

SCRIPTURE CARD GUIDE FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

"NEVER TAKE RISKS" MAY 28 & MAY 29

SERIES OVERVIEW: "7 EASY WAYS TO DERAIL THE CHURCH"

In the U.S. more churches are closing than opening. As the church, we need to recognize what causes this trend. While some might point to a changing culture, a deeper look into the churches that closed reveals several common denominators. In this series, we distill points from Thom Rainer's book, "Autopsy of a Deceased Church" to reveal seven main factors that lead to a church declining, and ultimately dying. Looking at how the church of Acts avoided these pitfalls, we better understand, not only why the early church grew, but how the church today, can avoid these traps and continue our mission of more people experiencing the power of the Gospel.

*Follow the directions below for a guided group discussion with a friend, in a family, small group, etc.
Grab a Scripture Card (printed or electronic) and simply follow steps from 1 to 6 on this page and the next.*

1

OPENING PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE:

About 3 minutes

Ask a volunteer to open in prayer.

2

BIG IDEA:

A minute to read

One of the sneakiest traps that Satan uses is the trap of complacency; the idea that we can just sit back and never take any risks. However, as Paul shows us throughout Acts, church growth and the Gospel advancing happens when risks are being taken to reach people. These risks for Jesus are necessary, and not only do they help reach others with the good news of Jesus, but they cultivate a heart of trust inside each and every one of us as well.



May 28 & 29, 2022

⁴² The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to make sure they didn't swim ashore and escape.
⁴³ But the commanding officer wanted to spare Paul, so he didn't let them carry out their plan. Then he ordered all who could swim to jump overboard first and make for land.
- Acts 27:42-43 NLT

Reflect

Read the full passage in your Bible - Acts 27:27-44

What word or phrase is the Holy Spirit highlighting from the scripture reading?

What might be God's invitation to you in this?

What might be God's challenge to you in this?

How might God be calling you to respond?
Be curious...and then do it.

DISCUSSION HELP:

Use follow-up questions to take the discussion deeper. Guide answers to be honest and real.

Can you say more about that?

How have you seen that play out in your life?

What does that stir up in you?

Has anyone else had a similar thought or experience?

What might God be inviting you to do?

3

INTRO QUESTION:

About 5 minutes

What is your boating preference and why?

- 1) Speedboat
- 2) Kayak in rivers or boundary waters
- 3) Pontoon on a lake
- 4) Fishing or rowboat
- 5) Sailboat
- 6) Cruise ship
- 7) None of the above!

4

SCRIPTURE READING + GROUP DISCUSSION

About 40-45 minutes

Acts 27 describes a scary storm raging around them. How do you tend to react when you are afraid? Is it easier to take more risks or less risks when you are in a storm of life? Explain.

In this passage we see risks taken to stay alive: cut the lifeboats, throw the wheat overboard, cut the anchors, run the ship aground, and swim for shore. There were risks to doing nothing too! How does a false sense of safety come about when we don't take risks? How does your trust in God grow as you face the risks you see, and those you don't see?

What does complacency in your faith life look like? What would taking a risk in your faith life look like?

Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28. What did Paul endure to share the Good News? Read Acts 28:30-31. What benefits did Paul's time in Rome provide after all the suffering? Read Philipians 3:8-11. What would Paul say has infinite value and eternal worth above all else?





5 CLOSING GROUP PRAYER:

About 10 minutes

Read the prayer section on the card aloud. Allow for a time of personal reflection and silent prayer.

On a note card write your name and the following opening prayer lines: *"Dear God, thank you for..."* and *"One area or way I ask You Lord God to reawaken my faith and grow my trust in You is..."* Complete the sentences on the card. Put all the cards on a table in the middle of the room and have each person chose a card to take home. Pray for the person whose card you select. Connect back with this person in a few weeks and ask how God is answering the prayer.

TAKE IT DEEPER

Pray

Take a moment to be still in God's presence...(after a moment) offer this prayer: "Lord Jesus, I'm here to connect with you, to just be with you as your child."

Invite God to show you if you've become complacent in your faith (and to not be afraid to take an honest look at this).

Thank God that he has the power to awaken hearts, and reawaken hearts...like yours!

Live It Out

Taking a risk to live like Jesus can be uncomfortable, even scary. Start with prayer...what risk might Jesus be calling to you to take this week to be more like him, to live the Gospel? Trust Jesus for the confidence that he is with you and for the courage to act. Make a plan and do it!

6 LIVE IT OUT:

About 5 minutes

Read the "Live It Out" section and invite the group to take the steps noted.