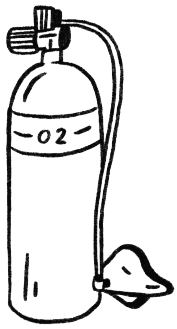
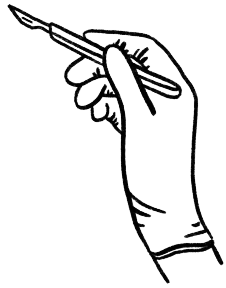
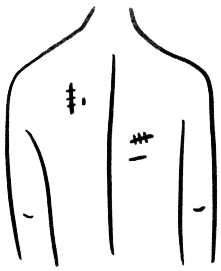
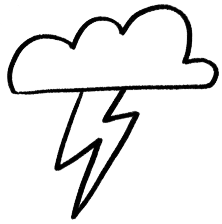
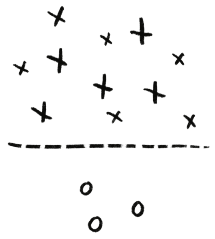
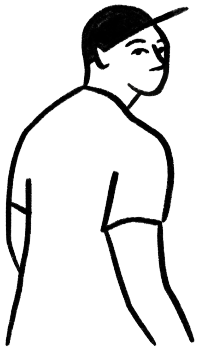
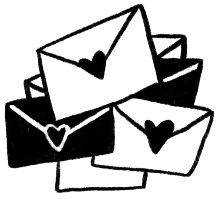


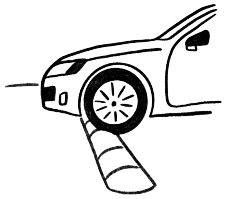
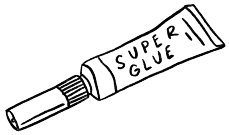




WHAT CHURCH *can* BE
QUESTIONS
FOR REFLECTION & CONVERSATION

Thank you for downloading discussion
questions for What Church Can Be.

We're honored and delighted that you are reading our book.

We've been praying that every word would both encourage your
soul and help you better pursue the mission God's called you to.

If you have any questions, or if there are any
ways that we can serve you, please let us know.

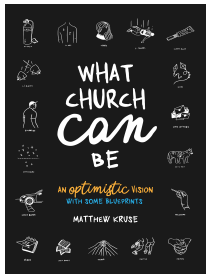
email
kruse@sevenmileroad.org

book website
whatchurchcanbe.com

church website
sevenmilemelrose.com

twitter
@matthewkruse

instagram
@matthewkruse.boston



"What Church Can Be" is not just the title of our book.

It's an invitation.

An invitation for you to think deeply and optimistically about what *your* church can be.

We believe that Christ intends for every church to be marked by gospel centrality, holiness and humility, orthodox theology, supertight community, and missional intentionality. And we are convinced that your church can get there, too.

For this to happen, you and your leaders need to be on the same page about what building a strong gospel culture entails. We've written these discussion questions to help you take a pronounced step in that direction.

...

We've designed these questions with two "audiences" in mind.

1: YOU

The first set of questions for each chapter have been written with you, the individual reader, in mind. We are convinced that deep, honest, soul work done between you and God is necessary for you to love and lead others well. These questions are meant to help you consider how your life aligns with the gospel principle unpacked in the chapter.

2: YOUR TEAM

The second set of questions is for you to process with your team. The work of ministry is done in collaboration with others. That Christ has set things up this way is both a gift and a challenge! We all bring a myriad of ideas, personalities, giftings, and sins to the table. These questions are meant to open some honest conversation with those who are leading with you.

Our big dream is that each set of questions will work together to both drive the big idea of each chapter deeper into your soul and unite your team around a compelling vision of what your church can be.

chapter 1
Spin Class

Questions for you:

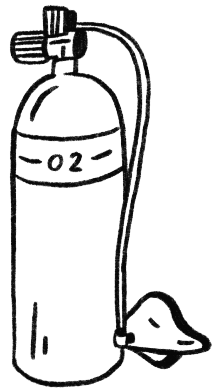
1: Recall the times when a part of your life had to "die" so that the "life" God was calling you to could emerge. What was that like?

