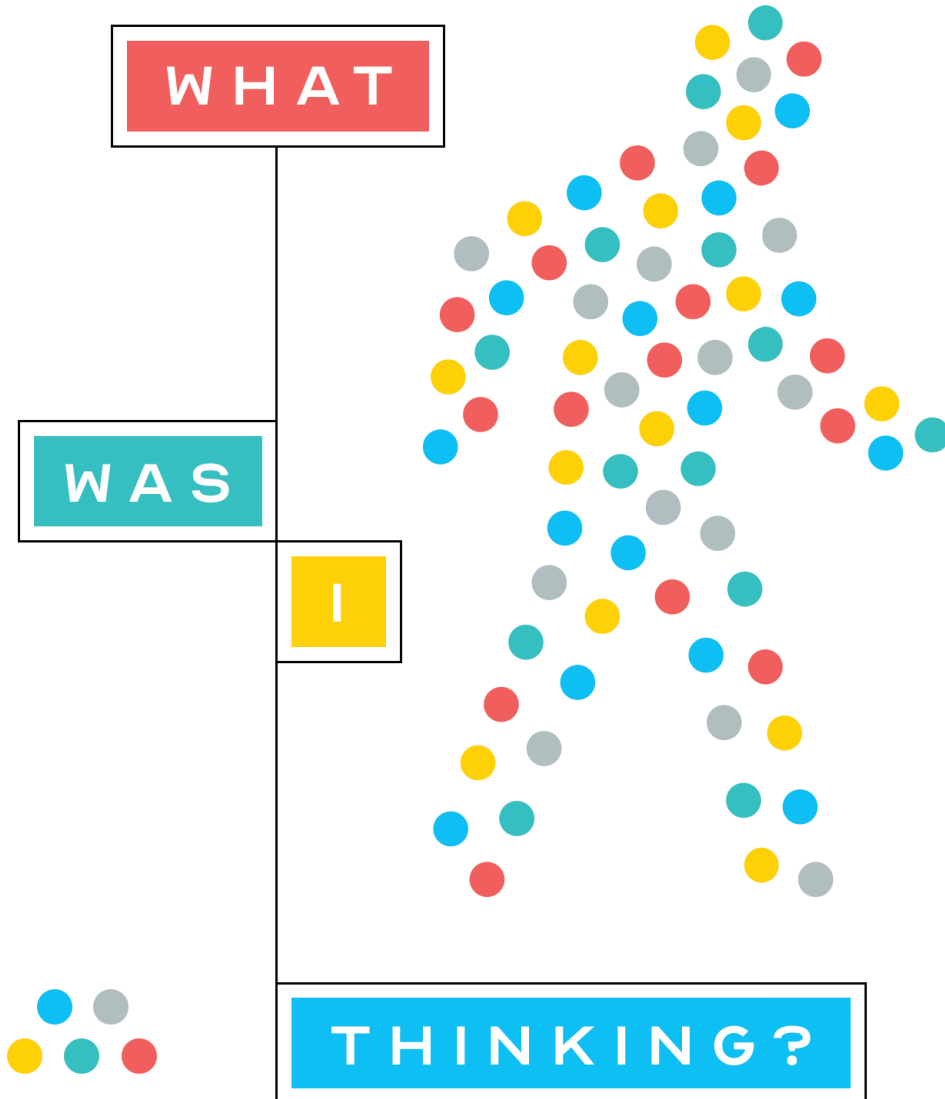


DISCUSSION GUIDE

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HOW TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS SO YOU
CAN LIVE AND LEAD WITH CONFIDENCE

INTRODUCTION

1. Discuss how you view your attitude toward risk. Do you consider yourself a risky person, a cautious person, or somewhere in between? Explain your answer.
2. How have you learned to make wise decisions in the face of risks? How do you weigh risk and reward in your daily life?
3. How do you respond to the instruction to “trust your gut” for decision-making? Is your gut reliable?

CHAPTER 1

1. Discuss any “what was I thinking?” moments in your life.
2. How do you respond to this quote: “The ability to make good decisions and to take wise risks is the hidden ingredient that sets a leader apart” (see page 14)? When have you seen a leader live this out?
3. Considering risk-taking and forward progress, respond to Ecclesiastes 11:4 (“Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest,” NLT). How has this verse played out in your life?

