



# QUESTIONS

## for your real life journey

Episode 20: Capt. Richard Bradbury

## How do we face change?

### 1. GO ALL IN (12:51)

In the last six months, Richard's family have experienced a huge amount of change – moving house and country, starting new appointments and schools – as well as being separated through work, travel or quarantine. He says his family have always faced a lot of change, which can be quite 'messy'.

'One of the ways that I would embrace change with our family –and we've done this over the years – is trying to be creative in times of transition. We face a change head-on by making it as interesting as we can, embracing the new culture we're entering.'

Have you experienced a transition into a different culture – whether that culture was overseas or much closer to home (eg moving to a new school, workplace or neighbourhood)? It makes sense that people often try to minimise the impact of a transition by adapting to gradually to the changes, so what do you think about the Bradbury family's creative philosophy of throwing yourself fully into a transition by experiencing everything there is to offer? What might this creative approach to facing change look like for you?

### 2. DON'T BE A HERO (16:18)

Richard has ministered in several cultures overseas. He says, 'When I went to Zambia many years ago, my stance would be, "I've got all these problems to fix, and I can fix them and I can mobilize my people to fix what's not right here." I had a kind of defensiveness, a sense of "knowing better" and having all the answers.'

'More recently I've moved to a belief that solutions come from within the community, and my job is to facilitate and connect. All the answers are already there: the people that we've worked with in Kenya and Zambia are hugely resilient. The strengths that you'll find there are unbelievable!'

'A great motto I had on my wall on the Kenya for our team was: "Let the locals be the heroes." Now, as I look back on my time in Zambia, I'm a little bit embarrassed sometimes of how we did react, you know, in the start. So it's been a huge, huge learning curve for me.'

If ministry is helping others face change, what do you think Richard finds embarrassing about his approach to ministry when he first went overseas? Why do you think his approach to ministry changed so much? Why do you think it's true that the best people to solve a community's problems are the local people in that community?



# QUESTIONS for your real life journey

## How do we move through suffering?

### 3. THE MINISTRY OF SITTING AROUND (21:28)

Richard reflects that he originally viewed suffering as short, temporary events that happened from time to time in his life, interspersed with long periods of experiencing no suffering. But when he went overseas he saw that for a lot of people, life is hard all the time.

'And when you give yourself to a community, when you embrace it and participate in that community, then suffering and grief becomes part of your everyday life. And so, learning to live with that is really important.

'We used to say in Chikankata that we had the ministry of sitting around. If somebody had died in Zambia, we would always just go round to the house. The women would go and the men would make a fire. And then we would just sit around. I've had some of the best conversations I've had in my life when I've been sitting around the fire at a funeral house.

'So I think for me when we move through suffering, we've got to show up, to be present, to be in the moment. And we'd got to be ready to face it head on by just sitting around, being with people and journeying together.

Can you remember someone just sitting with you when you were going through something tough or painful? Did it help? Do you remember a time when someone you know was grieving the loss of someone important to them? Did you choose to be present with them through it? If you did, how did it make you both feel? If you didn't, what brought you to that choice?

### 4. THE MINISTRY OF SINGING (26:02)

Richard tells the story of him being involved in a car accident: 'Five or six years ago, I was driving in the north of Kenya, and the car that I was travelling in rolled over a bunch of times, knocking myself and the driver unconscious. Long story short, with lots of little miracles along the way we ended up in the hospital in Nairobi.

'I remember absolutely nothing about what anybody said to me that day. But one of the Salvation Army officers, a lady from Zimbabwe, came and sat at my bedside. And she just sang: "I know he cares for you, for you. I know he cares for you." That's the only thing I can remember, apart from the car.

'Sometimes it's just the simplicity of singing that stays with people.'

Can you remember a moment when hearing someone sing comforted you, or helped you through a difficult situation? What were the lyrics? What specific element of that moment was most powerful? Even if you've not experienced singing when you were suffering, is there a song that particularly inspires, encourages or gives you hope?



# QUESTIONS for your real life journey

## How do we receive joy?

### 5. HURRY HAS NO BLESSING (35:38)

Richard mentions a Swahili phrase, 'haraka haraka haina baraka' (literally, "hurry hurry has no blessing") that reminds him to 'slow down and not go so fast because you miss the blessings along the way.'

He reflects: 'I think sometimes we're in danger of missing the joyful stuff in our lives if we're not being present in the moment. I love listening to my son make jokes, watching films with my daughter, the simple things.'

Can you think of an example of when you were so focused on looking to the future or dwelling on the past that you missed what was going on right in front of you? Why do you think life is often so fast-paced? What things do you do every day that you rush even though they might be enjoyable?

