

Lifebyte 74

Having the Heart of Jesus A Kingdom Mindset

“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is... In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like Him” (1John 3:2; 4:17)



Restoration Ministries International

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

email: Mikedowg@aol.com

Web: www.Restorationministries.org

Introduction

In Lifebyte 73. *Stop Toxic Thoughts—Replace Toxic Memories* we recommended that you be earnest in replacing all of your fear-based (toxic) memories with love-based (healthy) ones. The indwelling Spirit has given you the “spiritual weaponry” of *forgiving* from your heart and *praying blessing* on those who were instrumental in each toxic memory being formed in your mind.

You don’t have to conjure this transformation up on your own; that will never work! *Love* for God and for others is the foundational character quality of Jesus that underlies the changes His Spirit will make as you yield to Him. Love is the key characteristic of Jesus that identifies us as His disciples. And, ONLY by looking to His Spirit within you can you transform those negative, toxic thoughts and memories into ones that are healed.

The *love of Christ in you* enables you to view your life purpose through *His* eyes—a Kingdom mindset that is burdened to see ALL whom He puts in your life come to salvation (Matthew 28:18-20).

It’s *His love* that compels you to cast aside all self-seeking values and motives, so you can live a trust-filled, obedience-based life that pleases our Father (Romans 12:1,2).

Do You Have A Kingdom Mindset?

A *mindset* is a way of thinking that is so deeply entrenched in you that it creates a powerful incentive to evaluate and respond in a certain manner. You aren’t born with a particular mindset; rather you develop one through a variety of teachings and life experiences.

Think of a mindset as the summation of your *goals and values*, as well as the *methods* you use to achieve your goals.

• **goals** The *focus* of your ambition and effort. Deep emotional commitment compels you to *persist* in reaching your goals. You may respond with intense frustration or anger when people or events interfere with meeting your goals.

• **values** Your *principles or standards* of behavior. A reflection of your character, your values guide your judgment of what you *consider important* in life. Deep emotional attachment accompanies your values, and you’re easily hurt when they are violated.

• **methods** Reflect *the ways* in which you accomplish or approach a task or situation. How you do things reflects how your mind operates. You generally have less emotional attachment to your methods, unless you are obsessed with *doing it your way*.

It’s a sad incursion of the world’s ways into westernized Christendom that so little effort is expended on working out mutual *goals, values and methods* within relationships, especially in marriage. If these aren’t intentionally discussed and agreed upon, frustration emerges. That’s because none of the people involved can understand why the other(s) can’t see things *their way*. Instead of developing a mindset that defines them collectively as a couple, a husband and wife will live like married singles; divorce may follow.

When people do make the effort to work out their goals, values and methods together, they’re more likely to realize how wonderfully different they are. Appreciation for and devotion to each other can then grow. By heeding the guidance of the Spirit of Christ in them and applying God’s Word to their goals, values and methods, followers of Jesus can intention-

ally develop a *communal Kingdom mindset*. Without this collective mindset, the extended spiritual family of called-out ones can't fulfill God's purposes through them and reach others for Him.

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him" (1John 3:1)

A good starting point for developing a Kingdom mindset is to recognize that your *highest identity is being our Father's child*. The shed blood of Jesus made this wondrous relationship possible, so it's essential that you hold your "childhood" in high regard. Understanding yourself as *Father's child* gives you *His perspective* so that you can establish *His* goals, values and methods in your life.

When you are permeated with His Kingdom mindset, any conformity with worldly goals and values becomes meaningless to you. And, His mindset propels you to become more like His Son through

His Spirit at work in you.

Mike and Sue: In our innermost being we identify ourselves as *our Father's children*, fellow followers of Jesus seeking to be like Him in love and character. We are married, but that relationship isn't the foremost way we perceive ourselves. Rather, we are *Covenant partners* pursuing Christ-like growth, both individually and together. In this light, we're fully open to the input and feedback which we offer each other, especially in regard to confronting toxic thoughts and memories that hinder our spiritual and relational development.