2: Is there anything that God may be calling you "die to" right now for the sake of gospel advance?

Questions for your church:

1: Recall a time when our church was called upon by the Spirit to "die to" something we loved for the bigger cause of the gospel? What was that like?

2: What things might we tend to hold onto rather than die to as a church?



chapter 2
Oxygen

Questions for you:

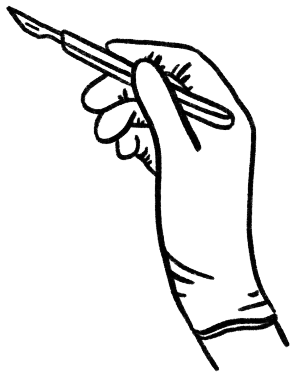
1: Recall the moments or seasons in your life when you most vividly remember "breathing in the grace of the gospel." What attended those times?

2: What specific rhythms could you embrace that would help perpetuate gospel-centrality in your life and work?

Questions for your church:

1: What realities or pursuits are we most tempted to "center on" other than the gospel?

2: What are some ways that we have made "believing the gospel" the thing that everything else flows from? How can we continue to grow in this?



chapter 3
Melamona

Questions for you:

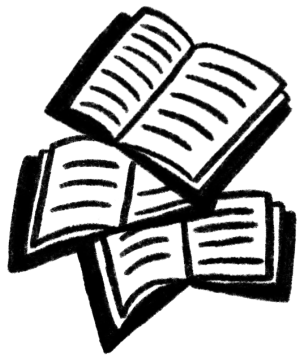
1: In what areas of your life do you most easily allow for a disconnect between your "personal holiness" and "public persona?"

2: What individual and communal rhythms have you established in your life to help you obey the Spirit's command to "pay careful attention to yourself?"

Questions for your church:

1: In what ways have we succeeded in building a culture where "who we are" is more important than "what we do" or "how well we do it?" In what ways have we failed? How can we continue to grow in this?

2: What examples can we think of where either an individual or our church as a whole was not only convicted of sin, but took pronounced action to make a clean break from it? What attended those moments?



chapter 4
Open Books

Questions for you:

1: What keeps you from "regularly and concretely" confessing sin to others within the context of the church?

2: Who are those that you are regularly "walking in the light" with? What do those times look like? How can they be stronger?

Questions for your church:

1: In what ways have we succeeded in establishing a culture of open and honest confession? In what ways have we failed? What would it take for us to grow more in this?

chapter 5
Lights

Questions for you:

1: Recall the times when you were most clearly humbled by God for the work He was preparing you for. What was that like?

2: What are some ways that you have been or are tempted to put your name, rather than Christ's, "in lights?" How can you better identify and avoid this?

Questions for your church:

1: What are some places where we tend to look to or promote personalities rather than Christ in our church? What practices can we cultivate to guard against this?

chapter 6
Tears

Questions for you:

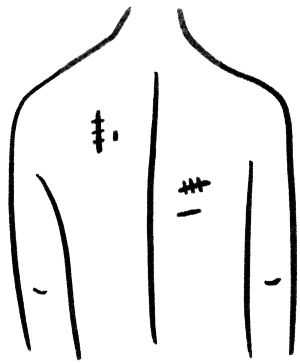
1: Recall the moments or seasons when you were most emotionally invested in the work of the gospel, to the point of "tears." What marked those times?

2: List the things that cause you to shy away from being emotionally invested in your work.

Questions for your church:

1: Do we tend toward emotional "investment" or "detachment" more as a church? Why? What does this look like?

2: In what ways can we take more emotional risks to better serve one another and drive our mission forward?



chapter 7
Scars

Questions for you:

1: Think about times of opposition that you have endured for holding to orthodoxy? What was your posture in those times? If you've experienced none, why do you think that is the case?

2: Do you believe the lie that if you are "nice" enough everyone will appreciate and speak highly of you? If yes, why is this such a temptation for you?

3: Have there been times when you have practiced "equivocation" to avoid the disapproval of the world? If yes, what was driving you to do this?

