

New Website Offerings

Excerpts Only

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MONTH OF AUGUST

MINI-MESSAGES

CALLING ALL PREACHERS!

Yes, that means you! Ask God to give you opportunities to share the Gospel and I have no doubt that you will have them. And when you do, swallow your anxiety and tell people why you love Jesus. Talk about what you know best – your experience with Him. That’s what the church does for each other – we help each other deliver the message. Let’s pray for opportunities for each other and let’s pray for wisdom and words to communicate it well.

SEEKING THE LOST

Have you ever been hopelessly lost before. It’s an unpleasant sensation, isn’t it, when you realize that you don’t recognize anything around you and that you have no idea which way to turn to get to your destination? Maybe asking directions helps, but it depends on who you ask, doesn’t it? Maybe looking at a map will get you headed in the right direction, but only if you read it correctly. When you’re lost, the best way of getting where you want to go is to have someone who knows the way take you.

It would, I think, revolutionize the church if we somehow managed to regain our compassion for lost people. Think

about it. Wouldn't we be more willing to come alongside struggling people and share the gospel with them? Wouldn't we do it more lovingly and gently? Wouldn't we be more likely to invest our energy and resources in helping people deal with the consequences of their lost-ness? Wouldn't we be more sensitive to the ways in which we obscure the gospel? Instead of keeping it simple.

Want to know my opinion? It comes down to identifying with lost people. It comes down to remembering a time in your life when you were lost and needed direction, a time when you were estranged from God and had no clue which way to go. It comes down to admitting to ourselves how easy it still is for us to get turned around and headed in the wrong direction and how thankful and joyful we feel when Jesus reaches out through the hand or voice of another person to turn us back in the right direction.

STOP MAKING FRIENDS WITH YOUR FEARS

There are reasonable fears that everyone has, but we address them. We move on with things that must be done. We integrate our lives with other people for the sake of mutual support. We take the risk of forming relationships.

Human beings are created in the image of God and the God of Christian Scripture is a social being. Father, Son and Holy Spirit have existed from eternity past in a perfect community.

The triune deity has created us with the innate drive to produce, share and live in a community as well. While times of solitude are often helpful to creativity, loneliness is both unhealthy and painful.

For the shy and isolated, it must be horrifying to reach out. To take the risk of rejection. To put themselves in social contexts that make them feel insecure. But it is a risk worth taking!

And those of us who find it easier and more natural to be outgoing certainly have the responsibility of making space in our lives for others. Compassionate with their awkwardness. Sensitive to their fears.

Our hidden fear is that if we lost all of the trappings of life — if we were no longer a librarian, or stock broker, or electrical engineer, or an interior decorator, or that successful person living with our fine families in neatly ordered lives — that we would still be loved. If we are afraid of that, it is because we are under-practiced in our exercise of openness. Our unadorned self is an amazing gift. Friends treasure such a gift and give it back in return. All masks can be removed.

WE'RE HARD TO IMPRESS

Keep gratitude as your default setting by cultivating the habit of praise. That's what it is, habit: habitually seeing the kindness and grace and love of God where others cannot. Make sure your prayers are loaded with thankfulness. Develop the habit of praising God in your conversations. Train your spirit to feel God's breath in the kiss of your spouse, hear His voice in the kind words of a friend, see His fingerprints in a brand-new summer day, sense His protective presence in a long journey. Even in dark valleys, when you can't see Him or hear Him or feel Him, you know He's there, right? Thank Him for being with you even when your senses are too limited to recognize Him.

GOING THE DISTANCE

Life can be many things, but quite often it can be down right hard! We describe those times as “an uphill climb.” We have to exert so much energy just to stay put, we forget about making progress. Before long, we become so discouraged with how far we have to go, that we settle in and try to just stay put by

walking in place. We can't begin to think about making the necessary effort to continue our advance on the upward call of God.

What we so often fail to realize is that staying put requires a lot more effort over the long haul than advancing forward. The Christian life is all about movement, either toward to God (Philippians 3:13-14 RSV) or slipping away from the life he wants for us (Hebrews 2:1 NLT). The principle of spiritual inertia is even more dramatic than the physical one. It takes more effort to hold our position without sliding back than it does to continue our growth in the Lord. God designed us to continue our growth in the Lord.

Going forward, moving more to be like Christ, is the "natural" spiritual process God designed for us as the Holy Spirit works to transform us to be evermore like Jesus (II Corinthians 3:18).

When our growth stagnates — when we become complacent, when we are willing to settle for where we are — we reject the work of the Holy Spirit and begin the slow and futile fight of just trying to stay put in our walk in the Lord. The gravity of Satan and sin suddenly has a much stronger pull on our lives. Rather than living in the momentum of grace and the upward call of God, we find ourselves struggling harder to stay where we are than we ever did moving in the direction of Christ and His character.

ENTREPRENEURS- USING EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

Seeing is believing. Get customers to buy your products by giving them a first-hand experience.

Are you looking for the best way to increase sales for your product? There's a great marketing tactic that's proven to profoundly influence customers' buying decisions. It's called

"experiential marketing"--using events to bring customers into contact with your product to create memorable experiences--and it's increasingly popular with entrepreneurs looking for a high return on investment.

After all, which would be more likely to influence your intention to buy something--reading about it in an ad or trying it out first hand? If you're like most people, personal experience shapes your opinions and buying preferences more strongly than information you get through advertising or even via word of mouth from friends or colleagues. In a 2005 Experiential Marketing Survey by Jack Morton Worldwide, nearly three-quarters of consumers said that participating in a live marketing experience would increase their "purchase consideration," and close to 60 percent said it would result in a quicker purchase.

For certain target audiences, experiential marketing exerts an even greater influence on sales. Nearly 80 percent of teens surveyed by Jack Morton said experiential marketing would increase their consideration of a purchase, and 60 percent of women said it would be more likely to lead them to actually purchase a product than would TV or the internet. What's more, 80 percent of Latino women indicated that participating in a live marketing event would make them more receptive to future advertising.

Any number of venues will work for your experiential marketing events, including malls, fairs, retail stores, restaurants and urban street corners. The key is to choose a venue that supports the theme of your event and fosters interaction.