

Discovery Learning Process

Living and Leading Well:

Navigating Mid-Life Ministry

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Instructions: Read the Introduction and each chapter, complete the Evaluation and Application (E & A) questions, and discuss each chapter with a small group of folks who have read and completed the E & A questions using the Introduction and chapter DISCUSSION questions provided below. Page numbers listed for the DISCUSSION questions are based on the hard copy of Starting Well.

Chapter 1: Few Leaders Finish Well

Evaluation and Application:

1. How are you doing in the middle of your race? Are you tempted to quit? Are you feeling some pain, fatigue, or frustration?
2. How has the enemy been attacking you and trying to get you to quit the race?
3. What things have you done to shore up your defenses?
4. Which one of the traps mentioned (loss of courage, complacency, burnout, busyness, disillusionment, pride, or lack of discipline) have you experienced? What have you or are you learning about how to work through it?
5. How did or is God getting you freed up so that you can continue to run with greater freedom and confidence?

DISCUSSION

1. What is your concept of what it means to finish well in life and leadership?
2. Why is finishing well more like a marathon than a sprint? (p. 2-4)
3. What are the six barriers to finishing well? (p. 5)
4. What are the seven traps that mid-life leaders can fall into? (p. 6-13)

5. Which of these traps are you most vulnerable to?
6. How does grace fit into your understanding of navigating mid-life ministry and finishing well?
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 1 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 2: Mid-Life Challenges

Evaluation and Application

1. Do you have any patterns that God may want to break in your life so that you can become more free and effective in life and leadership? What are they? How does God want you to partner with him in this process?
2. Prayerfully think about David and his fall. What can you learn from David and how do you intend to keep from repeating his experience?
3. Which of the mid-life challenges are you facing? How are you doing with them? Do you have anybody who you can talk to and pray with about these challenges? If not, what is your plan for connecting with the right person or people who can support you during this season of your life?
4. What is your understanding of spiritual warfare? Read and study Ephesians 6: 10-20 and evaluate whether you have all of your spiritual armor on. If not, what equipment or weapon do you need to appropriate and how do you plan to do this?

DISCUSSION

1. What is your definition of personal change (transformation)?
2. Why is change in some areas easier/harder than in other areas?
3. What do you think about the statement that “if you’re not broken, you’re not much good to the Kingdom of God”? (p. 18)
4. What is your understanding of humility and brokenness?
5. What are the seven responsibilities and challenges of mid-life ministry? (p. 19-20)

6. What other responsibilities and challenges are you or have you faced in mid-life?
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 2 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 3: Examining Your Foundations

Evaluation and Application

1. What's in your toolbox? What are the right tools that you need to be the person God wants you to be so that you can partner with him in his purpose for your life? If you are missing some necessary tools, how do you go about getting them?
2. What is The I Timothy 1: 5 Principle and why is it important? Which side of Diagram 3 are you on? If you are on the left side (moving toward flesh, frustration, futility, failure), how do you get on the right side (moving toward passion, presence, power, productivity)?
3. How did you do on the Love Inventory (Appendix A)? How do you cultivate love in those areas where you are weaker? How do you use love as a primary tool for influencing others?
4. What did you learn from examining and comparing the lives of David and Caleb? Why did one finish well while the other did not? What was the legacy of David and Caleb?

DISCUSSION

1. What do you think about the "impression" of God's toolbox? (p. 24-26)
2. What are the "tools" of the Kingdom?
3. What is the "I Timothy 1:5 Principle"? (p. 27)
4. According to I Timothy 1:5, what is the goal and what are the means to the goal? (p. 28-33)
5. How does the "I Timothy 1:5 Principle" lead to focus, spiritual authority, and finishing well? (p. 34-35)

6. What happens when we do not establish, maintain, and enlarge our spiritual formation foundation (pure heart, clear conscience, sincere heart)? (p. 44)
7. What one insight have you gained from the Introduction and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 4: 10 Warning Signs of Burnout

Evaluation and Application

1. What is the definition of burnout? Why is establishing, maintaining, and enlarging our foundation of intimacy important for navigating the challenges of mid-life if we want to finish well? How would you rate your devotional life? What areas do you need to improve and how are you going to go about it?
2. What intimacy cracks did you discover in your foundation? If you have any, how are you going to repair them?
3. How did you do on the Burnout Inventory? What are the specific area(s) that you are vulnerable? How are you going to strengthen these areas and guard yourself from becoming more vulnerable to burnout?
4. What did you learn from studying the life of Elijah? What lessons do you need to apply to your own life and how do you plan to do so?