### 6. STAYING SLOW IN A FAST-PACED WORLD (38:41)

When asked how he plans to ensure his family maintains that slower-paced, living-in-the-moment existence now they're living in London, Richard mentions four things:

- Exploring the countryside
- Getting a dog
- Learning about things his children enjoy (even if he's not that interested)
- Being the kind of dad that turns up the volume (even if it's not his kind of music)

What do you think of these suggestions? Would they work for you? What other ideas can you think of that would help you and your household maintain a slower pace and live in the moment?



# QUESTIONS for your real life journey

## How do we mature in service?

### 7. WALK HUMBLY (446:23)

Richard shares: 'A Bible verse that's often been with me, and given to me, is Micah 6:8, which talks about acting justly, loving mercy or kindness, and walking humbly with God. And I think we tend to focus on the parts about acting justly and loving mercy. But I'd never really thought about walking humbly until I'd been overseas.'

'Sometimes it feels like acting justly (which requires courage) and walking humbly are not easy bed mates, because for courage, you often have to rely on your own strength, but for humility, you're kind of setting that strength aside.'

'So I think that being overseas has made me realise it's not really about what I can accomplish, but about how I live my life. Now, when I arrive at a place, I can see how God is already at work there. And, even in the worst of situations, I'm able to see the face of Jesus in the people that we're working alongside and working with. And so I think for me, having a huge dose of humility has helped me to mature in service.'

Is it possible to be someone who both acts courageously for justice and walks humbly? Can you think of examples of people who do both well? Which would you say is more important, and why – what you can accomplish, or how you live your life?

### 8. LEARNING FROM FRIENDS OF OTHER FAITHS (41:41)

'During the time we lived in a majority Muslim country, learning about other faiths brought me a different, and better, perspective of the Bible.'

'Many of my friends in Bangladesh were Muslims, and we celebrated with them in their festivals. During Eid, we would break the fast together, and then I would find we'd start to get presents.'

'But at Christmas time, lots of our friends who are missionaries would say, "Oh, this is our chance to tell our story!" And my response was: "No! I'm not giving a present just because I want to tell the story of Christianity – I want to give a present because these are my friends. And I want to do it out of love, from a place of humility and a place of learning."

'And so we've explored our faith in relationship with people who think differently, who experience God in a different way. For me, that's been such a rich experience. And those people of other faiths have helped me to mature.'

Have you explored your faith in relationship with people who think differently? If not, what stops you? Who do you know who might enrich your understanding of God, the Bible and life in general even though they don't follow Jesus?



# QUESTIONS for your real life journey

## Act: YOUR FOUR CHOICES

In each episode of the All Terrain podcast, Matt asks his guest to make four choices as well as answering the four questions.

At the end of series two, let's consider our own four choices.

### Places ('Where are we walking?')

- Richard's answer: 'We're going to drive through the Kenyan savannah until we get to a hill in the middle of Amboseli National Park. It will take about 40 minutes to reach the top - and from there you can see the savannah, elephants, Mount Kilimanjaro... You can just see for miles - it's the most fantastic place I've been in the world'
- Reflect:
  - Where would you choose, and why?
  - What are you grateful for when you think of that location?
  - When could you next plan a trip there? If that is unrealistic, which place closer to home that makes you grateful in a similar way could you plan a trip to?

### People ('Who's coming with us?' - one living, one dead, one fictional)

- Richard's answers:
  - Boniface Mwangi (Kenyan politician and activist: 'Speak courage fluently')
  - John Smith (Scottish politician and leader of the Labour party in the 1990s)
  - T'Challa / 'Black Panther' (fictional character in the Marvel Cinematic Universe)
- Reflect:
  - Who would you choose, and why?
  - What are you grateful for when you think of those three people?
  - For the person who is living, how could you let them know that you are grateful for their inspiration in your life? Could you send or make a gift? Write them some words of affirmation? Give them a hug or spend some quality time with them? (These might be difficult if you've never actually met them!) Or serve them in some way?

### Cultural influences ('What's on the playlist?' and 'What's in the snack bag?')

- Richard's answers:
  - Music: an eclectic mix of big band, 1980s (Queen, Elton John, Simple Minds) and Stormzy
  - Food: Tunnock's Teacakes and Irn-Bru
- Reflect:
  - Which food and music would you choose, and why?
  - What about that food and music are you most grateful for? Do you have a similar experience to Richard, who is 'transported back to Glasgow' on his first sip of Irn-Bru?
  - Who could you buy those snacks for as a treat? Who could you make a 'mixtape' (or Spotify playlist) for? Whose favourite food and music could you share with them to strengthen the bond between you?