

Asking for a raise

Asking for a raise or a promotion can be intimidating, even for the most confident employee. If you are preparing to have a conversation with your boss about compensation, the following worksheet is designed to help you build a compelling case and broach the subject with boldness, tact and humility.

Before you begin, pause and pray. Ask the Lord to meet you and seek His wisdom. He loves to provide guidance to His children (James 1:5.)

*"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."
James 3:17*

Prepare



SIFT THROUGH YOUR EMOTIONS.

If you are planning to ask for a raise, chances are there are many emotions surrounding your thought process. It's difficult to build an objective case when emotions are clouding your thinking.

Why are you asking for a raise?

(Be brutally honest with yourself here. Are there outside factors—like an increase in personal expenses—contributing? Does jealousy of another co-worker play a part?)



GATHER THE FACTS.

With your emotions separated, determine the cold-hard facts.

How have you specifically added value to the company over the past year?

(Be as specific as possible. Did your workload or responsibilities increase? Did you produce more revenue or were you responsible for a new initiative? The more quantifiable metrics you can list here the better!)

Do some competitive research. What do websites like Glassdoor, Payscale or Salary.com say about compensation for roles similar to yours? Do you have other reliable information about compensation and benefits at comparable companies?

*"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much."
Luke 16:10*

*"Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation."
Romans 4:4*

Asking for a raise

Determine what you are asking for. Specifically, how much of a pay increase are you seeking? Are there other benefits like flexible work hours or more PTO you would like to discuss? List what your goals are here. Try to boil it down to only two big “asks.”

What are you asking for? (Be realistic but don't be afraid to be bold.)

1.

2.

What might a compromise look like? (What will you settle for?) “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.” Romans 4:4

1.

2.

3

SEASON YOUR CONVERSATION WITH GRACE AND GRATITUDE.

Entitlement is quite possibly the best extinguisher of generosity. If you really want your boss to respond favorably to your ask, it's important to approach the conversation with a grateful attitude. Take a few minutes to orient your heart by reminding yourself of reasons you are genuinely thankful for your current job, coworkers and manager.

Reasons to be thankful for: (Aim for 10+)

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-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

*“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”
1 Thess. 5:16*

Asking for a raise

Practical next steps

- 4 RUN IT BY YOUR CREW.** List 2-3 trusted friends/advisors you can share the above information with and invite them to check your motives and ask you the tough questions. Ask them to pray for you and hold you accountable on next steps.

Who will I share this plan with?

1.

2.

3.

*"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
1 Thess. 5:16*

- 5 SET A METING.** Don't over communicate, but be clear. You don't want to blindside your boss. Be strategic - is your boss usually less stressed on Fridays? Maybe target that day.

When and where are you meeting?

Who knows to be praying for me during this meeting?

- 6 FOLLOW UP WITH THE FACTS IN WRITING.** After the meeting, follow up with an email detailing the discussion. Did your boss ask for more information? Are there next steps? Remember to include "just the facts" and season it with gratitude ("Thanks again for your time today...") This email will help ensure you and your boss are on the same page and can serve as a helpful way to keep the ball rolling.

Asking for a raise

But what if the answer is “No”?

There are likely a myriad of factors that contribute to whether or not you receive a pay increase. Unfortunately, many of those are likely out of your control. The profitability of the company, the economy on a macro-level, or an emotionally immature manager or one that is less adept at advocating for his or her employees' career growth are just a few realistic examples of reasons your request may not be granted. It's important to remember that the Lord is still in control, regardless of the outcome of your conversation. If the answer is “no,” keep seeking God for direction. Is it time to look for another opportunity? Are you being called to a season of patience at your current job that will develop character for the future?

Whatever the outcome of the conversation, we can find encouragement knowing that as Christ-followers we are ultimately *“working for the Lord, not human masters.”* Colossians 3:23

“For there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.”
Romans 13:1

“The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and He exalts.”
1 Samuel 2:7

Case study: My story

A few years ago, I asked for (and received) a promotion and a 25% pay increase at my corporate job.

Those who know me well might be surprised to learn this since I tend to be fairly reserved and prefer to avoid confrontational discussions. I'm also a part-time seminary student. (Shouldn't “serious Christians” avoid talking about—let alone asking for—money?) **The truth is, that one conversation about my financial compensation was a catalyst not only for my career but also my spiritual growth.**

Preparing to ask for a raise was a long process for me—one that required prayer, seeking counsel from others, and a painfully honest evaluation of my own motives. In order to approach my boss with a clear and compelling “ask”, I first had to wrestle through my emotions and identify where pride was clouding my judgement. This is where the personal and spiritual growth happened. I was forced to analyze objectively if I truly deserved a raise and to determine on a personal level where my true worth is found. For those looking to ask for a raise, I'd love to share a few important lessons I learned during that process.

Regardless of the salary, a prideful outlook will make any job miserable.

Initially, when I started thinking about asking for a raise, my ego flared up in an ugly way. I became bitter and I started keeping score. I noticed all the petty things that upset me about my company—which, by the way, is an awesome company—and I kept a mental tab of even the tiniest things I did at work that could justify my desire for promotion. I was jealous and hyper-critical of co-workers with more senior titles. It was not pretty.

Asking for a raise

It took time for me to sift through my emotions. I spent time in prayer, asking God to check my heart. I discussed my feelings about my job with close friends, giving them the green light to call me out if my complaints were petty or self-centered. Those conversations were painful and exhausting. Eventually, I was able to approach the subject of my financial compensation with a Biblical perspective and true humility. In doing so, I could approach my boss confidently—no longer desperate or frustrated—and receive whatever his response would be with grace, rather than indignation.

2 Nothing is wrong with sharing the facts.

There were times I felt incredibly guilty for even thinking of asking for a higher salary. I mean, isn't it "unchristian" to even be talking about money? Wouldn't it be "more holy" of me to accept a lesser salary? (Actually no; God is clear in Scripture that employers are called to pay their workers fairly. See Romans 4:4 and James 5:4.)

During this time, I mentioned to a professional mentor of mine that I was feeling guilty about asking for a raise.

His response was simple, "Well, there is nothing wrong with stating the facts."

He was right. I had no reason to feel guilty about respectfully sharing the data around my reasons for seeking promotion or the amount I was hoping to receive. For me, the facts were this: My job responsibilities had nearly tripled over the past year and I had learned—from a few unsolicited job offers—that the market was paying significantly more for my position today than it was when I was hired.

Since that conversation, I've had the opportunity to manage several employees of my own. On this side of the table, I see even more how helpful it is for an employee to share a clear list of why a raise is warranted. As a manager, it's a huge joy to have the opportunity to reward my team financially for work well done and I love it when they share specific data that can help me justify a promotion to senior leadership during review cycles.

3 Asking for a raise should be more about your value than your ego.

I think the main reason my conversations with my boss went so well was because I was able to calmly share clear data related to why I deserved a pay raise. I needed to show my boss objectively that I was bringing enough value to the company to justify a pay increase, so I came prepared with clear metrics of my contributions. I was prepared with detail on what I was doing day-to-day to tangibly serve the company as well as the impact of those efforts.

Frankly, I would not have been able to do that had I not first taken time to separate my emotions from the facts. Once I did, the information was easy to gather and spoke for itself. By sharing the facts, it freed me up to speak confidently and show genuine gratitude.