

# Becoming Thriving Families Of The Kingdom

## 1. Introduction

- A. **Becoming Thriving Families Of The Kingdom** - In this series, I would like to draw upon some lessons learned about the kingdom of God and raising families while enduring the challenges of military service. I believe these will help families and couples, as well as individuals.
- 1) We will take some time to look at... how we live and experience the vivid power and closeness of God's relational Presence in our personal life, family life, and professional life.
  - 2) We'll explore some of the principles and practices of the kingdom of God taught by Jesus that elevate us above the everyday grind of life—above the adversity and monotony of life.
  - 3) This exploration will take us into a lifestyle of extraordinary fulfillment and robust relationships with God and family in any kind of military environment, command climate, or assignment.
- B. Due to the abbreviated nature of this series online, it is really an introduction to the full series that we teach at Spring Canyon.
- C. In this series, we will be drawing the greatest portion of our studies and discussions from some of Jesus' teachings that are designed to transform traditional human paradigms about life; not just our thought processes, but how we see and experience life.

## 2. Our Food

- A. John 4:33-34 - <sup>33</sup> Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to <sup>z</sup>finish His work."*<sup>1</sup>
- B. Where do you get your energy? What gives you fuel in life?
- C. **Teaching Point:** Jesus shows us a higher way. Instead of being fueled and energized by natural things, He cultivated a spiritual hunger that brought Him to a place where He was energized by doing what God was doing.

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<sup>y</sup> Ps. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:9

<sup>z</sup> Job 23:12; [John 6:38; 17:4; 19:30]

<sup>1</sup> [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Jn 4:33–34.

D. **Teaching Point:** Don't say to yourself, yeah but that was Jesus...He already knew how to do that. Based on Philippians 2 and Hebrews 12:8. "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."<sup>2</sup>

E. **Question:** What race are you running?

F. **Teaching Point:** I have encountered many Christians in military life as well as other places who are very discouraged in what can seem like insurmountable conditions. When their eyes began to open to God's activity around them and they become a part of the heavenly mission more than the earthly mission, their entire life and demeanor changes.

### G. Cultivating Heart Affections Toward God & His Kingdom

1) **Teaching Point:** We must cultivate an appetite for the food of God's will. [Reference Jesus and His food to do the Father's will.] **Spiritual hunger is cultivated.**

2) **Example:** We have all met people who are very disciplined in life and people who severely lack discipline. Unless they had an eating disorder, none of them lacked the discipline to eat! Why?

3) **Example:** Likewise, I have met many Christians who were very disciplined in life (especially in the military). And yet, there was no correlation between those who were disciplined and their depth of relationship with God. Some of the disciplined people were devout and some struggled to be overcomers in life. Likewise with the less disciplined crowd. **So we know that spiritual hunger is much more than just personal discipline. Spiritual hunger must be cultivated.**

4) Jesus takes it much deeper, teaching us that "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)<sup>3</sup>

A) Treasure = **Time, Money, Energy**

B) **Teaching Point:** Our hearts follow and develop passion around where we invest our treasure.

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<sup>1</sup> Phil. 2:8

<sup>2</sup> [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Heb 5:8.

<sup>3</sup> [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Mt 6:21.

### 3. Retooling Our Thinking - What Produces Fruit?

- A. **Side Note:** Keep in mind that re-tooling our thinking is the first step in re-tooling our practice and lifestyle.
- B. Throughout our lives, we have been taught that much work produces much fruit. But most of us were NOT taught that much relationship produces much fruit. Yet, we find Jesus challenging this assumption in John 15.
- C. **John 15:5 (NKJV):** *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”*<sup>4</sup> \*\*\*Abiding is a relational term.\*\*\* We grow into deeper relationship with God (abiding), as we cultivate a lifestyle of relationship with God. Much of this happens through a lifestyle in prayer and the spiritual disciplines. [See the footnote<sup>5</sup> for some of the spiritual disciplines.]
- D. **Side Note – What We Are NOT Saying:** We are not suggesting that we should lose our work ethic, neither should we negate to apply the laws of sowing and reaping. But if we rely solely upon our work ethic, we severely limit our impact and the level of Divine influence and miraculous results than can occur in our lives, our families, our spiritual families, our churches, our communities, etc.
- E. **Teaching Point:** Jesus did not say, “You shall receive power after you have worked hard enough.” He said, *“<sup>8</sup>But you shall receive power <sup>l</sup>when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and <sup>m</sup>you shall be <sup>3</sup>witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and <sup>n</sup>Samaria, and to the <sup>o</sup>end of the earth.”*<sup>6</sup> **Teaching Point:** We recognize that the relational component of abiding is a spiritual component. It involves the Presence of God among us (the Holy Spirit).