Look closely at the diagram below. A Kingdom mindset often creates problems for you with your unbelieving relatives. If they're still boxing you in as the (kid) brother/sister they grew up with (warts and all), unbelieving siblings pigeon hole you into that old identity that's mired on Earth. Because of their desire to hold onto a worldly mindset and toxic memories, they resist the changes and new mindset the Spirit of Jesus is producing in you—a purposeful pursuit of Kingdom goals, values and methods on the journey to Christ-like character. And,

Sanctification:
The Family of Jesus Pursuing a Kingdom Mindset

Earth
Where people hold onto their toxic thoughts & memories and pursue the goals of this world.



"We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, Who is the Spirit"
(2 Corinthians 3:18)



Family of Jesus Pursuing a Kingdom Mindset



Christ-like character

The Family of Jesus (Matthew 12:50)
Living repentantly with those who have a Kingdom mindset.

Goal: To arrive in heaven with as many others as you have helped come.

Value: To mutually help each other develop the mindset of Jesus.

Method: To apply His Word to your lives and be guided by His *rhema*.

the further along the path of sanctification you travel, the less comfortable you become with the box they want to put you in. Have you experienced this tension?

To the degree in which your *mindset*—the composite of past memories which color your goals, values and methods—remains toxic, you'll curtail growing in the love of Jesus. Until you *detoxify* those memories that are unChrist-like and unbiblical, you can't develop a Kingdom mindset that enables you to cooperate with others in fulfilling our Father's will.

The very prayer of Christ for His own, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done...", must hallmark the way of life for any and all who have embraced His Covenant. Doing our Father's will is not optional, but rather His mandate for those who will enter His heavenly kingdom. (See Matthew 7:21; 12:50; 1John 2:17.)

Think about the goal of a *Kingdom* lifestyle, marriage, family, and home fellowship family: to purposefully develop a mutual Kingdom mindset that enables them to cooperate harmoniously in carrying out our Father's will. Using the Bible as their foundation and trusting His Spirit to guide them (*rhema*), they intentionally develop common goals, values and methods to which they are wholeheartedly committed out of love for their Lord and love for one another. This calls for far more mutual discussion than lecturing!

The rest of this Lifebyte will discuss elements to help you develop a biblically solid Kingdom mindset with minimum frustration in your life. We'll introduce you to some possible hindrances to understanding other people, and we'll expose how hindrances to developing a Kingdom mindset are perpetuated by the ecclesiastical religious system.

A Kingdom Mindset: Understanding the Big Picture, Integrating the Details

Many years ago while Mike was still in the Navy, we became aware of a major difference in how people approach new information or situations. Some people, a very small minority, see the *big picture* first before they see the *detail*. The vast majority see *detail* but struggle to understand the *big picture*.

Mike is a big picture person. He sees the forest first, then the individual trees. Sue begins with the individual trees, then later discovers how they fit into the whole forest. During our early marriage we didn't appreciate this different mindset and became frustrated with each other. Perhaps you recognize what we're talking about here!

We'd like to offer some insights we've gleaned over the years to help you peacefully cooperate with others in developing a Kingdom mindset. The mutual participation that's needed in collectively sharing a Kingdom mindset is dependent on accepting input from *both* the big picture person(s) and the detail person(s). This requires give-and-take discussion, and that everyone tries to understand where the other(s) are coming from.

A Lesson From the Teamwork Test

(Copyright 1991 by Jim Dethmer)

Many years ago Jim Dethmer developed the Teamwork Test to help people understand the various roles they play in a group environment. It was used extensively at many clergy-attended conferences he conducted around the nation. We've adapted his summary of the four teamwork styles. As you read, consider which best describes you.

Collaborators

The collaborator is a *goal-directed* team member who sees the vision, mission, or goal of the team as paramount but is flexible and open to new ideas, willing to pitch in and work outside his or her defined role, and able to share the limelight with other team members. Most people see you as a big-picture person, but they believe, at times, that you may fail periodically to revisit the mission, to give enough attention to the basic team tasks, or to consider the individual needs of other team members. People describe you as forward-looking, goal directed, accommodating, flexible, and imaginative.

Contributors

The contributor is a *task-oriented* team member who enjoys providing the team with good technical information and data, does his or her homework, and pushes the team to set high performance standards and to use their resources wisely. Most people see you as dependable, although they believe, at times, that you may become too bogged down in the details and data or that you do not see the big picture or the need for positive team climate. People describe you as responsible, authoritative, reliable, proficient, and organized.