Questions for your church:

1: In our current cultural moment, where are we most tempted to "trade-in God's words for ones that are more socially acceptable?"

2: How can we refuse to compromise truth while maintaining a posture of humility and grace?

chapter 8
Guts

Questions for you:

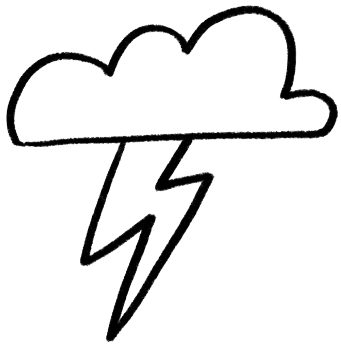
1: Review the "conflict styles" (winner, walker, yielder, compromiser). Where do you land? Recall a conflict when this tendency of yours was evidenced. What was that like?

2: What fears cause you to "shrink back" from saying hard things or having hard conversations?

Questions for your church:

1: If our church had a conflict style, what would it be? How have we seen this evidenced?

2: What can we do to foster a culture in our church where hard conversations happen, and happen in ways that are loving and fruitful?



chapter 9
Thunder

Questions for you:

1: Recall a moment or season when the words of Scripture "thundered" on your soul. What was that like?

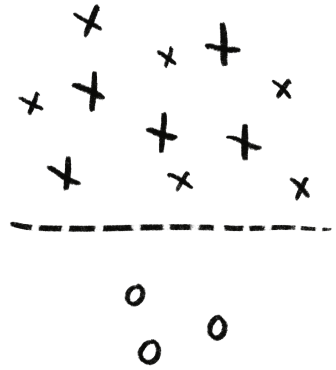
2: What voices other than Scripture do you tend to listen to or be distracted by?

3: What rhythms can you embrace that will foster the work of the Spirit through the Word in your life?

Questions for your church:

1: If someone was new to our church, would it be unmistakably clear that we love and live from the words of Scripture in everything? If yes, give examples of how this is communicated. If no, why not?

2: What are some ways that we can infuse Scripture into elements of our church life where we would tend to leave it out? Be specific.



chapter 10
Outsiders

Questions for you:

1: Which is your default posture toward "outsiders?" Ignore? Avoid? Blend? Villianize? Why do you think this is? What does this look like in practice?

2: In what ways could your life be better built to welcome, love, and gospel outsiders? Be specific.

Questions for your church:

1: How would we describe our church's default posture toward "outsiders?" Ignore? Avoid? Blend? Villianize? What does this look like in practice? Why do you think this is?

2: Describe the typical experience of someone intersecting with our church for the first time. Where are we strong? Weak?

3: What "missional distinctives" could we embrace to ensure we better pursue and welcome outsiders?

chapter 11
X-Factors

Questions for you:

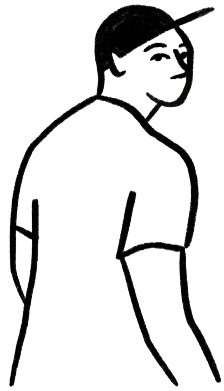
1: Are you more of a "risk-taker" or "risk-avoider?" Give specific examples of what this has looked like. Why do you think you tend to be this way?

2: Are there specific areas in life or ministry where you are "playing scared" right now? What would it look like to take a gospel-driven risk there?

Questions for your church:

1: Recall a time when our church took a bold risk. What convinced us to do that? How did it work out?

2: Where have we been "playing scared" and potentially missing an opportunity for gospel advance? Why might we be doing this? How can we change it?



chapter 12
Glances

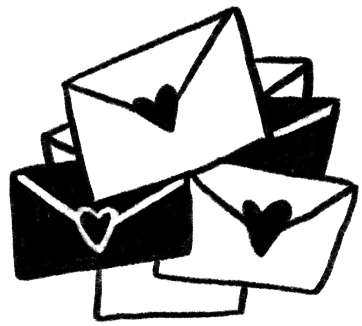
Questions for you:

1: What are some areas of life or ministry where you are tempted to "glance sideways" in envy at others? Be specific. How could you begin to cultivate contentment in those areas?