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<sup>e</sup> Hos. 14:8; [Gal. 5:22, 23]

<sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. 3:5

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Jn 15:5.

<sup>5</sup> Prayer, Worship, Serving, Simplicity, Solitude, Fasting, Meditation on Scripture, Spiritual Contemplation, Hearing God, Body Ministry, Spiritual Friendship, Silence, Sabbathing, Secrecy (Matt. 6:4, 6), Submission, Reflection, Scripture Reading, Study, and Learning.

<sup>k</sup> [Acts 2:1, 4]

<sup>l</sup> Luke 24:49

<sup>m</sup> Luke 24:48; John 15:27

<sup>3</sup> NU *My witnesses*

<sup>n</sup> Acts 8:1, 5, 14

<sup>o</sup> Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:23; [Rev. 14:6]

<sup>6</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ac 1:8.

- F. **Teaching Point:** For me and those I know whom I consider great examples to follow, abiding begins with intentional morning prayer and devotions.
- G. **Application:** Some questions I like to ask each day:
- 1) Lord, what are You doing today and how can I be a part of it?
  - 2) In my family...my work...and other places.
- H. **Observations:** Morning prayer slows me down and helps me to be much more aware.
- I. **Teaching Point:** Years ago, when everything in life was rushed and I hardly had time to think because life was so busy, God began to teach me to “walk more slowly and I would get more done.”
- J. **Results:** I found that I was much more tuned into how people were doing—especially my family and people who worked for me or with me. I found myself much more observant (more spiritually aware) to see and hear what God was doing around me.
- K. **Illustration:** In Dickens “Christmas Carol” when the ghost of Jacob Marley visits Ebenezer Scrooge and laments their stingy business practices with people, Scrooge says, “Jacoooooob, it was just business.” Marley shouts in reply to him with a profound statement. He says, “**BUSINESS? Mankind was my business! Love, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The deals of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!**” (After death, the character realized he was running the wrong race.)
- L. **Observation:** Dickens was not far from the kingdom of God when he wrote this statement for the character of Jacob Marley. In God’s economy, humans are the most precious cargo. This is why there is such a raging spiritual battle around the destiny of every human being on earth.
- 1) **Illustration:** Have you seen the stock ticker tapes on CNBC or other business channels? I often imagine an equivalent in heaven that shows the movement of people’s hearts toward God (or away from God).
- M. **Teaching Point:** The work-to-fruit principle is a natural law just as the law of gravity or the second law of thermodynamics are natural laws. The relationship-to-fruit principle is a spiritual law.

- N. **Application:** Accessing natural resources versus spiritual resources in our everyday life.
- 1) Do you have specific problems or challenges? Have you prayed about them? Have you prayed about them with your family?
  - 2) Intentionality is the key.
  - 3) **Quote:** We had a saying in the military. "If it's not in your battle rhythm, it's not a priority."
  - 4) **Personal Example:** Weekly family prayer
- O. **Teaching Point:** Jesus is teaching us that there is a way in God where fruit does not primarily come from how much we do; but comes from Who we know and how well we know Him—how well we live relationally in Him and in His ways.
- P. **Illustration:** [Story of missionary who worked in the north and prayed for the south.]