Communicators

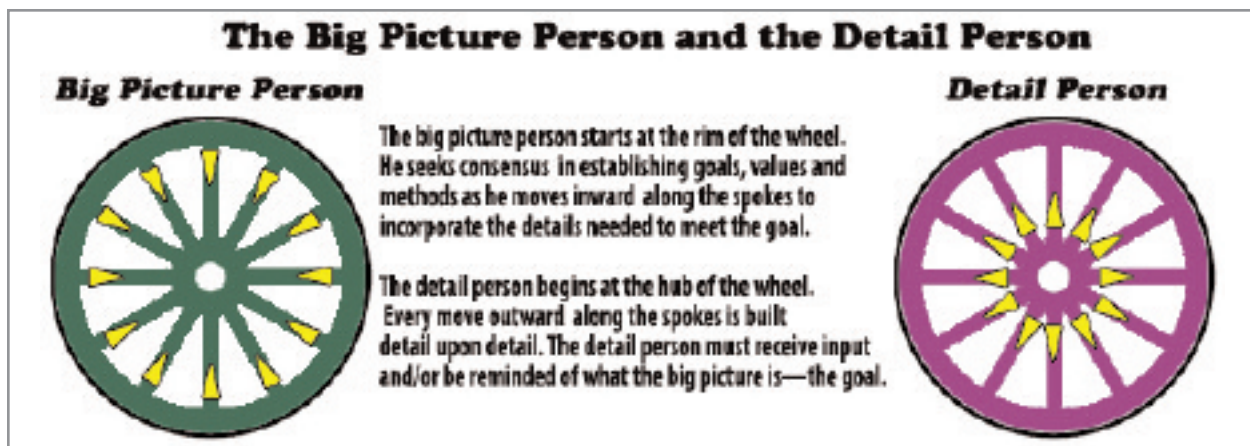
The communicator is a *process-oriented* team member who is an effective listener and facilitator of involvement, conflict resolution,

consensus building, feedback, and the building of an informal, relaxed climate. Most people see you as a positive “people person”, but they find that, at times, you may see process as an end in itself, may not confront other team members, or may not give enough emphasis to completing task assignments and making progress toward team goals. People describe you as supportive, considerate, relaxed, enthusiastic, and tactful.

Challengers

The challenger is a team member who *questions* the goals, methods, and even the ethics of the team, is willing to disagree with the leader or higher authority, and encourages the team to take well-conceived risks. Most people appreciate the value of your candor and openness, but they think, at times, that you may not know when to back off on an issue or that you become self-righteous and try to push the team too far. People describe you as honest, outspoken, principled, ethical, and adventurous.

So, in “team” situations involving others (even marriage or with your children), which role do you most often play? It may help if you picture the various styles like positions on a basketball team. In order for the team to play effectively, *everyone* needs to be able to shoot, dribble and rebound. But the guards do more dribbling than the center or for-



wards do, while the latter do more rebounding. Everyone has to do their part for the team to win.

Having used the Teamwork Test for over 18 years, we've found a connection between the various teamwork styles and the thinking processes of the *big picture* and *detail* people. Our links seem to recur but aren't necessarily universal:

Collaborator — *big picture*

Contributor — *detail*

Communicator — *detail*

Challenger — *either one*

Keep in mind that most who take the Teamwork Test don't neatly fit into just one style. For example, Mike is a Collaborator/Challenger. Sue is a Contributor/Challenger. Mike observes whether a husband/father or a faith community leader operates from *God's "big picture"*. That is, do they have a true Kingdom mindset that comprises *biblically based goals* for their lives, their families, and/ or faith communities? If they don't, he becomes a Challenger with them.

Sue finds out if individuals, families and faith communities rely on *biblical values and methods* that will enhance spiritual maturity and cooperative development of a Kingdom mindset. If these are absent, she becomes a Challenger.

Weigh these observations for yourself:

- Most important is that you *fully understand* what the other person is saying to you. This is where you need to ask questions. In order to have harmonious cooperation in establishing Kingdom-minded goals, values and methods, you need to *appreciate each other's point of view*.
- If you're a *detail* person, you're going to be discomforted and stretched when a *big picture* person is trying to explain the larger view. If you don't understand the *big picture*,

you'll focus on a lot of unnecessary and inappropriate detail.

