

Pivot: The Scary Secret of Life
Core Group Discussion Guide
March 4, 2018

Message Overview:

This week marks the beginning of a brand-new sermon series titled Pivot. In this series we will examine fundamental spiritual truths that, when lived out, cause our lives to Pivot in dramatic ways. I am praying that the Holy Spirit shows us his grace and helps us grab onto key truths that will cause our lives to Pivot toward God in powerful and fresh ways. The first truth we want to revisit is that the abundant life Jesus promises his followers ONLY happens after we die a spiritual death. To put it another way, in the Kingdom of God death precedes life. The big questions from this teaching are these:

1. For the not-yet-Christian, “Are you ready to let go of your life and give up, dying and submitting to the call of Christ on your life?”
2. For the already-Christian, “What must die in your life so that you can really live?”

My prayer is that God’s Spirit will speak and draw us deeper into himself. As you think about this teaching, pray for God’s Spirit to be at work in our worship and discussion.

Text(s):

- Preaching: John 12:20-26
- Extra: Romans 6:1-23, Galatians 2:20, Luke 9:23
- Core Group Texts: James 4:13-15, Luke 21:16-17, Romans 8:31-32

Questions for Discussion: (Adapted from John Piper’s book “Don’t Waist Your Life.”)

1. Ask for any reactions from the message.
2. (Say) We want to spend some time talking about Risk. We were reminded of the truth that all spiritual life comes from death to ourselves. The question we want to look at is this, “How does dying to self, invite us into a life time of risk for the sake of Christ?”
 - a. How would you define risk?
 - b. Do you tend to move toward risk or seek to protect yourself from it?
 - c. Is there a difference between good risk and bad risk? If so, what is the difference?
3. Read James 4:13-15 What do these verses tell us about certainty in life?
4. Read Luke 21:16-17 – Can someone explain these verses in their own words?
 - a. “Some of you they will put to death. . . . But not a hair of your head will perish.” How do both of those statements go together?
5. One more passage: Romans 8:31-32 – What is the promise of God that allows us to embrace risk for the sake of Christ?

I want to give us a few hypothetical examples of risk and discuss whether or not these are acceptable risks. Be sure to give reasons for your decisions.

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A) A missionary takes his wife and three children to a country in Africa where there has been ongoing warfare between rival tribes. As a result of the warfare, two other missionaries have been killed within the past year.

B) A college student spends his summer traveling illegally to and from a country where spreading Christianity is against the law, taking Bibles in the native language and distributing them to the people.

C) A missionary team in Central Asia find themselves embroiled in a dispute with local religious leaders in their area. An armed mob with machetes surrounds their compound, threatening to kill everyone inside. The mob decides to give the missionaries three weeks to leave the country or else. The mission agency recommends that the team withdraw until the tension subsides. The missionaries ignore the recommendation and decide to stay in the country.

D) A family from the suburbs of a major U.S. city decides to move into an urban ghetto in order to magnify Christ among the poor. Their four children, who each had their own rooms in their former house, are forced to share one room. Their neighborhood is home to crack houses, gangs, and prostitution.