Questions for your church:

1: What is about other churches that tends to trigger envy in us? Be specific.

2: In what ways have we built a culture of "contentment with" and "celebration of" the things God has given us as a church? How can we do this better?



chapter 13
Love Letters

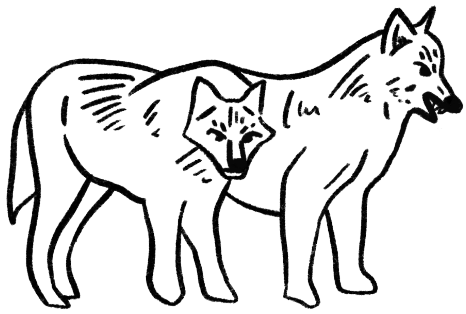
Questions for you:

1: On a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being ice cold and 10 being red hot), how would you rate your affection for the people Jesus has given you? What does this look like? Be specific. Why do you think this is the case?

2: When your love for people grows cold, how do you respond?

Questions for your church:

1: How would we describe the level of affection between the pastors and people of our church? How are those affections displayed? How can we grow in this?



chapter 14
Wolves

Questions for you:

1: What does it mean for a pastor (shepherd) to "guard the doctrinal gate" of the church? How are you proactively doing that for your people?

2: Do you find that the work of fighting wolves comes easy or hard for you? If hard, why do you think it is a struggle?

Questions for your church:

1: What heresies present the clearest and most present danger to our church right now? How is our church actively exposing and refuting them?

2: In what ways does our church signal to potential "wolves" that they will be "silenced" if they threaten harm to the sheep?

chapter 15
Years

Questions for you:

1: Consider your calendar. What does "frequency" in relationships with people look like for you? What does "longevity" look like? Which is more of a struggle for you? Why?

2: How would you describe what healthy "frequency" would entail for you in this season of life and ministry?

3: What is your vision for "longevity" in the current place where you are serving?

Questions for your church:

1: Would you say that our church is strong when it comes to "frequency?" "Longevity?" Both? Neither? Give examples of why you think this way.

2: In what ways have we communicated to our people the importance of investing in both "reps" and "years?" How can we do this better?

chapter 16
Fresh White Kicks

Questions for you:

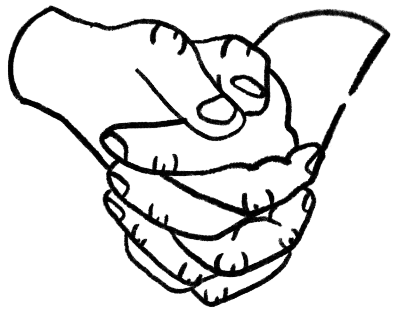
1: Paul "coveted no one's silver, gold or apparel," but was content with his "necessities" being met. Describe what you see as being "necessities" for you and your family in your current season of life.

2: What "unnecessary" material realities are you most tempted to covet?

3: Write down (in broad strokes) what you currently earn and how you spend it. If an outsider was to see this, how apparent would it be that you love God more than money?

Questions for your church:

1: Take a careful look at how our church spends money. What priorities are revealed? How are contentment and generosity being displayed?



chapter 17
Hands

Questions for you:

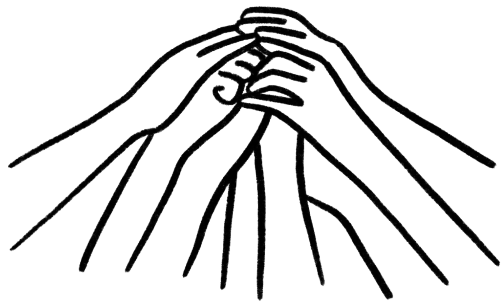
1: Who are the people in your church that you are certain would "know your hands" on sight? What has contributed to making this possible?

2: What stands in the way of others having access to your life and you to theirs? How could you deepen the intimacy you have with those you work with?

Questions for your church:

1: What practices have we embraced as a church that display a commitment to fostering "supertight community?" How can we grow stronger in this?

