

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH



Community Group Discussion Guide – Life In Technicolor Week #7

Can You Handle Success? / October 31, 2021 / Pastor Paul Taylor

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker – “Best and Worst” | Have each person share about their best and worst moments from the previous week or since your group last met. If you want to dig deeper, individuals can share their best and worst moments from multiple areas of their life – family, work, relationship with God, etc.

2. This week’s examination of Joseph’s life was primarily about the choice we have to either humble or exalt ourself before God. Read the verses below and discuss the corresponding questions.

a) When we choose to exalt ourself and walk in pride, the results can be disastrous. Not only do we face opposition from God, but we struggle with our earthly relationships. For example, successful people who walk in pride tend to drive away others, while unsuccessful people who walk in pride tend to come across as foolish.

How have you experienced the relational consequences (with God and others) of walking in pride?

b) Those who’ve experienced success and still walk in great humility display a beauty and draw others to themselves. Is there someone you know personally who displays this beauty of humility? If so, what is one aspect of their life you try to model in your own life?

1 Peter 5:5 (ESV) – ...Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Proverbs 11:2 (NLT) – Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Proverbs 16:5 (NLT) – The Lord detests the proud; they will surely be punished.

DIVING DEEPER

3. Pastor Paul shared that prosperity (i.e., success) can often be a harder test for us to face than adversity. Whereas during adversity we’re tempted to think that God has abandoned us, during prosperity we’re tempted to forget or altogether abandon God.

One of the main characters of the Old Testament book of Daniel depicts this struggle with prosperity. King Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler of the largest empire in the world at the time – the Babylonian Empire. Yet despite repeated encounters with God and even brief moments of praising God because of his interactions with Daniel and other Jewish exiles (see Daniel 2-3), King Nebuchadnezzar continued to exalt himself. Read Daniel 4:28-37 together and discuss the corresponding questions.

Daniel 4:28-37 (NLT) – ²⁸All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?” ³¹Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, “This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal

authority has been taken from you. ³²You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.”

³³Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. ³⁴At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. ³⁵All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?”

³⁶At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. ³⁷Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

- a) What stands out to you from King Nebuchadnezzar’s story? What can we learn about humility from the transformation King Nebuchadnezzar undergoes in verses 34-37?

 - b) Why do you think it might be harder to connect and develop intimacy with God during times of prosperity than during times of adversity? Have you experienced this in your life? If you’re willing, share about that with the group.

 - c) As we saw in the passage, God ultimately humbled King Nebuchadnezzar. While our own personal humbling stories may not be as dramatic, can you think of a time God humbled you and drew you out of a state of pride? If so, would you consider this humbling an act of God’s grace toward you?
4. All power belongs to God, and God gives that power out for us to steward well as we lead others. Read the following verses together and discuss the corresponding questions.
- Revelation 19:1 (NIV)** – After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
- John 19:10-11 (NIV)** – ¹⁰“Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” ¹¹Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”
- Matthew 23:1-12 (NIV)** – ¹Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ²“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. ⁵“Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels

on their garments long; ⁶they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others. ⁸"But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

a) Where and with whom has God given you power? How would you describe your leadership style?

b) Jesus' rebuke of the religious leaders in Matthew 23 is also a teaching moment with his disciples. What observations about leadership (both good and bad) stand out to you from this passage?

5. As we witness through the life of Joseph, God desires to give success and power to those who humble themselves. Read the following passages of scripture and discuss the corresponding questions.

James 4:10 (NIV) – Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Matthew 10:24-33 (NIV) – ²⁴"The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! ²⁶"So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. ²⁸Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. ³⁰And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. ³²"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

a) What do Jesus' words in Matthew 10:24-33 have to teach us about the posture of humility? Call out all of the observations you find in this text.

b) How can we continue to grow in developing and living out of a posture of humility?

TAKING IT HOME

6. God ultimately gives us success and power so that we can bless others. We're to be conduits of God's power and blessing, not containers! We see that most clearly in the example of Jesus Christ, and Jesus calls his followers to imitate his example.

Right now, do you feel more like a conduit or a container of the power and blessings God has graciously given you? How might God be asking you to make a more profound impact on those around you?

Philippians 2:3-9 (NIV) – ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. ⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

Mark 10:42-45 (NIV) – ⁴²Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

PRAYER REQUESTS

-
-
-

RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. **2022 Discipleship School** | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God’s voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, or to apply for the Discipleship School, click on the link below. <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>
2. **Baptisms – Sunday November 21st** | We believe baptism is an integral part of your spiritual journey and necessary as you seek to become a fully engaged follower of Christ. If you've recently decided to follow Jesus or you've been a Christ follower for a while but never gotten baptized, now is the perfect time to take this next step! Learn more and sign up by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/baptism/>.
3. **Plan A Visit** | Have an individual or family you want to invite to Rivers Crossing? If so, we’d love for them to utilize our Plan A Visit tool. Share this link with them: <https://connect-card.com/zTE3I3TXmFG0TgizStLj>.