

WHAT MATTERS

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Part 5 - "Formula for Success"

Small Group Material

February 5th, 2017

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *Always think next step!*

Study Verses: *2 Corinthians 5:7, Romans 1:16-17, Mark 10:17-21, Psalm 34:8, Hebrews 11:6*

Define The Win: *Participants would recognize how valuing the discovery process is an important piece in their transformation process. They would be able to pinpoint the situations where they are attempting to control rather than display faith.*

Key Points

- *Valuing discovery keeps us curious about the future and engaged in the process, even when the desired results don't come right away.*
- *Faith is the heart set by which our experience catches up with reality.*
- *We love formulas because they establish predictable and controllable outcomes.*
- *In the face of uncertainty, our default mindset is "tell me what to do and I'll do it." This promotes excuses and prevents ownership.*
- *If we're not careful, we'll use the Bible to find answers rather than to relate to God.*
- *Each step of faith we take provides us with an opportunity to discover things about God we didn't know before.*
- *Discovery breaks our tendency to control and execute by pushing us to trust and obey.*
- *Discovery makes room for our struggle, doubts and questions.*

- *When you can see 10 steps down the path, you don't need any faith to take the first step. Faith requires uncertainty.*
- *It's possible to have all the right answers but no understanding.*

ENCOUNTER

- **How would you describe or define DISCOVERY? Why is it important that our church community values discovery? How is understanding and valuing discovery critical in your own life?**
- **What is the difference between always thinking "next step" and always thinking "next steps"? Which one leads people towards discovery and which one pushes people to control their circumstances?**
- **What is the danger in viewing the Bible solely as an answer book? How does having a "just tell me what to do and I'll do it" mindset influence the way we approach scripture?**
- **How do you typically respond to situations where uncertainty is present? Would you describe yourself as a control freak? Why or why not? What makes you answer in the way that you do?**

FORMATION

- **Read Mark 10:17-21. In this passage, how did Jesus value and exemplify discovery? In what ways did Jesus get to the heart of the issue at hand? What did Jesus want the Rich Young Ruler to discover and see?**
- **Read Romans 1:16-17. How does this passage speak to embracing the process of faith? How does embracing discovery lead to trust and an inner change that is visible to others?**
- **Read Psalm 34:8. What does it mean to "taste and see" that the Lord is good? What have you done with this invitation?**
- **Read 2 Corinthians 5:7 and Hebrews 11:6. What is it about our faith that pleases God? Why is our willingness to display faith and pursue discovery so valuable to Him?**

EXPRESSION

- **Where are you reluctant to take your next step of faith because you are focused on how the other steps farther down the path will pan out? What would it look like to display courage, step out in obedience and think "next step"?**
- **Are there any situations in your life where you doing everything in your power to control the outcome? Why are you fighting for control in this area? What makes you reluctant to let go and trust?**

- Think of a current struggle (relationship issues, poor choices, difficult life circumstance, feeling disconnected from God, etc.). How can you take this struggle and use it as an opportunity to practice the value of discovery?

LEADER INSIGHT: *As a church community, we pride ourselves in valuing discovery. Why? Without discovery, faith is impossible. When you feel that you have all the right answers, there is no need to be a learner. Curiosity isn't required. Humility is never displayed. One simply stops growing because they believe they've arrived. We all know people like this. They have all the "right" answers, but very little to no understanding. The truth hasn't changed them. All that head knowledge hasn't managed to work its way into their heart. A transformed life is nowhere to be found.*

You don't need to trust anyone if you think you have everything under control. But, here's the thing about control - it's an illusion at best. The only predictable thing about living in this world is its unpredictability. No matter how much effort we put into letting our control freak nature determine every facet of our life, we've already lost. It only takes a small gust of wind for our feeble house of cards to come crashing down and for us coming face-to-face with the reality that there is only one God and we are not it.

Our response to life's uncertainties can push us to look toward God and His Word. Yet, we must get gut level honest about our reasoning for doing so. If we're not careful, we'll use the Bible to find answers rather than to relate to God. In the face of uncertainty, our default mindset is "tell me what to do and I'll do it." This promotes excuses and prevents ownership. We love formulas because they establish predictable and controllable outcomes. Certainty is the enemy of faith. When you can see 10 steps down the path, you don't need any faith to take the first step. Faith requires uncertainty.

Discovery keeps us curious about the future and engaged in the process, even when the desired results don't come right away. Faith is the heart set by which our experience catches up with reality. Each step of faith we take provides us with an opportunity to discover things about God we didn't know before. The foundation of a relationship isn't our behavior, but trust. Discovery makes room for our struggle, doubts and questions. When we embrace discovery, we make good mistakes and fail in the right direction. Discovery breaks our tendency to control and execute by pushing us to trust and obey. We need to stop living according to the plans we've made and instead embrace the process of discovery to know God more. If we put ourselves in situations where we collide with God's truth and allow it to be formed in our heart, we can't help but be transformed.