- If you're a *big picture* person, you need to set aside any boredom or irritation when listening to details. If you aren't willing to take note of the details, your endeavor will end up just a visionary pipe dream.

Why Today's "Church" Doesn't Have A Kingdom Mindset *Where Are the Biblical Apostle, Prophet and Evangelist?*

The vast majority of clergy who have taken the Teamwork Test were Contributors. They started with *details* but never developed the *big picture* of a Kingdom mindset. As Dethmer points out, they got "bogged down" in the details. Without input from those who see the *big picture* of God, their efforts become self-serving as they focus on keeping themselves and their faith community feeling comfortable.

Because detail-oriented clergy predominate in westernized Christendom, the vast majority of Christians neither understand nor carry out their part in fulfilling our Father's Kingdom purposes. This woeful situation actually came about back in the fourth century. Emperor Constantine, firmly establishing unity between government and the religion of Roman Catholicism, destroyed the role of the "big picture" gifts: the authentic apostle, prophet and evangelist as proclaimed by Paul for specific purposes:

*"He [Christ] gave some to be **apostles**, some to be **prophets**, some to be **evangelists**, and some to be **shepherds and teachers**,*

- *to equip the saints for the work of service,*
- *to the building of the body of Christ until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and*

of the full knowledge of the Son of God,
• a mature man at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Look again at our Lord’s purposes for these giftings. The first three in particular have been sorely lacking in American faith communities for centuries. We invite you to think about the *mindset connection* between these four gifts and their teamwork style. Our premise is this:

The big picture person:

Apostle, Prophet and Evangelist

The detail person:

Shepherd/Teacher

The *cooperation* among the big picture and detail giftings is what our Lord is calling for to help all of His followers develop a Kingdom mindset. Let’s review the roles and purposes of these gifts.

- **Big Picture:** An *apostle* (Heb. *shaliach*/Gk. *apostolos*) was a person sent forth with a clear understanding of God’s Kingdom. Thus our Lord could entrust an apostle to complete a specific mission to extend His Kingdom.
- **Big Picture:** A *prophet* (Heb. *nabi*/Gk. *prophetes*) was one to whom and through whom God spoke to get the attention of His people. The prophet understood both the holiness of God and His mercy in sending him to warn people to repent and restore fellowship with Him.
- **Big Picture:** An *evangelist* (Heb. *magid*/Gk. *euaggelistes*) was a faith community planter and repairer. He had a clear understanding of what Jesus accomplished for mankind in His atonement on the cross. With this larger perspective, he sought out unbelievers so that they’d be convicted of their sins and their need to repent. He remained in an area until a faith community was formed, and then left it in the hands of an elder shepherd/teacher while he moved on to other fields.

- **Detail:** A *shepherd/teacher* (Heb. *zaken*/Gk. *poimen*; Heb. *rab*/Gk. *didaskalos*) was an older, gray-haired leader, a respected elder who had gained wisdom through his life and had tasted God’s merciful forgiveness. Because of his years of maturing in the character of Jesus, a shepherd could lovingly impart wisdom and counsel to his flock. In compassion he represented our Father’s concern for His children by doing whatever was necessary to lead them through the narrow gate. He rightly divided the Word to help others apply it to their daily lives and exhorted them to righteous responses and actions.

It’s the *combined outworking* of these four gifts through the Spirit that equipped the first followers of Jesus to become more like Him, and enabled the body of Christ to be built up in unity and love to extend the Kingdom. The apostle, prophet, and evangelist operated among various faith communities. The shepherd/teacher ministered within one collective faith family in guiding the flock in cooperation with other biblical elders.

The *mutual cooperation* among both the big picture and detail giftings is needed once again to replace the clergy system adapted from paganism and thrust by Constantine onto Christendom.

For centuries since the Reformation, clergy have focused detail by detail on the words of the Bible, yet they’ve failed to instill a larger *Kingdom mindset* in their listeners. From a Hebraic perspective, to *hear* is to *obey*. Sadly, the obedience part has fallen by the wayside in contemporary sermonizing. Instead, a superficial “Christianity” represented by over 38,000 divisive denominations and sects nullifies the loving unity our Lord prayed for in John 17 that is Spirit-dependent.

