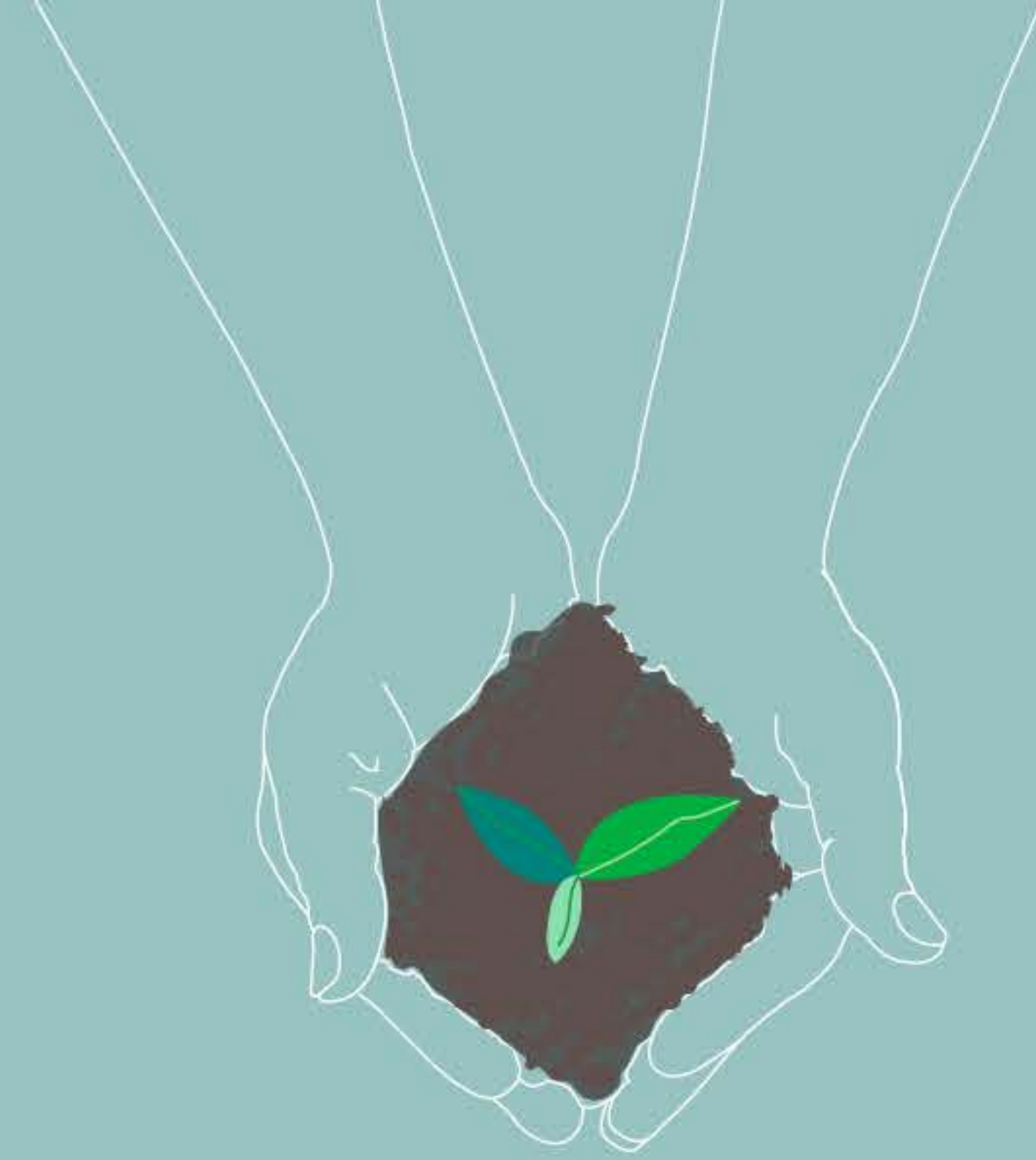


WORTH the RISK

JAN 30
PERSPECTIVE



GETTING STARTED

Welcome to our *Worth the Risk* series! Over the next five weeks, we'll explore how God is calling us to use our influence to spread the Gospel and make disciples in our Little Iowa.

