



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to week two of our *Worth the Risk* series! Last week was all about reshaping our perspective on risk from a personally-motivated lens to God's Kingdom-minded lens. We learned how we can find support, grace and even confidence in our future decision making and risk taking when it's aligned with God's mission because we know we are making an eternal impact regardless of the earthly results.

Together, we challenged ourselves to start identifying the barriers and opportunities that lie ahead as we make this shift asking, "What's the best that could happen?"

As you've had time to process and pray about barriers and opportunities amidst the people and real-world realities of your week, take some time to answer the following questions. If you're with your small group, share your answers with one another.

- How has this perspective shift impacted your natural inclination toward risk?
- Have you discovered or clarified your barriers to a Kingdom-minded perspective?
- Have you discovered or clarified any risky opportunities to invest in?

At this point, you may have a good sense of the opportunities God has in front of you. Others of you may be looking for more context while some may feel like you're just taking shots in the dark. Regardless of what you're sorting through, we're going to start digging deeper into several aspects of our lives where Kingdom-minded investment is always worth the risk.

DISCUSSION

1. As we unpack taking risks with the people in our lives, let's start by looking back on a few specific and potentially memorable moments from our lives. If you're with your small group, share your answers and stories from a few of the questions below.

Who taught you:

- How to read?
- What feelings are?
- How to ride a bike?
- Algebra?
- Your sense of humor?
- How to drive?

Each of these moments are a result of someone investing in us. Whether sitting with us and the same children's book for hours or being introduced to someone's "classic comedy" movie collection, people risked their time, energy and maybe even their patience because they wanted to share and instill something important in us.

The same is true in our faith journey. At some point, someone took the risk to share who Jesus is with you. Regardless of their motivation or your response, they took the risk to share something important with you because you were important to them.

2. This weekend, we identified and wrote down who invested in our faith journey. Who did you write down? Why?

3. Read Matthew 28:16-20, the Great Commission.

- What are Jesus' commands to His disciples?
- Jesus' commands are not only directed to His immediate disciples but all who believe in Him at any time. What is your response to having Jesus' call to make disciples placed upon you?
- Because of Jesus' authority, He has the right to issue commands and the ability to help us carry them out. How does it feel knowing Jesus promised to be with us regardless of our successes or failures?

After Jesus' resurrection, He gives His disciples a clear, people-centric command: to make disciples, baptize and teach them to obey Jesus. In following this command, the disciples established the first community of believers that quickly spread across geography and demographics. Generation after generation of Jesus' disciples have followed this same command all the way to us today. God's mission for us is focused on people. Throughout Scripture, we hear God's heartbeat for us to take risks with people as we love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39), love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-45), love each other as God has loved us (John 15:12) and make disciples. No mission is more important.

4. Take a deep breath and consider:

- What is most important to you right now? Consider what your most common thoughts, feelings and motivations gravitate toward. Are they focused on a particular goal, person, item, desire, feeling or belief?
- If what's most important to you isn't making disciples, why might that be the case?

We have to admit the command to go and make disciples can sound intimidating, overwhelming and even confusing at first. But, God isn't expecting perfection or us to follow His commands out of sheer obligation. We must draw from the joy of our ongoing relationship with God to inspire, renew and shape our desire for others to experience the same freedom and hope we've found. Out of this continual renewal with God, He calls us to be obedient to each small step and opportunity we can find with the people He's placed in our Little Iowa.

This will still require risk. We can influence the people around us by representing Jesus in our attitudes, actions and reactions, but a time will come when you have to choose - like those who came before you - to take the risk and share Jesus with them.

So, how can you get started now? Begin intentionally investing in one person. Look back on how others invested in you. Imagine how their life might look if they discovered the same joy and hope you have in Jesus. Start some additional conversations, invite them to spend time with you and pay attention to the small nudges God gives you along the way.

5. This weekend, we identified and wrote down who we are, or could be, investing in. Who did you write down? Why?

- What are the first steps you can take investing in them?
- Remember our perspective shift. What's the best that could happen by investing in this person?
- How can you regularly refresh and renew God's calling to make disciples in your Little Iowa?

PRAYER

Pray for the one person God's placed in front of you to take a risk investing in. If you're with your small group, write down each name so you can pray for them together. If reflecting back on some old memories brought specific people to mind, thank God for their investment and look for opportunities to reach out and thank them this week.

We'll see you again next week as we examine why our property is worth the risk!