



## INTRODUCTION

It's time for Week Four of our Worth The Risk series! Last week, we dug into how our money and stuff is a gift from God that belongs to Him. Living in this truth helps loosen the grip our property can have on our lives and encourages us to use the gifts God's blessed us with to bless others. As Pastor John said last week, "According to Jesus, the real risk is NOT being Kingdom-minded with our stuff."

Together, we committed to identifying a few simple, achievable steps in taking Kingdom-minded risks with our property. Take a few minutes to answer the questions below and if you're with your small group, share your answers.

- What was one Kingdom opportunity you identified in regards to your property this week?
- Did you identify any new risks or warning signs in your life in regards to your property?
- What step did you take in taking a risk with your property? If you didn't, what got in the way?

At this point in the series, these review questions may have started to feel a little familiar and the topics may be blurring together. But remember, we don't want to just learn and talk about the risks God is calling us to take; we want to apply our learning and take action in the unique circumstances and contexts of our lives. Looking back gives us an opportunity to reflect, reassess and celebrate answered prayers while holding ourselves and one another accountable.

And quick side note: Some of you have been wondering if there's a way to win the Choose Your Own Adventure Game from Week One. And the answer is YES. If you haven't escaped with the lost jewels of Prairie Seas yet, we recommend running through the shipyard and fighting a shark. 🐟

## DISCUSSION

The vast majority of us have at least one social media account. And if you've spent a decent amount of time on any of them (or recall some insights on social media algorithms from our Attention War series), you know how they attempt to recommend something you might find interesting to keep you scrolling or even make a purchase.

Based on just a few likes and follows, social media companies begin to paint a picture of who they believe us to be and deliver targeted content as a result. Each time we login or open their app, they have a platform they're utilizing to influence our thoughts and behavior.

- 1. Based on your social media recommendations, what interests do these platforms think you have? Are they accurate or inaccurate? If you're with your small group, are there any themes across your recommendations?**
- 2. Have you noticed any changes in your behavior or have you developed any new interests as a result of recommendations from social media?**

The power of social media is often in the scope of its platform. Influencers who make a career on social media are able to do so because they have the consistent attention of a group of people they're communicating with every day (or even every hour). Good, bad or indifferent, they've worked to develop an intentional platform – an opportunity to communicate ideas or information to a person or group. Which in turn, influences them.

The scale of social media and influencers can often make it seem like platforms really only matter or carry impact when they're really large. But we encounter platforms all over our Little Iowa too. The people we regularly engage with at school, work, in our families or neighborhoods influence us each and every day. Which means you carry a platform of your own as well.

### **3. Do you believe you have a platform? Why or why not?**

God has gifted all of us with a platform. It is a unique encouragement to know no matter our circumstances, we have the ability and opportunity to influence others. It means people are listening to you. It means people are watching you. It means your actions and reactions matter. While this kind of influence is a gift, we have a responsibility to steward this gift well. Just as God has blessed us with property so we can bless others in our generosity, God has blessed us with a platform so we can bless others in our influence.

### **4. Read Matthew 5:14-16.**

During Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He calls His followers to be light. This metaphor tells us to radiate God's love out into the world and guide people along the right path. That the evidence of our love for others is so obviously motivated by our love for God that people praise Him as a result.

- Are you aware of the influence of your platform in your Little Iowa? Do you know how your kids perceive you? What you're like in a meeting? Or how a room changes when you walk in?
- Do you think your platform is radiating this light? Why or why not? Think back on the implications of Jesus' command we learned from Pastor John to inform your answer:
  - o Are you humbly receiving this gift of light from God?
  - o Are you boldly owning or burying your light in your Little Iowa?
  - o Are you walking more and talking less so people can see God's glory through you?
  - o Is there less of you and more of Jesus represented in your interactions with your Little Iowa?

As we approach this next week, continue evaluating your platform. Whether you find you need to course correct an undermining behavior or maximize an existing opportunity, remember God has given you the influence you have and placed you in your Little Iowa for a reason. Capitalize on the existing opportunities and the unique ways God has wired you to influence others for the Kingdom.

### **5. What existing platform of influence can you invite God into this week? How can you more intentionally display Jesus' character in this area of your Little Iowa?**

Contrary to social media's value of a platform, it's not about how many you impact or influence; it's about the type of impact you make in the lives of others. It will always be worth the risk to authentically represent the grace and truth of Jesus in our Little Iowa so others can come to know Him as we do.

## **PRAYER**

If you're with your small group, take some time writing down one another's platforms of influence to pray for this week. Then, pray for God to clarify, convict, redirect and encourage how best to utilize this influence in our Little Iowa. Pray for a bold humility that keeps us open-handed with the gifts of influence God's granted us. Close your prayer by celebrating and thanking God for the influence we've been given; that God has invited us to play a unique part in His Kingdom work.

We'll see you next week as we wrap up our Worth The Risk series by making some action plans!