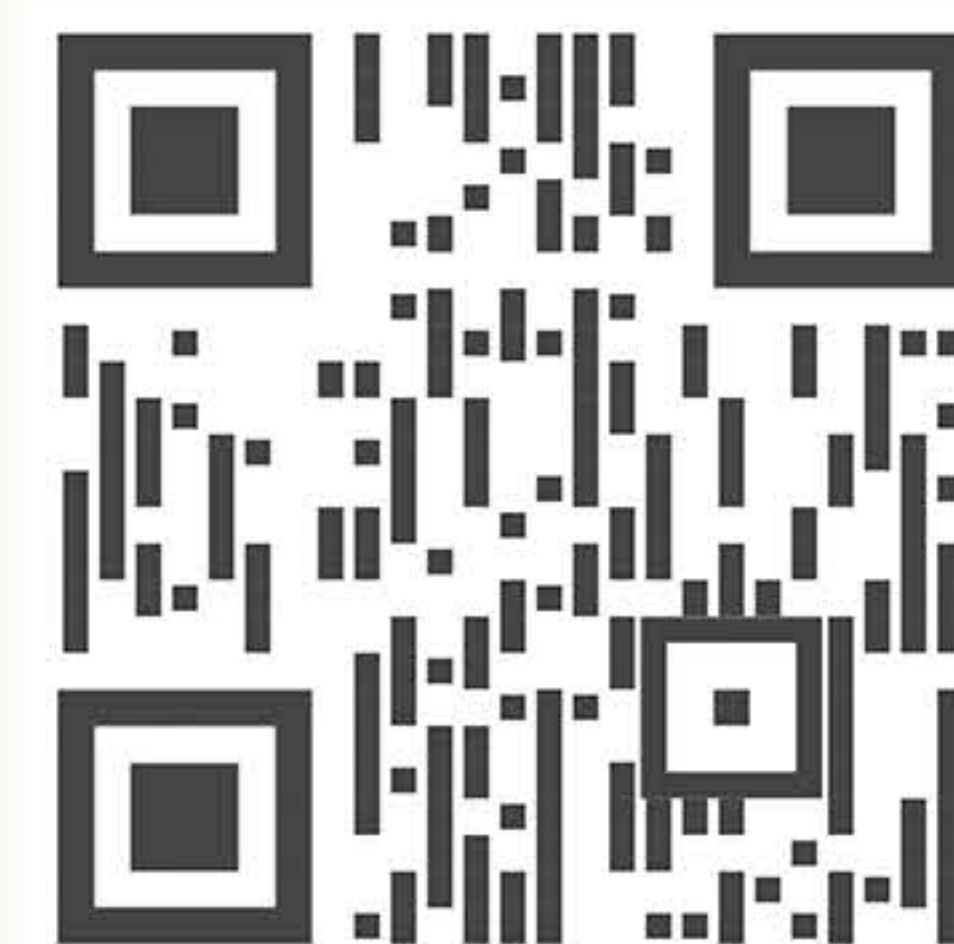
For those of you gathering in small groups during this series, here are four simple reminders as we get started:

- **You're here for a reason.** Great job saying yes to getting together in community. God will use this time you're giving Him.
- **Commit to being here.** From the beginning, make it a priority to show up each week. Consistency will help you grow in your relationship with God and your group.
- **Allow yourself to be known.** No matter your story or experience, your perspective and insight matters. God uses our vulnerability to build authentic relationships and bring healing.
- **Keep discussion confidential.** Commit to one another that what's said in your group stays in your group. We all need safe spaces to be open with God and one another.

INTRODUCTION

If you look back in your memory banks, you may remember a time when you or your kids read a *Choose Your Own Adventure* book. As we get started this week, we get relive that unique thrill together as we send you on your own digitally-daring adventure!

To get started, scan the QR code with the camera on your phone or go to prairielakes.org/game in your internet browser. From there, simply click on the image to get started on your thrilling adventure! If you're with your small group, make your decisions together as a team and see where it leads you.



DISCUSSION

How was your adventure? Did you find treasure beyond your wildest imagination? Did you find yourself trapped? Or maybe at a literal dead end? If you played through a few times hoping for a different result, or just because you were curious about the other outcomes, you may have noticed a better payoff by choosing the riskier path. And that's no accident.

This first week of our *Worth the Risk* series is all about reshaping our perspective. Each of us start with different thresholds and preferences in regards to risk. Some are more risk-averse while others may be risk-tolerant or even find a thrill or motivation in risk. It's important to know your natural perception of risk because it impacts your everyday decision-making. It may have even influenced the adventure you just traversed.

This weekend, we learned Jesus is calling us to consistently take risks for His mission, Kingdom and glory. Everything He asks us to do is risky. He says if you want to be first, you have to be last (Matthew 20:16), and if you want to live, you have to die (Matthew 16:25). It can sound like if we want to win, we have to lose first.

1. What is your natural inclination toward risk? Would you describe yourself as risk-averse, risk-tolerant or a risk-seeker? Why?
2. What's your response when you hear God's character and expectation is risk taking? Is that challenging or affirming to your perception of Him?

3. **Read Matthew 25:14-30**, the Parable of the Talents.

- For the servants who grew their master's wealth, what was their reward?
- For the servant who hid his master's wealth, what was his motivation?
- If you had the opportunity to steward someone's wealth, how would you care for it?
- Do you believe God has entrusted you with the wealth of His grace, mercy and love in Jesus?
Do you believe God is presenting an opportunity to care for that wealth?

As we shift our perspective from a personally-motivated lens to God's Kingdom-minded lens, we begin to evaluate the decisions we make and risks we take differently. We're no longer assessing based on our own benefit or protection but by how God's mission will benefit. When we align ourselves with God's mission in this way, we aren't just investing in the here and now. Our investment carries an eternal impact that never comes back empty. Regardless of the earthly results we see as a result of our Kingdom-minded risks, we can find support and grace in our risk-taking knowing our efforts with God will never pass away.

4. What are your barriers to taking the risks God is calling you to? Some examples may be:

Comfort	Judgement
Sacrifice	Health
The unknown	Time
Security	Others' expectations
Energy	Loss
Fear	The what ifs

Do any of your barriers carry a common theme?

What might be the opportunity cost of letting these barriers stand in your way?

When thinking of risk, we can carry a naturally negative mindset, asking ourselves, "What's the worst that could happen?" Instead, what if we shift our perspective asking, "What's the best that could happen?" We already know the end of the story. We know Jesus is returning to make everything right. So, imagine your own *Choose Your Own Adventure* story where you began making the riskier, Kingdom-minded choices because you know it leads to the real treasure at the end.

5. Have you ever dreamed about how God could use you in big ways to impact His Kingdom? What's one of those big dreams that could come true if you started making risky, Kingdom-minded decisions? What's the best that could happen?

PRAYER

Pray for your risk barriers, big dreams and for God to grow your confidence in pursuing Kingdom-minded risks with Him. If you're with your small group, share and pray for these together.

Next week, we'll explore how people are worth the risk. But until then, be on the lookout to start discovering new risks you can start taking yet this week!