

Are You Doing The Small Things? Part 3

1 Corinthians 1: 26 Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. 27 Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28 God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. 29 As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

Most plants require 3 essentials for growth. For those of you that are not green thumbs, let's review: They are water, sun, and good or fertilized soil. Most plants require all three.

For the past two weeks, we discussed two elements that are essential for our spiritual growth. They are reading God's Word and prayer. But they are not enough for us to thrive.

3rd small thing: Christian fellowship

The third essential element (and small thing) is Christian relationships (fellowship).

John 15: 12 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. 13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. 16 You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

This conversation Jesus has with His 11 remaining disciples takes place during the last supper. Notice how intimate it is. This is the culmination of spending three years with each other. Jesus actually exercises this “great love” the next day! This was a very tightly knit group of tax collectors, fishermen, a zealot, and we don’t know so much about the one’s whose professions are not mentioned, but they were a mixed bag that for the most part did not have a lot in common with each other. It was their love for Jesus that made them tightly knit. They were, of course, brothers:

Matthew 12: 48 Jesus asked, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” 49 Then he pointed to his disciples and said, “Look, these are my mother and brothers. 50 Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!”

We are to be known for our love for one another

It is through these relationships that prove to the world that we are His followers:

John 13: 34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Can someone look at your life and know that you are His because of your love for your friends?

These relationships are special and just like any other special relationship they take time to build. This is where believers become “Christ in the flesh” for each other. To me this is “fertile soil” that enables a believer to grow.

Matthew 13: 8 Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!

We can just call them “fellowship meetings”.

These meetings of brothers and sisters should be a safe place where you are listened to without judgment. It should be a place where those issues that weigh heavy on your heart can be discussed openly without fear of laughter or shame. They should be regularly occurring, consistent events that become typical of our lifestyle as believers. This is the only way for this love to grow, as we practice getting to know and love one another. The fuel that keeps these meetings “alive” will be the reading of Scripture, discussion, praise and prayer. This can be between 2 or more people. I know this might sound like “just another church service”, but this is much more intimate with fewer people. It is OK to have several meetings a week other than the “regular church” service and I think it is vital.

Other than corporate worship, there should be a small group of the same gender as well as for couples if one is in a relationship. A small group should be not much more than 6. The bigger a group gets the less likely certain people will share and the more frequently they’ll need to meet for the group to “gel” (grow closer together). The leadership of the group should ensure that the focus of the group stays on the Lord and that the conversation stays positive and encouraging making sure that what is being said is applicable to the whole group. This is not always easy to do and certain people might need to be reined in accordingly. **All meetings should start in prayer which sets the tone, always asking for the Holy Spirit to guide the conversation, inviting Him to be present.**

I am convinced that this should be the normal lifestyle for the Christian individual.

For some I know this could be a radical change, but it is this radical change that I needed to get my life in line with His and keep it there. It did not happen overnight, but over time I started to integrate meetings into my schedule until I had

enough and was not overburdened.

These meetings can also take place over the phone. I don't think its ideal, but it works. Just like any relationship or plant, you will reap what you sow.

These meetings are an investment well worth your time. It is in these meetings where relationships blossom which make our lives incredibly rich. The more time invested, the greater the value becomes.

If you are not currently in fellowship on a regular basis then take it to the Lord in prayer.

Ask Him to bring people into your life or help you to meet with others and you can be certain that He will answer a prayer like that. He wants His children to get together and anytime I pray for a great meeting with others He answers it.

Acts 2: 42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

These are the small, yet essential things.

These three regular activities of reading His Word, praying and God-centered meetings are simple, yet essential for spiritual growth. When all three are combined it is most powerful and dynamic. Participation from each individual is key. It is important to make sure each person is engaged and a part of it. The leadership or simply those most mature of the group should naturally pray for all members on a regular basis

as well. The evil one does not want these meetings to occur and he will do all that he can to disrupt.

Once meetings are established, it should be considered as if God engineered it and it becomes the work He's given us to do. This is not work in any negative sense, but work that yields much joy and is something to look forward to because we know that it pleases Him and greatly blesses us.

Keep in mind that the great purpose of these meetings is all about putting into practice the two greatest commandments: To love God with everything we've got and to love our neighbors as our selves. These meetings prepare us for ministering to those in greater need and those that do not know God.

Hebrews 10: 24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Are you ready for true growth?

Dear Lord, thank you for the precious relationships that you have blessed me with. Thank you for my family and for those people in my life that make my life rich and blessed. Help me to invest my time where it matters most, which is relationships. I pray that these relationships make you the focal point and lead to greater service for you. In Jesus' name, amen.