DISCUSSION

1. What is your definition of burnout? (p. 49-50)
2. What is meant by “intimacy cracks” in your foundation? (p. 50-51)
3. What are the seven sources of burnout? (p. 51-53)
4. How do these sources contribute to “intimacy cracks” in our foundations?
5. What are the ten “warning signs” of burnout? (p. 54-63)
6. What did you learn about burnout from studying the life of Elijah? (p. 63-66)

7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 4 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 5 – 10 Warning Signs of Blowout (Paul)

Evaluation and Application

1. What is the definition of blowout? Why is establishing, maintaining, and enlarging our foundation of integrity important for navigating the challenges of mid-life if we want to finish well? How would you rate your integrity? What areas do you need to improve and how are you going to go about it?
2. What integrity cracks did you discover in your foundation? If you have any, how are you going to repair them?
3. How did you do on the Blowout Inventory? What are the specific area(s) that you are vulnerable? How are you going to strengthen these areas and guard yourself from becoming more vulnerable to blowout?
4. What did you learn from studying the life of Samson? What lessons do you need to apply to your own life and how do you plan to do so?

DISCUSSION

1. What is your definition of blowout? (p. 72-73)
2. What is meant by “integrity cracks” in your foundation? (p. 74-75)
3. What are the seven sources of blowout? (p. 75-78)
4. How do these sources contribute to “integrity cracks” in our foundations?
5. What are the ten “warning signs” of blowout? (p. 78-87)
6. What did you learn about blowout from studying the life of Samson? (p. 63-66)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 5 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 6: 10 Warning Signs of Plateauing

Evaluation and Application

1. What is the definition of plateauing? Why is establishing, maintaining, and enlarging our foundation of faith (TRUST) important for navigating the challenges of mid-life if we want to finish well? How would you rate your faithfulness? What areas do you need to improve and how are you going to go about it?
2. What did you learn about personal and organizational plateauing? What did you learn about faith dynamics? What insights have you gained that will help you remain faithful in your personal life and organizational leadership?
3. What trust cracks did you discover in your foundation? If you have any, how are you going to repair them?
4. How did you do on the Plateauing Inventory? What are the specific area(s) that you are vulnerable? How are you going to strengthen these areas and guard yourself from becoming more vulnerable to plateauing?
5. What did you learn from studying the life of Gideon? What lessons do you need to apply to your own life and how do you plan to do so?

DISCUSSION

1. What is your definition of plateauing? (p. 95-96)
2. What is the “Faith/Vision Cycle” and why is it important to developing a trusting relationship with God? (p. 98-102, Diagram 6 on p. 100)
3. What is meant by “trust cracks” in your foundation? (p. 102-103)
4. What are the five sources of plateauing? (p. 51-53) How do they contribute to “trust cracks” in our foundations?
5. What are the ten “warning signs” of plateauing? (p. 109-115)
6. What did you learn about burnout from studying the life of Gideon? (p. 116-118)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 6 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 7: Establishing Disciplines of Faithfulness

Evaluation and Application

1. What are the five disciplines of faithfulness? What do you think of them? What disciplines would you delete or add to your own list?
2. Do you have a strategy for remaining faithful? If so, what is it and how are you doing? If not, what do you need to do to start developing one and when do you plan to have your plan in place?
3. What is your overall assessment of your life and leadership (based on the five assessments)? What are you doing well? What areas do you need to develop and how are you going to address these areas?
4. Are you accountable to anybody? If so, who is it and how does this person hold you accountable? If not, what is your plan to get real accountability in your life and when do you plan to begin?

DISCUSSION

1. What do you think about the statement that, “faithfulness over the long haul will produce fruitfulness and fulfillment”? (p. 123)
2. What do you think about GOAL SETTING? What has been your experience with this? (p. 124-130)
3. What do you think about SELF-EVALUATION? What has been your experience with this? (p. 130-132)
4. What do you think about SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES? What has been your experience with this? (p. 132-134)
5. What do you think about COMMITMENT TO MARRIAGE AND FAMILY? What has been your experience with this? (p. 134-135)
6. What do you think about RECREATION? What has been your experience with this? (p. 136-137)

7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 7 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 8: Moving Towards Focus

Evaluation and Application:

1. What is Godly vision and why is it important for the Christian leader?
2. How does a Godly vision help Christian leaders in their decision-making?
3. How does Godly vision help Christian leaders to gain a clearer sense of life and leadership purpose?
4. What are the primary “attacks” on Godly vision that the Christian leader needs to be aware of?
5. What are the antidotes to these “attacks”? How can you apply them to your life?
6. How are you doing on discovering and being purposeful in fulfilling God’s vision and purpose for your life and leadership? What is going right and what changes do you need to make to maximize your purpose?

