Reaching Beyond

Week Overview: “Investing in Others”

We normally think of a risk as a challenge, threat, or change that makes it possible for us to lose something of value—money, time, our reputation, or our safety. Our stereotype of the risky person is someone who loves danger and likes to do things that scare others. This kind of risk-taker may be bold, brash, and daring.

But there are other types of risk that are not nearly as dramatic. Yet they are also big steps of faith. One type of risk-taking that people sometimes overlook is the risk of investing in other people.

When you invest in someone else, you are always devoting yourself to something you cannot control. Each of us brings a bucket full of uncertainties into every responsibility we are given. We have moods, and respond differently to the same situation according to our emotions. We can be gleeful and joyous or dejected and sad. It makes a big difference in how we perform. We are easily preoccupied—with worries and fears or plans for our next vacation. We carry with us a network of shifting loyalties—to our kids, our parents, our friends, our job, and our God. We can be laser focused or disconnected and detached. We can be careful and precise or reflect a “just get by” attitude. We can assure someone that we know and understand what they’ve taught us even when parts of our learning are deficient. And we forget over time.

Entrusting training, resources, time and energy into the life of another can be a gamble. Ask any parent or school teacher.

This week we look at the challenge and reward of investing in other people as Jesus calls us to do. Our text in Acts 9:10-19 involves an ordinary follower of Christ named Ananias who is challenged to make a difference in the life of someone with a bad reputation among believers and a threatening background.

Week of February 14, 2016

Acts 9:10-19

A Disciplemaking Tool of Harvest Evangelical Free Church
(for personal study and/or growth groups)

8. Why do you think it was part of God’s plan to involve Ananias and others (19) in Paul’s life?

9. Why does God want us to be involved in each other’s life journeys?

Ananias took a huge risk. He was going to meet someone who only a few days before would have been delighted to arrest him.

10. We are not likely to receive a vision from God to direct us to engage with other believers. Discuss some of the ways Jesus recruits us to invest in the lives of others today.

11. How would you encourage someone who had a bad experience investing in another person? Maybe their friend became indifferent or grew moody or lazy or lost their zeal. What would you do to encourage them to keep on investing in others in the body of Christ?
Acts 9:10-19

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.

Many adults have worked for bosses or supervisors who seem allergic to training. They know all about responsibilities and job descriptions, but they never intentionally train their staff or employees to do the job or grow their skill set.

1. Discuss with the group a work situation where you received little or no training. What message did that lack of training communicate to you?

2. Make a list of some of the reasons that bosses, supervisors, or owners choose not to train their employees.

3. What does an employer or company miss out on when it chooses not to train its employees?

4. You may have been in a position of leadership or authority (in your family, neighborhood, church) and chosen not to train those around you, even when you could. What are some of the reasons we ourselves opt out of training?

5. God recruits a man named Ananias, who lived in Damascus, to come beside Saul. What do we learn of Ananias’ character according to Acts 22:12-13?

6. Describe the way God recruited Ananias to this task in verses 10-12. What does God do to make the opportunity clear?

7. Sometimes we have the opportunity to invest in someone that we don’t think has much potential. How does Ananias view Paul [Saul] in verse 13?