#### 4. Impartation

- A. **Teaching Point:** The scripture teaches us that we can impart our lives to people. (To impart from the reservoirs of what we have been given.) [Love, forgiveness, holy passion, wisdom, spiritual gifts, relationship with God.]
- 1) **Example:** I have had some very dear brothers (many older than me), who imparted to me a part of their life and passion for God.
- B. **I Thessalonians 2:8 [NKJV]** - So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased <sup>o</sup>to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also <sup>p</sup>our own lives, because you had become dear to us.<sup>7</sup>
- C. **Definition: μεταδίδωμι** 2 aor. μετέδωκα LXX, subj. μεταδῶ; impv. μεταδότη, inf. μεταδοῦναι (Theognis, Hdt.+; ins, pap, LXX, EpArist; TestSol 10:53 C; TestJob 4:1;

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<sup>o</sup> Rom. 1:11

<sup>p</sup> 2 Cor. 12:15; 1 John 3:16

<sup>7</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 1 Th 2:8.

aor. **aor.** = aorist

LXX **LXX** = Septuaginta, ed. ARahlf, unless otherwise specified—Lists 2, beg.

subj. **subj.** = subjunctive; subject

impv. **impv.** = imperative

inf. **inf.** = infinitive

Theognis **Theognis**, VI B.C.—List 5

Test12Patr, Philo; Jos., Ant. 4, 237; 6, 255; Just., A I, 66, 3; Mel., P. 47, 334; Ath. 30, 2) **give (a part of), impart, share** τινί τι (Hdt. 9, 34; X., An. 4, 5, 5; Tob 7:10 BA; EpArist 43; Mel., P. 47, 334) *someth. to or with someone* (B-D-F §169, 1; Rob. 510) ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικόν *in order that I might impart some spiritual gift to you* **Ro 1:11**. ὑμῖν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ *share God's gospel with you* **1 Th 2:8** (cp. Wsd 7:13 sagacious instruction; TestJob 4:1 divine precepts). W. omission of the acc., which is supplied fr. the context **Lk 3:11**; of alms-giving *to the needy* **Eph 4:28**; cp. Hv 3, 9, 2; 4. Without the dat., which is to be supplied fr. the context 1:5. Abs. ὀ

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Hdt. **Hdt.** = Herodotus, V B.C.—List 5

ins **Ins, ins** = Inscription, Inschrift, inscription(s). Without a period, esp. in lists, as at the beginning of entries; the capitalized form is used in titles. In conjunction with literary works this abbr. refers to the title or description of contents.

pap **pap** = papyrus, -yri

LXX **LXX** = Septuaginta, ed. ARahlf, unless otherwise specified—Lists 2, beg.

EpArist **EpArist** = Epistle of Aristeas, II B.C.—List 5

TestSol **TestSol** = Testament of Solomon, I–III A.D.—List 2

TestJob **TestJob** = Testament of Job—List 2

Test12Patr **Test12Patr** = Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, with interpolations II B.C.–III A.D.—List 2

Philo **Philo** = P. of Alexandria, I B.C.–I A.D.—List 5

Jos. **Jos.** = Josephus. This abbr. used when follow by title; I A.D.—Lists 5

Just. **Just(in)**, II A.D.—List 5

Mel. **Mel.** = Melito of Sardis, II A.D.—List 5

Ath. **Ath.** = Athenagoras, II A.D.—List 5

Hdt. **Hdt.** = Herodotus, V B.C.—List 5

X. **X.** = Xenophon, V–IV B.C.—List 5

BA **BA** = Biblical Archaeologist—List 6

EpArist **EpArist** = Epistle of Aristeas, II B.C.—List 5

Mel. **Mel.** = Melito of Sardis, II A.D.—List 5

*someth. someth.* = something

B-D-F **B-D-F** = FBlass, ADebrunner, RFunk, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature—List 6

Rob. **Rob.** = ATRobertson, A Grammar of the Greek NT in the Light of Historical Research—List 6

cp. **cp.** = compare, freq. in ref. to citation fr. ancient texts

TestJob **TestJob** = Testament of Job—List 2

acc. **acc.** = accusative

fr. **fr.** = from

cp. **cp.** = compare, freq. in ref. to citation fr. ancient texts

Hv **Hv** = Visions

dat. **dat.** = dative

fr. **fr.** = from

μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι *one who gives, (let the pers. do it) with liberality, or in all sincerity, i.e., without grudging* **Ro 12:8**.—M-M.—S. εὐεργετέω.<sup>8</sup>