But our Father is restoring around the world the foundations of the earliest

Church, which include the return of the biblical apostle, prophet, evangelist, and authentic shepherd/teacher. Is this part of your prayer as well?

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God” (Romans 15:5-7)

Paul pleads for Father to pour out a spirit of unity for those who follow His Son, and directs God’s people to accept one another with the loving purpose for which Jesus has accepted them: to bring praise and glory to God.

Tragically, however, so many *Christian* marriages and fellowship families are marred by interpersonal tensions and terminated relationships. Divorce is spiking, while Christ’s likeness between couples is plummeting.

The *self-absorption* so pervasive in today’s culture has invaded those who call themselves Christ’s. *Obliviousness* characterizes so many couples and families who should be getting to know and appreciate each other as years pass. *All* suffer, since all miss out on the beauty of perceiving one another’s hearts and goals and values.

As we’ve noted before, we’re all so unique because of different genders, background, family values, personality, giftings, and a whole lot more. Don’t take it for granted that anyone else, especially your spouse, understands how you think! It’s a rare couple who have determined to get to know each other’s inner motivations. We’ve met only a few cou-



ples who even know their spouse’s spiritual gift(s).

Paul makes the analogy of spiritual gifts operating like various body parts. (See 1Corinthians 12:12-31.). With Jesus as the only Head, each gift of the Spirit fulfills a specific function for the good of the whole body. His Spirit imparts the gifts as He wills. Our Lord expects His followers to know their own gifts and those of their spouses, their children and those who are their fellowship family so that they may cooperatively do their part for the King of the Kingdom. Do *you* need to discover how the Spirit has gifted you so that your body part may build up your home and the spiritual body He has set you in?

Look again at the *Big Picture Person and Detail Person* diagram on page 4. Again, a *detail* person focuses on each specific component of what they are going to do. They emanate from the *hub* of the wheel. Without a strong awareness of the big picture or even of the feelings of those around them, detail people can get frustrated when someone interferes with their seemingly orderly world. And, detail people are far more concerned with their own spiritual gift than in how everyone's gifting can cooperate to accomplish a common Kingdom cause.

The *big picture* person sees the collective involvement of many in accomplishing the task, as from the *rim* of the wheel. He or she keeps others focused on *why* each is doing their part—for the common good. The leadership style of a big picture person needs to be grounded in helping others do their part: "*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*" (1 Peter 4:10).

The Kingdom of God From the Big Picture to the Details

"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness..." (Matthew 6:33)

Our Lord's command, above, is an imperative, a must-do. To truly follow Him as Lord of our lives, *His* goal must be *our* life's goal: to do our part through His Spirit in extending His Kingdom.

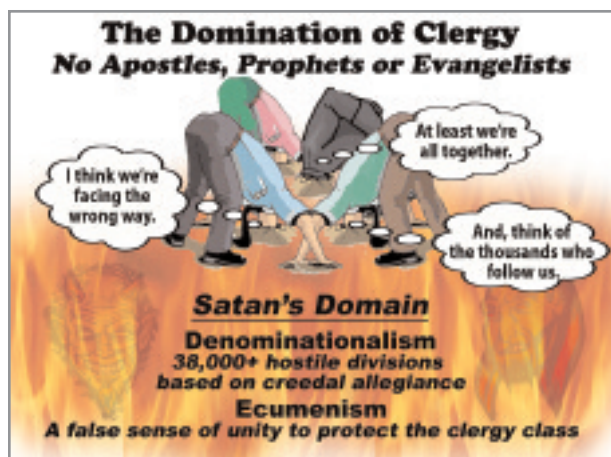
If you're *not* a big picture person, then seek one out; pray them into existence to come alongside you! For both the big picture person and the detail person, it takes a lot of love and courage to live with a Kingdom mindset. You become an enemy to the world because your values and goals are so unlike theirs (John 15:19; 17:14).

If you do see the big picture, you need patience and perseverance to help others understand it *and* fulfill their part in the Kingdom out of love for their Lord.

If you're a detail person, it's out of *love for Jesus and for others* that you can let yourself be stretched to use your "body part" for the greater Kingdom good.

