

## SESSION 10: MOVING FORWARD WITH PURPOSE

*Now what? How do you move toward a more meaningful and fulfilling life?*



**FUN FACT:** Many of the “actors” surrounding Brooks (played by Mike Vogel) in this scene are real people from Brooks’ life that are especially meaningful to him. The “real” Margaret is the beautiful older woman in the purple jacket behind him, the older men around him are special friends and mentors, and I’m [Julea] in the maroon jacket on the right behind him. ☺

### SHARE A PRAYER

Open the session with prayer requests and a prayer.

### INTRODUCTIONS

Last week’s homework was to imagine walking side-by-side with Jesus, relieving some of your burdens and moving toward restoration.

- Does anyone want to share what they learned from that experience?

The theme of today’s session is: *Now what? How do you move toward a meaningful and fulfilling life?* This isn’t just about moving forward—it’s about moving forward with meaning and purpose.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

As Brooks was growing up, he dreamed of opening his own business and being a successful businessman. By the time he was 16 years old, he’d already saved thousands of dollars from his car detailing business and dog breeding. He couldn’t wait to finish high school and go into the big world of business and opportunities.

And then there was a knock at the door, October 15, 1979, and Brooks’ life completely changed. He was suddenly propelled into the adult world—without his parents’ guidance.

“*Now what?*” he asked himself. His passion for business seemed like lifetimes ago. His father was a pastor—maybe he was meant to be a pastor. He enrolled in religion classes and waited for God’s call, but still felt lost. His mother had wanted to go to law school—maybe he was meant to be a lawyer. He struggled through law school and joined the legal field. When an opportunity to run for a state senate position opened up, he thought, “*Why not?*” His father’s

reputation and his pure determination led to a miraculous win. He was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate at age 27.

At first Brooks avoided victims' rights work because he wanted to move forward and stay away from his tragic past, but soon the need for victims' rights legislation became blatantly apparent. His family's case dragged through the legal system for 17 years and became known as the slowest moving case on death row—in part because the files were lost for two years(!) As Brooks said at the time, *"I'm not sure what victims' rights are.... but I think they should have some."* With this, he began a long and passionate process of authoring 28 bills to protect and serve victims and their families.

### **MOVIE CLIP** – *Play Session 10: Moving Forward with Purpose*

#### **THINK-PAIR-SHARE QUESTIONS**

Before discussing these questions as a group, take a minute to write your own responses (think), discuss them with a partner (pair) then join together for a group discussion (share).

- 1) In this scene, Brooks' passion stems from his life experiences. How did the events of his past prepare him for this moment?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) What are you passionate about? (e.g., your profession, hobbies, relationships, interests)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Where does this passion stem from? Is it related to other events or experiences in your life? If so, how?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) Is there a way that this passion could be used to help others? If so, how?

## FAITH WALK

As the creator of all things, God can do anything. When he sent his Son to earth, He could have made Jesus a king, a wealthy man, a ruler—anything. *But what did he choose? A servant, a missionary committed to helping others find peace and purpose. Why? Why was serving others God's and Jesus' end goal?*

When disciples James and John came to Jesus with an unrealistically, lofty request—to sit at the left and right of Jesus in heaven—Jesus politely declined. When the other disciples heard of this, they were offended and conflicted. Jesus called them together to remind them of their purpose in life. **Read Mark 10:42-45.**

- **What is Jesus saying in these verses?**

Most of the Book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament are examples of the disciples bravely serving others and sharing Jesus' example and words. Peter emphatically writes: *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."* (1 Peter 4:10).

## THINK-PAIR-SHARE QUESTION:

(Discuss with a partner then discuss as a group.)

- **What gifts have you received? And how could you use them to serve others?**

## ROUND ROBIN APPRECIATION DISCUSSION:

Sometimes it is easier for other people to see your gifts more so than to see a gift/talent/calling in yourself. We're going to try a round-robin to see what additional gifts we recognize in each other. Start by focusing on the person to the right of the group leader. Anyone who feels moved to do so—please share one thing you appreciate about that groupmate and/or how that person might be helpful to others.

## HOMEWORK:

What's your plan for "What's next"? What can you do to use your gifts and life experiences to plan a meaningful and fulfilling future?

On a separate piece of paper, write about your goals for the future. Be specific about:

- a) What you will do?
- b) How you will do it?
- c) When you will do it?
- d) And how you will know if you are being effective?

