

Falling Short

hope amidst our failures

a newstory church series

Pt I: Faithfulness Over Success

Pastor J.R. Briggs

Ice Breaker: How do you define success in your life? Take a moment to share your honest answer with the group. Where do you think that definition came from—family, culture, social media, past experiences?

1. Pastor J.R. shared that an idol as "a good thing that we make an ultimate thing." What are some good things in your life that you might be tempted to make ultimate things? How can you tell when something has crossed that line?
2. Arthur Brooks' "idol game" mentioned money, power, pleasure, and prestige. Which of these four do you find yourself most drawn to, and why do you think that is?
3. Henri Nouwen identified four false voices about identity: "I am what I do," "I am what I have," "I am what others say I am," and "I am what I have accomplished." Which of these voices speaks loudest in your own head? What would it look like to quiet that voice?
4. In the Parable of the Talents, the servant with one bag (or talent) was paralyzed by fear and a distorted view of the master. When have you held back from using what God has given you because of fear or a distorted view of who God is?
5. "Your truest identity is not earned, achieved, or proven—it's received." Why is it so difficult for us to simply receive our identity rather than try to earn it? What would change in your daily life if you truly believed this?
6. The sermon called us to "joyful surrender," which might mean surrendering what we thought our life, career, or family would look like. What dreams or expectations might God be asking you to surrender right now? What makes this difficult?
7. Pastor J.R. concluded: "The gospel frees us into a different metric. Of allowing Christ to define us, not what we do or how well we do it." What is one practical step you can take this week to live more out of your belovedness rather than performance? How can this group support you in that?