

MODULE 6: EMPLOYMENT READINESS

SESSION 5: GETTING READY TO FIND WORK

Key Ideas for This Session:

- Taking the time (while you have it) to prepare a well thought out summary of who you are will be extremely helpful for securing future employment.
- Be professional and not sloppy. Pay close attention to detail. A job worth doing is worth doing right!
- Your goal is to create a resume that is well-designed, truthful, and accents your skills, experience, and interests.
- Key verse: 2 Chronicles 31:21:
In everything that he undertook in the service of God's temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.

What Is a Resumé?

Over the next few weeks, we will begin the work of preparing a professional resumé that will help you find employment when you are released from prison/jail. If you have several years left before you are going home, you will need to update your resumé closer to your release date to show any additional schooling or work experience you have gained. At the end of this session is a worksheet you can use to make notes or begin drafting the resumé itself.

A resumé is a summary of your skills, abilities, and accomplishments. It is a way to show a potential employer who you are and what you can do. It is a “snapshot” designed to get the attention of an employer in order to be invited to an interview.

Here Are Guidelines for Creating a Professional Resumé:

(Check off the box as you complete each item.)

- Be specific. Don't waste space on your resumé with general statements, or flowery words that try to paint an exaggerated image of yourself.
- Be direct and to the point when stating your accomplishments and immediate goals.
- Avoid using personal pronouns such as "I" or "me." Do not use abbreviations.
- List only the necessary information. Personal information such as height, weight, age, number of children, etc. should not be listed.
- Make no excuses. Do not include the reasons you are no longer working at each job listed on your resumé. You are only providing a list of your past work experience.
- Always be positive in your comments. Never write or speak negatively about a past employer.
- Emphasize your skills, experience, training or education, as well as your interests.
- Check for typos, poor grammar and spelling errors (using a dictionary). Mistakes are often seen as evidence of a person's lack of attention to detail.
- Centre or align all headings. Headings should be easy to locate, clear, and consistent.
- Ask someone to proofread your final version.

Here Are Guidelines for Circulating a Professional Resumé:

- Use a computer to produce the finished copy of your resumé. Assistance may be available at your institution. Otherwise, write it out neatly so that you can typeset it when you are back in the community. There are free templates available for resumé that you can find on the internet if you are already in the community.

- Include a copy of your resumé with every job application you submit, even if it contains a lot of the same information.
- Applications and resumé should be submitted to the person in charge of hiring. It is appropriate to call the company to ask the name and title of the person who needs to receive your resumé.
- Always include a cover letter with your resumé. A cover letter should show a prospective employer in a more focused way, how your skill sets align with their job posting.

Never lie on your resumé or job application. While your resume probably won't specifically address your incarceration, the job application may ask about criminal convictions. Be honest. Many employers are willing to give an opportunity to former prisoners who have the attitudes, motivation, skills and experience needed by the company.

Here is an Outline for Preparing Your Resumé Content:

Use the following worksheet to begin gathering the necessary information for your resumé.

Name:	
Address: (If you know what your address will be or have an address that you can be contacted at, use one of these. Revise your resumé as information changes.)	
Telephone Number:	
Objective: (Match your objective to the job you are applying for—but don't force it.)	
Expertise: (Skills)	

Abilities:	
Strengths and Interests:	
Work History: (Include jobs and other work-related training you had while in prison.)	
Education / Training:	

How you see yourself and what you think of yourself influences how other people will see and respond to you. Don't put yourself down because of your past, where you come from, or how others have treated you. That doesn't mean you should be pretentious, but it does mean that you should have a positive and hopeful attitude based on how God sees you.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

God knows you and He knows your heart. God also knows your needs and He will help you. That doesn't mean you can just sit back or pursue a job half-heartedly—you must do your best by:

- Not feeling sorry for yourself and just hoping that someone—anyone—will hire you.
- Not dwelling on feelings of shame because you committed a crime.
- Not being prideful or stand-offish, because you think that the society owes you.

Read the following two scenarios and discuss:

SCENARIO 1

Tony applied for an entry-level warehouse position. From the job description, it was a job he felt he could do, and it was what he wanted even though he didn't have any previous warehouse experience.

Tony knew that he needed to make a very good first impression in the interview and that he would have to stand out among the applicants. He went to the interview prepared. Even though it was a warehouse position, Tony decided to wear dress clothes rather than jeans and a t-shirt like most of the other applicants. He felt a little out of place in the room of applicants, but Tony got the job and was told afterwards that he stood out from the others. His new boss said he looked like someone who wanted the job badly enough to try to make a good impression. The boss was looking for someone who seemed respectful of the opportunity to work for his company.

SCENARIO 2

Bob landed a job at a construction company within three days of his release from prison, even though there were not many people were getting hired at that time. Although Bob had a lot of experience as a carpenter before prison, he was applying for a job that a lot of other qualified people wanted. When one of Bob's friends who was also looking for a job asked him for advice, Bob said, "I started developing better communication skills before getting out of prison." He said he wanted to learn skills that help you "sell" yourself to an employer. Bob told his friend that he needed to learn to believe in himself and learn to present himself more positively.

What do Tony and Bob have in common?

What can you do to show an employer that you would be the best candidate for a job that you have applied for?

Role Play an Interview:

Pick a partner and practice questioning each other with these typical interview questions. Be honest, forthright, and genuine. Answer with content that is relevant to the job you want.

Tell me about yourself.

Why should we hire you?

What is your greatest strength?

What is your greatest weakness?

What were you doing before this job?

What are your salary expectations?

Why do you want this job?

How do you handle stress and pressure?

Describe a difficult situation and how you overcame it.

What are your goals for the future?

Source: thebalance.com

Break into small groups and discuss the following if there is time, or consider these topics this week:

- *Consider Proverbs 14:23 "All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty." What does this mean to you?*
- *Memorize 2 Chronicles 15:7 "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."*
- *Study the book of Nehemiah for a role model of a diligent leader and faithful worker.*
- *Practice interview answers with a friend this week. Having an idea of your answers in advance will boost your confidence, minimize interview stress and help you feel more at ease.*
- *Consider and list a few types of places where you would like to work:*