You may be among those who are reluctant to find out how you've stopped short of God's bigger picture. Maybe you've been initially offended when we've confronted you about your complacent, detail-oriented world that has nothing to do with Jesus' Kingdom call for your life. Please, open your heart to this: All the details are useless and meaningless if your goal doesn't match *our Lord's goal* for His Kingdom people!

As we noted earlier, most clergy are detail-oriented. Sadly, people whose thinking starts from details ALWAYS stop at their own level of personal convenience and competence. They MISS the big picture of God, a Kingdom mindset, *unless* they are willing to accept input from the apostle, prophet and/or evangelist. The big picture gifts *stretch and challenge* people to see their lives and faith community from our Father's larger framework. It's *His* big picture that His children must commit to.



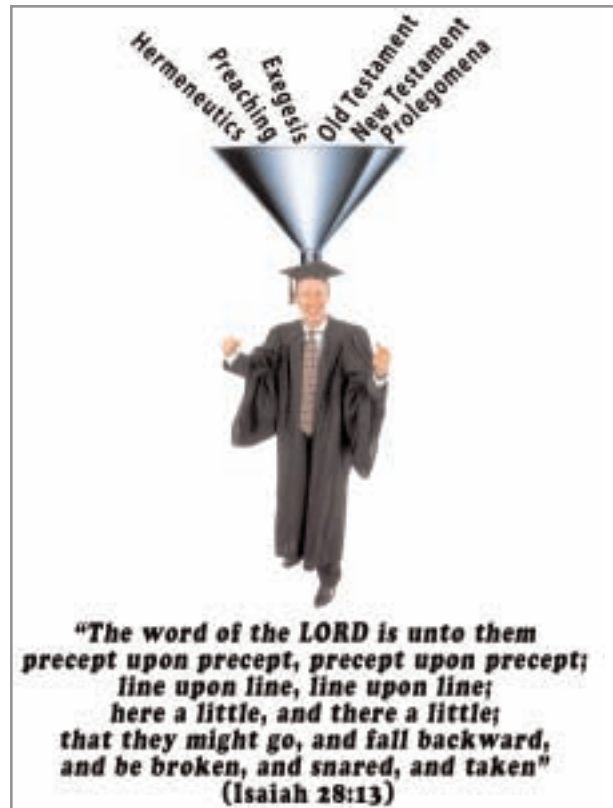
The Holy Spirit gave Mike the gift of prophecy when he first followed Jesus. He initially recognized the detail orientation of clergy while at seminary in 1978, and subsequent years of counseling clergy only verified his observation.

We're pursuing this topic because so many clergy have ingrained in their congregations a mindset of viewing their spiritual lives from an *individualist, detail view*—attending services, acquiring Bible knowledge, putting money in the collection, participating in programs that make them feel good. Yet how few professional clergy break through the self-absorbed mindset of their congregation to be *wholly sold out* for the Kingdom of God!

In our book, *Restoring the Early Church*, Chapter 6. "Greek Philosophy in the Church—How Did Plato Displace God?", we discuss the detail mindset of clergy that is taught and reinforced in seminaries. You can read Mike's personal account of this, beginning on page 89 of the book: <<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/books/rtec/2.RTECSection2.pdf>>

In general, a detail-oriented person in ministry relies on *how-to* type manuals and seminars, seeking a "by-the-numbers" approach because this is how they were taught in their seminaries. Class by class, content was presented to them for which they were given tests to show they understood the details. Since most seminary professors are clergy and academics themselves, *detail* is their starting point. (*The Purpose Driven Church* by Rick Warren and other materials on the Church Growth Movement aim at the detail mindset of clergy.)

On the right is a facsimile of a large poster that hung in the foyer of the main building where we attended seminary. Detail-oriented seminary professors



trained future clergy to organize the Bible into structured segments as a systematized how-to manual. This approach relies heavily on sermons and Bible studies rather than on the biblical example of role modeling a Kingdom mindset.

In essence, today's clergy have been trained to be *managers* instead of leaders bent on boldly extending the Kingdom of God through well-equipped Jesus-followers. What's the difference? A manager is trained to run an *established, smoothly running system*.

Only when the apostle, prophet and evangelist have their input will all of Father's children be equipped to mature and serve in the good works God has prepared for them (Ephesians 2:10). A *big picture* leader brings together people who dedicate themselves to a cause that's much greater than just meeting their own wants and desires. He/she leads and challenges people to leave their comfort zones and live by a Kingdom mindset.