2: How would you describe the culture of "touch" in our church? Does it reflect the depth of relational intimacy that we see in Scripture?



chapter 18
Teams

Questions for you:

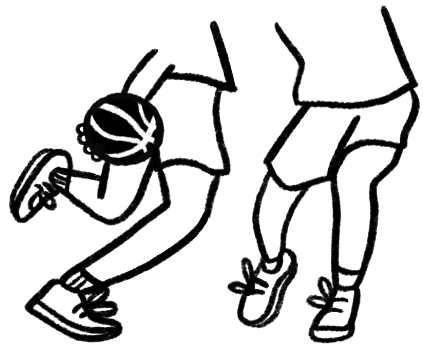
1: Does your way of approaching your work lean more toward "drum solo" or "team effort?" What are the primary hesitations you have about tying yourself to others in the work of the gospel?

2: What specific gospel work are you engaged in right now that offers opportunity for inviting a teammate to lead with and learn from you? What is keeping you from doing this?

Questions for your church:

1: Think of some times when our church displayed an "uncommon unity" in going after something together. What contributed to making that happen?

2: Could it be said of us that the majority of our gospel work is done in the context of "team?" If not, why not? What are some places that we can move toward more pronounced partnership?



chapter 19
Hustle

Questions for you:

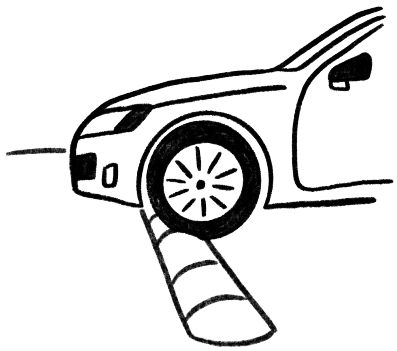
1: Recall the gospel continuum of work:
"Slacker -> Gospel Hustle -> Workaholic"
Where do you naturally land?
How does this display itself in your approach to work?

2: How do you embrace both "grace-animated effort" and "grace-dependent rest" in doing your work? Be specific.

Questions for your church:

1: Give some examples of where our church has displayed "gospel hustle" in our work together. Is this the norm?

2: Consider the weekly and annual calendar of our church. Where are rhythms of gospel hustle and sabbath rest on display?



chapter 20
Speed Bumps

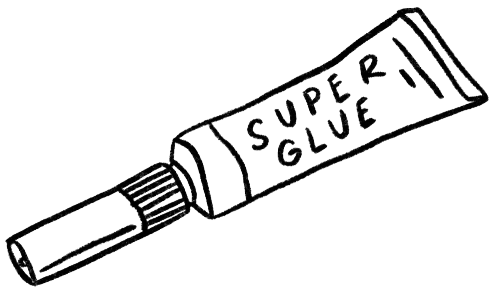
Questions for you:

1: Consider the times when you've been tempted to treat those who are weak as "speed bumps" to be avoided or run over? What did that look like? How can the realities of the gospel change this tendency in you?

2: Where are the places of weakness in your own life where Jesus has met you with patience and grace? How has this grown your compassion towards others?

Questions for your church:

1: In what specific ways has our church built a culture of loving and serving those who are the weakest among us? How can we grow stronger in this?



chapter 21
Superglue

Questions for you:

1: Think of some times when you have freely and happily given away something that God had given to you? What was it that moved you to doing that?

2: What are the biggest reasons that your hands would tend to "superglue" rather than "give away" the things God has given you?

Questions for your church:

1: Think of some times when our church has displayed a spirit of open-handed generosity, even if it meant sacrificing comfort or security? What was that like? What was driving that?

2: Are there any specific things that God has gifted us with that he is now calling us to give away for the sake of broader gospel advance?

chapter 22
Kites

Questions for you:

1: Think of a time when you sensed the Spirit empowering a gospel effort of yours. What was that like? What posture or practices were you embracing at the time?

2: Catalog the rhythms of prayer that you are practicing currently. Do they evidence a conviction that you are dead without the Spirit animating your work? If not, how can you grow in this?

Questions for your church:

1: In what ways do we "start and surround everything in prayer" as a church? Be specific. How can we grow in this?

2: Where are we asking and believing the Spirit to lead and empower us right now?