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**\*\*Look ahead to Session 11: Celebrating Together to make plans for your class graduation.**

**\*\*\* Please complete the Class Evaluation Form on page 73.\*\*\***

## FROM BROOKS

### **What have you done to find meaning and fulfillment in your life?**

*In the broader context, I think in order to have meaning and fulfillment in life we have to be living within God's will for our lives. That doesn't mean I have to be a minister or missionary. God needs business people, musicians, and movie-makers to accomplish His will as well. For the first years after my parents were killed, I was convinced that God wanted to me to be a preacher—but I never felt a true calling and knew God had a different plan for me.*

*I believe that God gives us certain passions in our lives to direct our path. These are things that we want to get up in the morning to do and to dedicate our lives to. I knew I wanted to make a difference in the world, and have believed that God spared my life for a reason.*

*Just after our wedding, my best man stood up and gave a little speech that I have never forgotten. He said that after all of his years, he found there were three things that made life worth living... (He was 80 years old and had lived a very good, successful life—so I paid attention.)*

*Those three things are: (1) Someone to love, (2) Something to do, and (3) Something to look forward to. Since then I have come to equate those three things with 1 Corinthians 13:13, which talks about the three things we need in life: faith, hope and love.*

***I'll start with Love, which is also, "Someone to Love."*** *I first must love God. I think we all know this, but it's much harder to actually practice. God wants us to put him first. And even if that just starts with going through the motions and getting into His word daily, I think we can grow more in that direction every day. But it is something we have to want to do—and then do it.*

*Then I love my family. This is something I have wanted through most of my life—to have a family of my own. I went so many years without really having that. I had my sister, grandparents, and other relatives, but I never felt like I had my own family until I married Julea and we started our family. We have done well and we have struggled at times. But I have always believed my family was there for me and would never leave. I have also tried to be there for them and hopefully have never put them in a position to doubt my love for them and my desire to protect them with all I am and have.*

***Faith is substance we cannot yet see. I am a new person through my faith in Christ.*** *I also believe that God has a plan for my life. He made me for a purpose in this world. That is also where my passion lies. There may be things in life I have to do to make a living, but in the best-case scenario, I can make a living by living my passion. I am a lawyer, but that has never been my passion. I have been a soldier, and while there were things I was very passionate about, I can't say it was my life passion. I was a state senator and did other work I was passionate about where I was able to help people and make things happen that I believe made people's lives a little better.*

*Then Julea and I moved to Los Angeles and I finally acknowledged that one of my dreams was to tell stories. That meant making movies and television shows. It meant writing, acting in, and producing stories that were meaningful. In that work, I found faith and I found my something to do.*

***Then there was Hope. It was my "Something To Do."*** *I believe this is our ability to dream and accomplish what we can do when we are our best selves. This is where we discover that "We are capable of so much more than we ever thought possible." I believe that by being right in God's will and having love and faith, we can then live our hope... Our Dreams and God's plan.*

*Our love for God and our families—together with our passion for our work and helping others—allows us to move forward in life, no matter what life may throw our way. We are then able to live the dreams of our childhood and know that the work we did along the way was worth it.*

## FROM RICHARD – MY WAY, GOD’S WAY (EXCERPT)

By Richard B. Douglass, Published in 1977 for Convention Press Youth Course 3137



God does not have to give people enough light to see the end of their journey. The lights of an automobile do not shine three hundred middles down the road to the end of a lengthy trip. They give enough light for driving in the right direction and to avoid missing the road along the way. When a person takes one step in the direction of God’s will, God then gives the necessary guidance for taking the next one. Disciples must exercise faith enough to follow in this progressively unfolding path.

God reveals his way progressively to give faith and courage time to grow. If everything were revealed at once, a person might develop a super case of “cold feet.” A missionary who has had a successful career in South America grew up in a middle-class American home. When he was twelve, he committed himself to the ministry. He worked hard but also had some unusual opportunities. Throughout his college and seminary career, the young man pastored several churches in rural communities. Then he moved East to a church that provided a challenge.

In seminary he and his wife took a missions course together. They were interested, but felt no particular calling. After the couple had been out of seminary for four years, they became aware that God seemed to be creating an increasingly strong desire to go live in South America and minister there. They though in terms of the great population centers in two or three countries. Finally they settled on Brazil and felt they would be most

at home in a modern city. By the time they had finished their language studies, they felt their interests redirected toward interior work in one of the most primitive areas of the country.

His testimony is typical of the leadership God offers:

*“Now that I can look back across the years, I see that my wife and I lacked the maturity to leave the United States until we had been out of seminary for a few years. God knew exactly how rapidly he could guide us. I believe that if we had been told we were going to live in the interior when we arrived in Brazil and began to see some of the conditions, we would have returned to the America immediately. God readjusted our thinking one step at a time so that we would not run in fear from what he had for us to do. I must admit now, I wouldn’t trade our experiences for anything.”*

We need to remember that God is able to guide best those who plan best. A person who wants to float through life with no clearly defined goals never looks ahead enough to ask for God’s guidance. When a Christian begins to think in terms of long-range goals, short-term goals, and immediate goals, he puts his mind into a process that stimulates his thinking, his motives, and his maturity. He begins to think in terms of what he really wants out of life and how he can best achieve the goals he has. This usually stimulates the Christian to ask what God might want to do in this overall process.