You may be wondering, “If early evangelists stayed in an area until a faith community was formed and elders were trained to serve, how did we end up with today’s Evangelism Crusades?” The contemporary “drive-by Gospel drop” has no biblical basis, and therefore has produced professed “Christians” who have no idea of either life in the Spirit or a Kingdom life purpose. Little lasting fruit has come from this approach.

Numerous evangelism crusades officials admit that only 4-10% of those who “go forward” later stay true to Christ. The remaining 90%+ go on living inoculated *against* Jesus as they continue their own way of life, believing they’ve “met” Jesus already. But, they’ve never *known Him* as Lord of their lives.

“Drive-by evangelism” has become so prominent because well-meaning clergy don’t understand the biblical evangelist as a specific gift of God with a distinct understanding of His big picture. There’s a desperate need for the *Kingdom minded* evangelist who fully shares the Gospel and stays until a faith community can be gathered as extended family under the Lordship of Jesus. The evangelist then entrusts their care to a biblical elder, a shepherd/teacher—and moves on to reach other unbelievers.

“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word [rhema] that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4)

Rhema is our Lord’s means to reveal both His big picture *and* the detail of His specific will. He reveals His *rhema* in various ways, as Peter quotes the prophet Joel: “*In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream*

dreams” (Acts 2:17). It’s not that our Lord isn’t still doing this today. Rather, people aren’t being taught by detail-oriented clergy to seek His *rhema*. They’re filled with entertaining stories wrapped around fragments of Scripture. But the Spirit’s revelation? No.

Both King David (2 Samuel 5:18-25) and the Apostle Paul, for example, were guided by the *rhema* of God. Paul in particular was directed by the Spirit specifically regarding what to do (Acts 18:9) as well as receiving guidance in a dream (Acts 16:9).

Through the Spirit of Jesus within you and in others who are mature in the faith, you’ll learn how you may cooperate with our Lord’s will. *Rhema* is God’s way of connecting you to His big picture and showing you your specific part in it.

Below is an excerpt of Frank J. Exley’s poem, *Step By Step*, from our workbook, *Demolishing Strongholds*. It captures the essence of living by *rhema* with a readiness to obey it:

Thou canst not see today the hidden meaning
Of My Command, but thou the light shalt gain;
Walk on in faith, upon My promise leaning,
And as thou goest, all shall be made plain.

One step thou seest — then go forward boldly,
One step is far enough for faith to see;
Take that, and thy next duty shall be told thee,
For step by step thy Lord is leading thee.

If you’re eager to seek our Lord’s *rhema*, you must be willing to let yourself be stretched beyond your comfort zone. You’ll go through many hardships if you have a Kingdom mindset. But you’ll find yourself becoming more comfortable with others who are *rhema*-led. You won’t be ruffled by their input into your life.

The Christ-like nature of an authen-

tic spiritual leader, whether husband or elder/shepherd, is a man who is concerned with the big picture. Out of love, he helps those he's responsible for to fulfill their part in the Kingdom. Guided by deep concern for the well-being of ALL in his care, he relies heavily on the wisdom which *rhema* from God provides:

*Though a man may be wise, if his words are **rejected** he will be **deprived of all enjoyment**. When a man is wise to his own advantage, the fruits of his knowledge are seen in his own person; **when a man is wise to his people's advantage, the fruits of his knowledge are enduring**. One wise for himself has full enjoyment, and all who see him praise him; one wise for his people wins a heritage of glory, and his name endures forever" (Ecclesiasticus 37:20-22, 24,25; see also 1 Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:3,4).*

Here a few questions for reflection and discussion:

- What are your spiritual gift(s)? How are they being used? What are the spiritual gift(s) of those close to you in the faith? How are you cooperating together in the body of Christ?
- If you're married, *why* are you married to your spouse?
- If you have children, *why* did God entrust them to you?
- *Why* do you fellowship with those you do?
- Is the greater part of your spiritual life spent on pouring yourself into the Kingdom, or in being complacently comfortable pursuing your own goals?
- If you're not a big picture person, do you have access to those who are? Do they find it easy to stretch your comfort zone?