

In healthcare for Gods Service-Why be Distinctive?

(Suitable for use within a group over approximately one hour, or for an individual's personal Bible reading)

Thinking about life as a student in healthcare

1. Think of 3 class mates that 'stand out' in your year group. What makes them stand out? Is it their behaviour, attitudes, looks, intelligence, character, and/or beliefs?
How does their 'standout' attribute make you feel toward/about your class mate?
2. Think of 2 staff members (teaching, ancillary or administrative) that 'stand out' at your clinical placement. What makes them stand out? Is it their behaviour, attitudes, looks, intelligence, character, and/or beliefs?
How does their 'standout' attribute make you feel toward/about this staff member?

What does God have to say?

Read Matthew 5:13-16.

Matthew 5:13-16 forms part of a discourse of teaching given by Jesus to His followers early in His earthly ministry. In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus calls His followers to 'stand out' – to be distinctive – from the unbelievers whom they 'do life with' (in our context that would certainly include our class mates). As salt is distinctive in food; as light is distinctive from a hill peak, so followers of Jesus are to be observably distinctive in their actions and attitudes from their unbelieving neighbours, colleagues, friends....so that praise will be brought to their Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16).

And it is for this very purpose – the bringing of praise to God- that is the reason for the Godhead rescuing us from sin and death.

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12.

Putting it into practice

A. Practicing in light of reality

1. Do you think your attitudes and actions matter? Do you *really* think that your actions can actually cause praise giving from others to God?
Think specifically about the past 3 months at your clinical placement. Do you feel that through your conduct you have been an encouragement to believers and unbelievers to bring praise to God?
2. Do you really believe that because of God's goodness toward you - that you (as a health care student), despite being at the 'bottom of the ladder' in your work environment, are:
 - a. An individual whom God has chosen for His purposes (1 Peter 2:9, 12); and
 - b. A person who has received God's mercy without merit (1 Peter 2:10)?
3. Do these (could these) realities explored in questions 1 and 2 affect your understanding of:
 - a. Your purpose as a healthcare student;

- b. Your identity and value as a health care student (even apart from the marks you gain and your reputation amongst your class mates).
4. Do you think that in your attitude toward sin (1 Peter 2:11) and your understanding of its guilt, power and consequences that you are a 'stranger' (1 Peter 2:11) amongst your class mates?

B. Being distinctive – the consequence of practicing in light of reality

1. Think over the last week. Identify 3 circumstances that have presented as possible opportunities in which you could have been distinctive for the cause of God's honour amongst your class mates and tutors.
2. Does being observable for Christ before your class mates come naturally, or does this prospect fill you with fear? If fear is your response, how does this fear manifest?
3. List 3 regular circumstances you are in as a health care student on a weekly basis. How you could 'naturally' speak, act, think to give praise to God and for others around you to consider doing the same?
4. Will you have the courage to pray that God will enable you to think and act amongst your class mates in such a way that you will cause unbelieving class mates to:
 - a. question the hope that you have (1 Peter 3:15); and
 - b. bring praise to God?

Bible Bites

(Suitable to be completed over approximately 20-25 minutes)

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1. Think of 3 class mates that 'stand out' in your year group. What makes them stand out? Is it their behaviour, attitudes, looks, intelligence, character, and/or beliefs?
How does their 'standout' attribute make you feel toward/about your class mate?

What does God have to say?

Read Matthew 5:13-16:

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.'

As salt is distinctive in food; as light is distinctive from a hill peak, so followers of Jesus are to be observably distinctive in their actions and attitudes from their unbelieving neighbours, colleagues, friends....so that praise will be brought to their Father in Heaven.

And it is to this end – the bringing of praise to God - that the triune God has acted to save us for.

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12:

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. ¹² 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.'

Putting it into Practice

1. Does (could) the potential of your actions functioning to bring praise to GOD, *and* the fact that you were mercifully saved for this purpose (1 Peter 2:9-12), affect your understanding of:
 - a. Your purpose as a healthcare student?
 - b. Your identity and value as a health care student (even apart from the marks you gain and your reputation amongst your class mates)?
2. Do you think that in your attitude toward sin (1 Peter 2:11), and your understanding of its guilt, power and consequences, you are a 'stranger' (1 Peter 2:11) amongst your class mates?