

Life Hacks

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

Life Hacks: Strategies or ideas adopted in order to solve everyday problems in an inspired, ingenious manner. More simply, uncommon solutions to common problems. Having trouble opening sealed plastic packaging, try using a can opener. Want to fix a scratched DVD, simply rub a banana peel on it. Life hacks are simple, creative, and very effective. But this concept of life hacks isn't a new idea. In this new series, we will look at several times in the bible where Jesus gives us uncommon solutions to some of our most common problems.

Life Hacks Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic
1	8/11/19	Work
2	8/18/19	Time
3	8/25/19	Sex
4	9/1/19	(GROUP SOCIALS)

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Work

The Big Idea

Change your boss.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: Share a story about a time you were frustrated with your boss.

Move #1: Let's begin the discussion with some questions unpacking this Sunday's sermon.

1. What stood out most to you from the message this weekend about how you can love your boss when you see Jesus as your boss?

Move #2: Let's jump into the story of Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers. Despite his negative circumstances, we see how he trusts and honors the Lord in the way he serves his master.

Read Genesis 39:1-6a (NIV)

1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. 2 The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. 5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. 6 So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

2. What are some things that stick out to you about Joseph's relationship with his boss, Potiphar?
3. How did Joseph's relationship with the Lord impact the way he worked?
4. How does your relationship with the Lord impact the attitude you have while at work?
5. What do you see as the primary purpose of your job?
6. How might seeing the Lord as your boss make work so much more purposeful?
7. How did the fact that Joseph saw God as his ultimate master affect his performance and, therefore, the way his human master viewed him (verses 3-4)? How could that play out for you?

Move #3: Sometimes our workplace makes us feel like we are slaves working for an unappreciative master. Let's look at how the Apostle Paul encourages slaves to act towards their masters.

Note to Leader: To understand the historical context in a way that helps connect this passage to our modern context, it is recommended that you read the section from the *NIV Application Commentary* below in your preparation time.

Read Ephesians 6:5-9 (NIV)

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 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. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. 9 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.

8. Compare and contrast slavery and employment.
9. How have you seen respecting or disrespecting a superior in the workplace change the atmosphere in the work environment?
10. Imagine being enslaved to someone, or feeling trapped in a job where your boss is a complete jerk. How would it feel empowering to choose to do your work for Jesus instead of them?
11. What are some ways you can serve and honor Christ in the workplace, even when you do not like your boss?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

1. Change your boss (to Jesus).
2. Find a way to honor your earthly boss in a way that also honors your heavenly Boss.
3. Seek to be a positive Christian witness in your workplace.

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

On Ephesians 6:5-9

Not only is slavery foreign to us, but our understanding of it has been determined by nineteenth-century slavery in the United States. This increases our difficulty in understanding why the early church did not call for a wholesale rejection of slavery.

In the Greco-Roman world slavery was so much a part of life that hardly anyone thought about whether it might be illegitimate. Only the Therapeutae, a Jewish sect in Egypt, and perhaps the Essenes, rejected slavery in principle. It was considered an economic and practical necessity, an assumed part of life as much as birds and trees. Scholars are reluctant to hazard estimates about the numbers, but as many as one-third of the people in Greece and Rome were slaves. In addressing them Paul was addressing an enormous number of people. People became slaves through various avenues: birth, parental selling or abandonment, captivity in war, inability to pay debts, and voluntary attempts to better one's condition. Race was not a factor.

No doubt for many slaves life was harsh and cruel, but their circumstances depended on their owners. They did not merely do menial work; they did nearly all the work, including oversight and management and most professions. Many were educated better than their owners. They could own property, even other slaves, and were allowed to save money to buy their freedom. No slave class existed, for slaves were present in all but the highest economic and social strata. Many gained freedom by age thirty, especially in urban areas. Even after gaining freedom, however, they were still under obligation to their former owners in times of need.

Laws attempted to prevent gross abuse of slaves, but owners did have free rein to treat slaves as they wished. Some were loved and treated like family, but they had no rights. Others were treated cruelly, and if owners wanted to torture, crucify, or kill slaves they could....

For the early church to advocate revolt would have been the death of the Christian movement. Slavery and other social issues were not their focus; the gospel and its description of life were. They did not work out the sociological implications of the gospel except where it related to reception of the message and relations within churches. But as they presented life in Christ, they put in motion a process that would eventually destroy slavery. The painful fact is that it took far too long to accomplish the job, and the attempts by Christians to defend the legitimacy of slavery in the nineteenth century are disturbing.

This forces us to question whether we too simply assume the necessity of the structures of our society. People are still being dehumanized and tyrannized by relationships and employers. While not slaves, they are enslaved by our economic and social system. We are prone to throw up our hands and say, "That's the way it is." Like Paul, we must find ways to say, "The slave is your brother," so that the system is subverted by the way people are valued and nurtured. Churches should lead the way in such thinking.

But the attitudes of people in such situations need to change too. Many people are caught in the system or are underemployed, but need the jobs they have. They tend to become resentful and uncooperative or passive, waiting for some external force to remedy the situation. What Paul tells slaves is directly relevant. Our jobs and our role in the culture do not determine who we are. We live in, to, and for Christ in all we do. Moreover, our value and identity do not derive from our circumstances, but from Christ. By directing all our actions to Christ, all of life— even the most mundane parts— is elevated to meaning and service to God.

The message of this text obviously moves from ancient slavery to modern employer-employee relations, but it pushes us far beyond that. Its theology concerns who we really are, what motivates us, whom we seek to please, and how we use power. Every part of life is redefined. No action or relation is seen by itself, and nothing is treated at merely a surface level. Everything we do involves a direct encounter with Jesus Christ. He is the origin and the recipient of every act. If this is true, no act is mundane and no person is unimportant. Power must be used for him, not against him. And all of us stand on equal footing with the same Lord, who cares deeply how we treat each other and will hold us accountable. (Klyne Snodgrass. *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*)