DISCUSSION

1. What is your understanding of God’s will and his guidance for decision-making?
2. How do you go about making major life decisions?
3. What is your understanding of “focused living”? (p. 142-143)
4. What is the role of “vision” in God’s will and decision-making? (p. 146-147)
5. How does the “Parable of the Sower” (Clinton paraphrase) relate to vision and focus? (p. 149-150)
6. What are the four “attackers” of vision clarity? (p. 150-155)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 8 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 9: Articulating Ministry Philosophy

Evaluation and Application:

1. What does an effective philosophy of ministry look like? And why is it important?
2. How does “giftedness” (spiritual gifts, natural abilities, and acquired skills) relate to an effective philosophy of ministry?
3. What is resonance and why is it important for owning your philosophy of ministry and functioning effectively from it?
4. What is the role of personal values in discovering and developing your philosophy of ministry? Why is an understanding of core values important for developing your philosophy of ministry?
5. What are your core values and your philosophy of ministry? Are you satisfied with your current understanding of this? If not, what action steps do you plan to take to gain clarity on these important issues?

DISCUSSION

1. What is meant by resonance and dissonance? (p. 158)
2. What is an effective “ministry philosophy” and why is it important to know what it is? (p. 160-162)
3. How do values relate to an effective ministry philosophy? (p. 163-165)
4. What are your personal values?
5. What is your ministry philosophy?
6. What is meant by “effective methodologies” and how do they relate to ministry philosophy? (p. 170)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 9 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 10: Finding the Right Role

Evaluation and Application:

1. What are the four key factors that help produce a focused Life? Where are you at in your understanding of each of these?
2. What is meant by “ideal ministry (or leadership) role”? How does a leader go about finding or creating this ideal role?
3. How do ministry philosophy, ideal role, and unique methodologies work together in a focused life?
4. Why is focus so important in mid-life? How are you doing? What might you do to gain a better, more clear sense of life focus?
5. What is your ideal role? What are you doing or can you do to work toward realizing your unique role?

DISCUSSION

1. What is your understanding of living a “focused life”? (p. 175-176)
2. What are the four “factors” of a focused life? (p. 175)
3. What qualities make up the “right role” for effective leadership? (p. 177-178)
4. What guidelines are helpful for finding the right role for leaders in their second/third ten years of ministry? (p. 179-181)
5. What is your “ideal” job description?
6. How does it compare to your current ministry role?
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 10 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 11: Accountability and Mentoring (Paul)

Evaluation and Application

1. Why do we need mentoring? Why do you need mentoring?
2. Who is mentoring you? Who are you mentoring?
3. How are you doing in your mentoring? What are you learning about mentoring? What are your strengths as a mentor? What are your weaknesses as a mentor? How can you use your strengths while becoming more effective in your areas of weakness?
4. What did you learn about mentoring and empowering from the example of Barnabas? How do you plan to apply this to your life and leadership?
5. Do you need a mentor? If so, what kind of mentoring do you need? How do you plan to go about finding the right mentor?

DISCUSSION

1. What is your definition of mentoring? (p. 190, 199)
2. How does mentoring compare to other empowering relationships like teaching, coaching, spiritual direction, and counseling?
3. What are the three types (levels of involvement) of mentoring? (p. 191)
4. What are the roles of the Bible and the Holy Spirit in spiritual mentoring? (p. 192)
5. What are the characteristics of effective mentors? (p. 193)
6. How do you go about establishing and maintaining a healthy mentoring relationship? (p. 194-195)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 11 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

Chapter 12: Living and Leading Well (Richard)

Evaluation and Application

1. What did you learn about openness from I Corinthians 10? Why is openness especially important for leaders as they attempt to navigate mid-life challenges?

2. What did you learn about hospitality and the lordship of Christ from John 1? What are the issues in your life that keep you from allowing Christ to take complete residency in your life?

3. Which of the Biblical examples (King Saul, Zechariah, the Religious Leaders and Jesus, Abram, Martha, Nicodemus, or Jeremiah) did you most identify with? Why and what insights did you gain?

4. What do you need to do to make sure that your spiritual foundation is strong enough to navigate mid-life and prepare you to finish well and leave a lasting legacy?

DISCUSSION

1. Why are times of personal renewal important during mid-life? (p. 211)

2. What is meant by “openness”? (p. 212)

3. What happens when life and leadership just don’t seem to be working out the way we thought they were supposed to? (p. 212-214)

4. Which of the seven Bible characters did you learn the most from?

5. What did you learn?

6. What is the role of GRACE in navigating mid-life ministry?

7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 12 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?