responsible for family members or church events, and there's lots to do.

We all want to rest well – but sometimes it's easier said than done. We may have limited time to stop, and so we might jump to quick fixes and distractions to numb our minds. What would a really restful day look like for you? It might be about finding time to be completely on your own or surrounding yourself with people you love. Do you find it easy to let go of work over the weekend, or does it sometimes creep in?

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from His.” – Hebrews 4:9-10

God makes it clear that rest is important for our wellbeing, both physically, emotionally and spiritually! God made us to work, but He also made us to rest – just like Him after the first six days of creation. Rest is not a sign of weakness, or laziness, but of spiritual discipline to let God be God, and acknowledge that we are not able to do everything all the time.

PRAY: Thank God for rest! Ask for His help for you to be intentionally restful, and to remember that only He is in control of all things.

PRACTICE: Write a list of all the things that make you feel really rested, from the big (like going for a long walk) to the small (like reading a book). Prioritise doing at least one of these things each weekend.

Support for Christians in the workplace

The evening before the week begins again. How do you feel? Do you feel refreshed from the weekend?

You probably went to church today – what encouragement from today could you take with you and hold on to for the week to come? From your church community, is there anyone you will see or speak to midweek? Or maybe there is someone who is having a tricky time at work – take a moment to hold them before God. Maybe you have something weighing on your mind – why not ask someone in your church to pray for you as you head into a new week?

Living for Jesus at work can be hard. But the wonderful news is that God never calls us to live for Him in isolation – in fact, the Bible warns us lots of times that trying to go it on our own will probably end in disaster!

First and foremost, God gives Christians the Holy Spirit, to guide us and give us strength, and as a reminder that we are not alone, but that God is always at our side (John 14:26). God also calls Christians into a life of community, to surround ourselves with

brothers and sisters in Christ who can help us and share the burden as we go about seeking to live for Jesus.

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” – Hebrews 10:23-25

During the working week, this support could be found in our church communities, with a close friend or as part of a small group, or it could be as part of a Christian workplace group. In these places, we can share struggles and encouragements, give, and receive prayer, enjoy God’s word together and work together to be a voice for Jesus in our workplaces.

PRAY: Pray that you would remember that as you seek to live for Jesus at work, you are never alone. If you ever feel as though you are, pray that God would help you to find people to support and encourage you.

PRACTICE: What aspect of living for Jesus at work did you find particularly challenging in the past week? No matter how small, why don’t you share this with your Christian workplace group and ask for prayer and accountability in this area. Similarly – what have you been encouraged by in this last week? Why don’t you send a text to a Christian friend who is also trying to live for Jesus at work, tell them about it and encourage them to keep going!

First published in the United Kingdom 2022

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176 Copenhagen Street
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Acknowledgements

With thanks to Joanna Evans as lead author. Special thanks to Danny Webster and Mark Bainbridge. The resource is produced by the Evangelical Alliance and Lawyers’ Christian Fellowship.



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