

## Weekly Study

### Man in the Arena | Ethan Matott | October 2, 2022

*\*A note to leaders: there have been two additional questions added to the “grow” and “move” portions of the Weekly entitled ‘Dive Deeper’. This is designed for you to help guide your group into deeper relationship with Jesus and each other, and take an additional step for owning their relationship with Jesus throughout their week.*

## START

**If it's your first week meeting as a group, go around and do introductions. Have people include their name, how long they have lived in Austin, and the most impactful thing they took away from Sunday's message.**

*\*A note to leaders: the best way to begin to build relationships among your group and stir one another's faith is to share our stories with each other. The Bible says that we overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony (Revelation 12:11) — our testimonies are powerful and help bring healing and freedom to others!*

*Extend an invitation on the first night of your group for people to share their testimonies with the group. Usually, having one person share at the beginning of the night each week seems to work best.*

**If your group has been meeting already, go around and check in with your group with the following questions. If you had new people join your group this week, be sure to allow time for introductions.**

- It's a new month! What is everyone most looking forward to crossing off their fall bucket list?
- What is the most impactful or challenging thing you learned during Sunday's message?
- What did that thing teach you about God? About yourself?

## SHARE

This week Ethan continued our sermon series “Let's Go Change the World” with a message about influencing your arena. The question is not, “Do I have influence?”, but rather, “How am I using my influence?” God has given each of us a sphere of influence with which He has created us in order to impact the people around us. He challenged us to think about the ways that we are leading the people around us and use the influence we have to push the kingdom of God forward by being ready, being excellent, being bold and being a bridge builder.

## G R O W

### Read Acts 7:51-60.

When you want to lead people to Jesus and influence people in your arena for the kingdom, you can expect to encounter opposition. While Stephen was working to advance the gospel, his adversaries became so angry that they put him to death, which bears a striking resemblance to the story of Jesus. Stephen was the first martyr of the faith, and because of his boldness to speak truth it seemed like he made it more difficult for believers to follow the way of Jesus. Instead, his death caused the disciples to scatter and end up taking the gospel further than it had been at that point.

It's difficult to relate to this passage since we live in a nation that is not hostile to Christianity. Instead, the difficult question for us to answer today isn't necessarily "Would I die for my faith?" (Although a good and sobering question to think about), but rather, "Will I live out my faith every day and maximize every opportunity to influence the people around me for Jesus?" There are four ways that Ethan talked about that help us do this: be ready, be excellent, be bold and be a bridge builder.

- What is the most convicting part of this passage?
- What are the things that keep you from stepping into the arena and living all out for Jesus?
- *Dive Deeper:* For more information about the persecuted church and for ways you can be praying, ask your group leader or coach to reach out to reach out to RRA's groups ministry lead, Haley and she can provide resources to learn more.

## M O V E

### Read Colossians 3:17.

There are ways that we can prepare to influence our arenas. It won't be perfect, but don't let perfection be the enemy of readiness. By the power of God's spirit at work in us we can be ready not only for the tasks he has for us, but for the people that he'll put in our paths. Your influence starts with your heart posture. We have the ability to work excellently, as unto the Lord. Excellence generates influence, and influence creates impact — we want to be people of impact. We can be bold in the right ways — the boldest thing you can do is walk in your calling instead of seeking to be relevant or popular. It doesn't require that we push the Bible down people's throats, but we have yet to see the amount of impact that could be had by being obedient to speak the truth in love. Don't let your fear of being bold in the wrong way keep you from being bold in the right way. We also can be bridge builders — so often the reason we aren't bold is because we've watched people be bridge burners and keep people away; we

have the opportunity to build bridges in our spheres of influence and partner with God to bring people in and tell them the truth of who Jesus is.

- Between being ready, being excellent, bold or a bridge builder, which comes most easily to you? Which is a challenge for you?
- Who is the biggest critic in your mind that keeps you from entering the arena?
- *Dive Deeper:* Scripture says, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” Identify someone whose choice above comes more easily to them than you and talk with them about it. Find someone whose challenge IS what comes easily to you and share the wisdom that the Spirit has given you about it!

## P R A Y

Spend some time sharing personal prayer requests. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into separate groups to share more freely.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to cultivate depth individually and in your group that helps you become more like Jesus each day and maximize your influence for the sake of the gospel.
- Ask God to give you the courage to live all out for him no matter where you go.