STUCK! / Discussion GUIDE
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(To be Used in companion with STUCK! Navigating Life and Leadership Transitions)

This Discussion Guide can be used with Small Groups, Reading Groups or Peer Reading Partners who are wanting to get the book from the book.

At the end of each chapter are a series of reflective questions to help a Christ follower personally process the insights regarding life transitions. These questions are designed to help an individual glean important insights that can only come from experiencing a transition.

This Discussion Guide is designed to help STUCK! be used as a small group discussion resource. These concepts have also been used in a workshop/seminar format, by book-groups as the basis for reflection and study, and by buddy-reading partners.

OVERVIEW / The Book / STUCK!

STUCK! has four major sections. Each provides a theme for discussion and interaction. Between 4-6 interaction times (typically two-hours in length) will provide helpful processing of the concepts found in STUCK!, and insight into the purpose and pathway through a transition.

The Four Major Sections of STUCK!

I. Transitions: DEFINED (chapters 1-4)
II. Transitions: FOUR STAGES (5-9)
III. Transitions: DEFINING MOMENTS (chapters 10-16)
IV. Transition: LEARNING AND RESPONDING (chapters 17-20)

In the next pages is an introduction and overview of the four sections, and the discussion questions found in the chapters to help promote discussions and greater insight.

SECTION ONE
Transition: Definition and Characteristics (chapters 1-4)

In chapters 1-4 the book surfaces the reality and nature of a transition. Transitions occur in the life of every Christ follower. The issue is not whether transitions occur, but rather recognizing and processing the transitions we will each experience.

The temptation is to deny or take a short cut through a transition (chapter 1). Transitions produce some of the most important insights and lessons each of us can learn in life (chapter 2). The question of “why” haunts many a Christ-follower as they face the confusion and isolation that often accompany a transition (chapter 3). The good news is that there is a way through a transition. The Transition Life Cycle provides a template or generic pathway that transitions often take (chapter 4).

Review the discussion questions from chapters 1-4 listed below.

Pick the questions that most relate to your current experience, or ones that most interest the group. As you discuss the issues, look for patterns and themes on what occurs in the early stages of a transition.

Look at comments made to the nation of Israel during one of their darkest moments. They were penned by the prophet Jeremiah, but are as relevant and important for God’s followers today. Read Jeremiah 29. What insights do you see? What are the promises?
Short Cuts
(Chapter 1)

How would you describe the last few months of your journey with God? Spend some time journaling about what has been occurring:

- Describe what you have felt and what you identify as important.
- Identify some key words that characterize what’s going on.
- Is there an intuitive sense that there is something more going on than just a difficult time?

Different
(Chapter 2)

Processing your transitions. Knowing yourself. Living differently. Most do little in terms of thinking about past life and development.

Think of a time of transition in your life. Retrieve it from your memory banks. What happened? What was different about yourself as a result?

Why?
(Chapter 3)

Why a transition is occurring is often not discerned until after it is over. However, try to answer these questions about a current or recent transition:

- Why did God choose to push the pause button in your journey?
- Why now?
- What is it that he might be trying to address? Add? Affirm? Adjust?

The Lifecycle
(Chapter 4)

Are you in a transition?

- If so, when did it begin?
- Where do you think you are in the cycle?
- What have you been remembering about the past?
- What has God been saying to you?
- What issues seem to be surfacing?
- What has been your response?
SECTION TWO
Transition: Four Stages ( chapters 5-9)

There are typically a series of stages as a transition progresses. Often, Christ followers do not realize they are in a transition until it is well under way. The hurt, isolation or confusion that can accompany the beginning of a transition makes it difficult to see. Typically, those experiencing the beginning of a transition are just trying to cope or survive (chapter 5).

Once the dust settles, and the transition is realized, there begins a time of evaluation and questioning. Why? Where is God in all of this? What went wrong? Where is all this leading? Why has God gone silent? What is He trying to teach me (chapter 6).

The Christ walk is about trust. The challenges and the struggles we each face reveal the greater need to trust God. Transitions lead to times of surrender and increased dependency on Christ. The surrender of control must be revisited. As a Christ follower yields, again, to the “author and finisher of the faith” God begins a deeper and wider work in His children (chapter 7).

The call to align with God and His work, and the prize of surrender to that work, nets fresh revelation, God revealing His designs and His plans. The nation of Israel most embodies this truth. As they yielded to God, the Lord revealed is purposes and their unique destiny (Jeremiah 29). (chapter 9)

Review the discussion questions from chapters 5-9 listed below. Pick those that most relate to your current experience, or ones that most interest the group. As you discuss the topics, how do the four stages apply to your (or those in your group) current situation? If you are in a transition right now, what is God asking you to address or even re-visit?

Look at the chronology of Peter’s final days with Christ.
Text: John 18-21. Are there any aspects of a transition or the transition life cycle for these verses?

Confusion
(Chapter 5)

What if you realize that you are at the entry phase of a transition? What should you do?

Discuss the following suggestions. Which are a help to you right now? Which is your greatest challenge?

1. Wait. If you are truly in a time of transition, it will unfold.
2. Adopt a posture of openness. Instead of seeking to end or remedy your struggles, open up to what God might be doing in your life.
3. Start a journal. Write down your thoughts about where you are. List the issues that you
find yourself pondering. What are your questions?
4. Reflect on the issues that you believe launched you into the transition. What is the nature of those issues? Why are they so difficult?
5. Ask God to begin to reveal his purposes, even in the midst of your hurt and confusion. Pray and reflect by asking, “Lord, what are you at work doing?”
6. Find someone to travel alongside you. This should not be someone who claims to have all the answers, but some one committed to help you process your questions.

