

Surprise the World by Michael Frost | Chapters 3 – 4
 Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Review

Habits form and reinforce values.

- Our goal is to adopt “missional habits,” which:
 - o Testify to God’s reign.
 - o Produce “questionable lives.”
 - o Create opportunities to “give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Pet. 3:15-16)

The Five Habits of Highly Missional People:

Bless	I will bless three people this week, at least one of whom is not a member of our church.	<i>Outward</i> orientation.
Eat	I will eat with three people this week, at least one of whom is not a member of our church.	<i>Outward</i> orientation.
Listen	I will spend at least one period of the week listening for the Spirit’s voice.	<i>Upward</i> orientation.
Learn	I will spend at least one period of the week learning Christ.	<i>Upward</i> orientation.
Sent	I will journal throughout the week about all the ways I alerted others to the universal reign of Christ.	<i>Inward</i> orientation.

Tonight’s interest – the *outward* habits: Bless & Eat.

Bless: The First Habit

When Frost instructs, “I’d like you to bless three people each week – at least one of whom is a member or your church and at least one of whom is *not*,” what does that word “bless” bring to mind (Frost, 29)?

Origins of “Bless”

Latin *benedicere* (where we get “benediction”)/Greek *eulogein* – “to speak well of,” “to pronounce or make happy.”

- Frost writes, “In most respects it means to confer prosperity or happiness upon another... I’ve heard that part of the etymology of the term ‘to bless’ is to ‘add strength to another’s arm.’ In this respect, to bless others is to build them up, to fill them with encouragement for them to increase in strength and prosperity” (Frost, 30)
- Clarifying, “add[ing] strength to another’s arm,” Frost writes, “Anything that relieves their burden in life. Anything that helps them breathe more easily. Anything that lifts their spirit or alleviates their distress” (Frost, 30-31).

Discussion Question 3 (p. 111), Who in your life has “added strength to your arm”? How have their acts of blessing informed your faith?

Forms of Blessing

- 1) Words of Affirmation
- 2) Acts of Kindness
- 3) Gift-Giving

Discussion Question 4 (p.111), Which of the types of blessing is most natural and comfortable for you? What have you been most blessed by?

Frost cites Gary Chapman (*The Five Love Languages*) on p. 31, writing that Chapman “identifies the importance of empathy in blessing others with words of affirmation.”

- Part of knowing how “best” to bless is Habit 3 – *Listen*.
 - o Whether to the Spirit, or to the lives of the person we want to bless.

Discussion Question 5 (p.111), “How can you become a better ‘student’ of the people you bless?” How will that enrich your ability to be a blessing?

Eat: The Second Habit

On p. 44, Frost writes, “[Eating] isn’t merely good missional strategy. It is a way to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.”

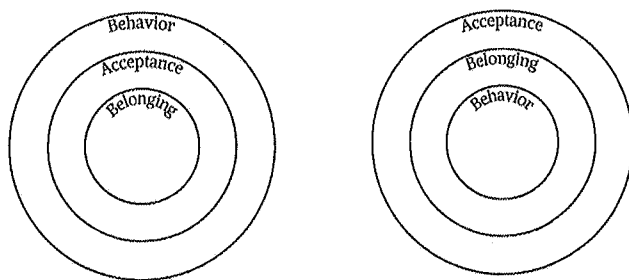
- Think of instances in the Bible of Jesus eating with people: Did those meals have *missional* impact? Why do you think that is?

Discussion Question 8 (p. 112), “The table is the great equalizer in relationships.” How so? How have shared meals enriched your relationships?”

Equalizing creates *openness!*

- On pp. 52-53, Frost (citing Ben Meyer) considers how Jesus turned eating norms on their head, dining with people of different social standings and religion, such that “conversion flowered from communion” (53).
 - o Congregations often expect conversion to *precede* communion. Why do you think that is? How does that hinder mission?

Another way of thinking about many churches’ postures toward the lost vs. Jesus:



This is from a conversation with Dr. Don Arterburn (Baylor University) about how churches can be hospitable toward recovering addicts. Obviously, in the context of mission we are concerned with more than *behavior*, but I think there’s some helpful overlap with Frost’s point about communion → conversion.

Why would acceptance and belonging *produce* behavioral change (or conversion)? How does that relate to Frost’s broader point about the power of “living questionable lives”?

But is it *effective*?

- Read Frost, 34-35.
- Is there someone in your life you would like to see find their way [back] to God? Unsure of how to help? Try blessing or eating with them!

THE BELLS CHALLENGE

DNA Accountability Form

From Frost, *Surprise the World*, pp. 105-106

Bless: Whom Did I Bless This Week?

What questions, issues, or learning arose from this habit this week?

Eat: With Whom Did I Eat This Week?

What questions, issues, or learning arose from this habit this week?