CHAPTER 2

1. When have you learned a new lesson through a moral failing—a time when you overestimated your character, willpower, or self-control as you waded into damaging choices (see page 23)?
2. What is the relationship between one’s risk-taking and their “success”?
3. How do you describe the difference between risking and failing to achieve a challenging goal versus risking and tarnishing one’s legacy (see page 26)?

CHAPTER 3

1. Read aloud Matthew 25:14-30. With which man do you identify? What does this parable say to you about risk-taking and living an obedient, God-honoring life?
2. Are decision-making and risk-taking skills that can be developed and all people can acquire them? Explain your answer.
3. Have you ever encountered more danger by playing it safe instead of taking a risk? Discuss examples from your life or when you’ve witnessed this in others’ lives.

CHAPTER 4

1. How do you define your sphere of influence in which to make good decisions and a positive difference?
2. What are the four propositions that you’ll encounter when you face a decision that involves risk?
3. Discuss a decision you or someone has faced and outline it using The DOPE Model.

CHAPTER 5

1. How do you confront the first proposition of risk—"Desire: What would you like?"—in a manner that seeks the interests of God and others over the interests of self?
2. Discuss the four principles and practices outlined in this chapter that will help you deal with the first proposition. What seems most helpful? What seems most challenging?
3. Read aloud Philippians 4:6-8. Why is this an important Scripture to reference when you face the first proposition?

CHAPTER 6

1. When confronting the second proposition of risk—"Opportunity: What is available?"—what are the three types of options that exist? Define each of them.
2. Which option category do many successful leaders choose? Why does that category lead to their success?
3. What are some ways that you have confronted the second proposition of risk in a way that is wise and pleasing to God?

CHAPTER 7

1. Why is it that so many well-reputed and seemingly good people, at the height of their influence, begin to abuse their power?
2. What are some practical ways you can be vigilant to guard against becoming an abuser of power?
3. Read aloud 1 Corinthians 4:7. How does this verse put your power into the proper perspective?

CHAPTER 8

1. How do you react to this statement on page xx: "Cautious people do pay a price. They tend to overlook the negative consequences of not taking risks and thereby cheat themselves out of life's joys and accomplishments"?
2. As you confront the fourth proposition—"Expectations: What might result?"—why is it helpful to consider the potential consequences? How can you do this?
3. Why is there great danger in operating in secrecy?

CHAPTER 9

1. Give a few specific examples of what it means for you to think of others first.
2. What is the greatest differentiator in every decision a leader makes (see page 133)? Why is this important to effective leadership?
3. What are the crucial requirements of others-focused decisions? How can you obtain these?

CHAPTER 10

1. Discuss where the fine line exists between “taking wise risks and breaking ahead of the pack, and taking foolish risks and breaking completely away from it” (see page 138). How do you find that line and stay on the “wise” side?
2. What do you think is the reason for failure when most churches fail?
3. What are some signals to you that you’re becoming prideful or that pride may be a problem?

CHAPTER 11

1. Read aloud the suggested measures to help prevent sexual sin on page(s) 161-162. Discuss how each may be used effectively to remain sexually faithful. What other ideas would you add to the list?
2. When you’re faced with risk-taking, how likely are you to consider the absolute worst possible consequence before acting? How can doing so help keep you from sexual sin?
3. Think back to hearing news that a leader had fallen due to sexual sin. How did you react? What can we learn from others’ struggles in that area?

CHAPTER 12

1. Describe the differences between other-interested behavior and self-interested behavior.
2. Use the DOPE model to walk through a test case scenario from your life or from another group member’s life. How does this process aid in your decision making?
3. Discuss the four instruments introduced for assessing and managing risk. Describe each in your own words. How do you see their benefit?

CHAPTER 13

1. Define healthy and unhealthy escapes. What are some ways that you escape?
2. When you and your spouse are away from one another, what measures can you take to help mitigate temptation to sin?
3. Why is it important to live in the open and not hide?