The Water Line
(Chapter 6)

Most likely, evaluation will produce moments of truth when a follower comes face-to-face with issues of self. Evaluation often produces an incredible need for God, and a re-encounter with the love and grace of God.

1. What has surfaced now as you think through the evaluation phase of a transition? What have you learned to value as a result?
2. Look back at the four categories of questions. Apply them to your current transition and evaluate what led up to your transition.
3. What makes you feel stuck? What is God going after?
4. If you could address one issue right now, what would it be?

Alignment
(Chapter 7)

The prize of surrender is revelation. Most want revelation. Few want surrender.

Look at the four obstacles again. Which could keep you from surrender?

• Strong egos: self-sufficiency
• Shame / Guilt: past struggles
• Lack of self-acceptance: accepting God’s grace and love
• High achievement: task focus

Don’t get stuck in the alignment phase; your future depends on it. Lay down anything that may be keeping your stuck here.

Living it Forward
(Chapter 9)

Have you heard God speak? That may feel like a daunting experience. Let’s process what might be occurring:
What does God seem to be saying? What is the breakthrough? List the experiences where you sensed God was speaking to you in new ways. How does what you are hearing line up with:

- Scripture?
- Your past?
- Counsel from those who know you best?
SECTION THREE
Transition: Three Defining Moments (chapters 10-16)

Some transitions are bigger in nature and importance than others. There are three major transitions that occur in route to a Christ follower finishing well in their walk with Christ. These three work a follower to the potential moment of convergence, where an individual discovers their unique contribution. (chapter 10).

The awakening transition is about calling. It is the moment when decisions are made about life’s direction and purpose. Questions seem to be predominant. Answers less evident (chapters 11,12).

The deciding transition is when an individual begins to face the need for prioritization and some type of life decision-making grid. With multiple demands, and the scarcity of time, Christ followers must learn to discern how to say no, if they are to say yes to God’s plans and design (chapters 13,14).

The finishing transition is about completing the race set before a Christ follower early on in their journey. Finishing is about focusing on one’s unique contribution. Finishing is also about legacy and the life imprint one leaves behind (chapters 15,16).

Chapters 12, 14 and 16 are unique in that they are comprised of a series of coaching questions that can serve as the basis for discussion and interaction.

Pick the chapter that most relate to your current transition, or one you would like to process in a deeper way.

Chapter 12 – Process the Awakening Transition
Chapter 14 – processing the Deciding Transition
Chapter 16 – Processing the Deciding Transition

Read through again the dialogue between the coach and the topic area in the corresponding chapter.

What is helpful?
How does the advice apply to your situation?
What questions or thoughts do you still have?

Bible reflection:
Talk back through the lives of, Daniel, Timothy and Paul.
These three lives experienced the three transitions. What do they tell us about the results of going through these major, defining moments? What lessons can we learn? Look at Hebrews 13:7,8 - note the exhortation to study the lives of other leaders.
SECTION FOUR
Transitions: Where from here? (chapters 17-20)

Dr. J. Robert Clinton makes an over-arching comment about transitions:
“Get everything that God has for you out of each of the transitions he brings to you.”

There is a temptation to become (1) pre-occupied with life and its many demands, (2) to want answers prematurely, (3) want answers more than intimacy with God, as a result of a transition. Resist and lean into the difficult. There are insights hidden in a transition that are found nowhere else (chapter 17).

It will take resolve and a commitment to live out the trust you profess to have in God. But if you are going to moving from one phase of your development to the next, you must go through (not around) your transitions. Like three young men stood in the fire in defiance of a rule commanding them to violate their beliefs, fight for your walk with God. Put energy and passion into a deeper intimacy and living a life that counts (chapter 18).

One of the key results of a transition is a major shift in one’s paradigm, how one views life and the obstacles we face. New perspective breeds new courage and hope. Transitions reveal the need for change, and help to reveal the way forward in one’s thinking (chapter 19).

Transitions are not without risk and the call for greater faith. It will require you and I to leave the comfortable, take up the path again, and adventure into the unknown. There is a path. There is a way forward. Up ahead is the prize. Not big numbers or famous recognition, but that moment when an individual realizes, “for this I was born.” (chapter 20)

Resolve
(Chapter 18)

How is your resolve? It is one of the keys to getting all you can out of a transition.

1. What clarity have you received about transitions after having interacted with the concepts in this book.
2. Are you headed toward a transition? What might work against your resolve? What do you need to remind yourself of as you begin to process your transition?
3. Are you in a transition right now? What is working against your resolve? What needs to be addressed to help you stay the course? What assistance do you need to help you better process your transition?

Note: Keep your eye on the transition life cycle (chapter 4).
Relearning
(Chapter 19)

Understanding that God works and uses transitions to develop his followers brings purpose to the toughest of moments, and gives purpose to living in a time of the almost, but not yet.

1. What has resonated from this chapter as we discussed the reasons for transitions?
2. Do you simply want to skip ahead and move on?
3. Have you taken control yourself and locked out the potential ways God might be at work?
4. Do you believe God is truly at work in the midst of your transition?
5. How is your struggle in trusting God with control right now?

Next
(Chapter 20)

Did you get all you can out of your study of transitions?

1. Use the transition life cycle (chapter 4) and the three key transitions (chapter 10) as your key navigational tools.
2. Continue to process your transition with the help of a coach or mentor.
Leader Breakthru System

Defining Moments of Life and Leadership

THREE Strategic Transitions
Awakening (CALLING)
Deciding (CONTRIBUTION)
Finishing (CONVERGENCE)

Core Leadership Development Processes

Focused Living
AWAKENING
Clarifying CALLING

APEX
DECIDING
Discovering CONTRIBUTION

Resonance
FINISHING
Moving into CONVERGENCE

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