- D. **Romans 1:11-12** - For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—<sup>12</sup> that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by <sup>s</sup>the mutual faith both of you and me.<sup>9</sup>
- E. **Teaching Point:** The spiritual powerlines through which impartations are conducted are deep heart-felt love and holy affection. Notice Paul's language in **I Thessalonians 2:8**, "So affectionately longing for you..." Again in **Romans 1:11**, "For I long to see you..."
- F. **Teaching Point:** If abiding is relational, then it must be imparted relationally. As a spiritual father in my own home, the spiritual art of abiding must be imparted. It is caught more than taught.
- 1) **Quote:** There's an old saying that rings very true in life, "Kids don't do what you say...they do what you do."
- G. **Observation:** As a leader (in the home, at work, etc.), there is a strange and powerful phenomenon I have observed over the years. The composition of our character and interior life imprints on those we lead.
- 1) **Example:** A very good friend confided in me when he made colonel of toxic actions and attitudes toward those under his leadership and command. He didn't believe in those practices. They were very opposite to what he espoused, wrote, and taught. Yet he found himself practicing them before he even thought about it. After some reflection and personal self-audit, he found that he was manifesting and reproducing the actions and attitudes of toxic leadership that leaders over him had practiced. Somehow in the process, he picked up on those habits and attitudes in leadership.

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*pers. pers.* = person(s)

i.e. **i.e.** = id est (that is)

**I.-E.** Indo-European

M-M **M-M** = J Moulton/G Milligan, Vocabulary of Greek Testament—Lists 4, 6

<sup>8</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 638.

<sup>r</sup> Rom. 15:29

<sup>s</sup> Titus 1:4

<sup>9</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ro 1:11–12.

- 2) **Example:** If you're bitter and unforgiving, there is a high likelihood of passing that on to someone else like a virus. If you're gracious, just, fair, and full of God's love, there is a high likelihood of passing these qualities on to those you lead...in your family as well as your profession.
- 3) **Teaching Point:** This is why the primary qualifications of leaders in the New Testament are character qualities and not skills.
- 4) **Illustration:** Years ago, I read an interesting longitudinal study of kids in the inner city. It was a study of many decades. Some kids escaped the cycle of poverty and addiction and led very prosperous lives, but most did not. The only common denominator they could find was that all of the kids in the study had the same grade school teacher. (I think she was their fourth grade teacher.) She was still alive at the time, so they conducted a series of interviews to try to figure out what she did differently, but they couldn't find the difference. Finally, as she was somewhat exasperated, she said, "I don't know what I did differently. **But I sure did love those kids.**" In all of the teacher interviews, she was the only one who made that statement.

H. **Examples Of Impartation Activities & Practices For Families** (If we don't have time in the lectures, perhaps we could discuss them in a Zoom gathering.)

- 1) I would like to share some family activities that I found especially helpful in facilitating the impartation and discipleship process in the family.
- 2) **Teaching Point:** Keep in mind that "the quality of the conversation determines the quality of the relationship. Because the conversation is the relationship."<sup>10</sup>
- 3) **Caveat:** We have to be careful about thinking that these activities alone will provide impartation. (Reference the teaching we just did on the nature of our interior life and its power to reproduce.)
- 4) In parenting, individual personal time with each child.
- 5) Family Devotional Gathering (Weekly) – I teach, my wife teaches, the kids teach, prayer, biblical movie, talk about the movie, talk about scriptures.
- 6) Prayer in the family setting was a group event. We discuss things on the kids hearts, not just ours.
- 7) "What if" campfire circles.
- 8) Family dinner each night.

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<sup>10</sup> This is a statement I have often heard Dr. Joe Umidi say. Professor at Regent University.



- 9) Wisdom Discussions – “Wisdom cries out in the streets.” Continually discuss current events and what God’s wisdom is concerning various scenarios. (Discuss what is in the news.)