

The Essentials – Part 3: Partnering with God

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Review:

We are in Week 3 of our Essentials Series. What is essential?

- Week 1 – We are a community that is completely devoted to Jesus. The rest is just footnotes.
- Week 2 – We are a community that loves people – being a community that really sees people...

Serving Others in Community

We build God's kingdom through practical and spiritual gifts to meet needs and serve others.

Illustration: Partnering

Layer #1

Read Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” Isaiah has an awakening.

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

- Isaiah encountered God (awakened) and he served his purpose.
- There's an awakening...to my smallness and his bigness
- This is really all about you. Everything is yours.

- When we live in the weekly and daily rhythm of encountering God as centerpiece of our lives and our prayers.
- I become fully alive to the life-giver my life begins to serve his purposes.

Churches, businesses, and nations can get really goofy if we don't start with God's throne. We can become manipulative and demanding and controlling. It becomes about our employees, programs, and volunteers. What does it take to protect us, run us, be us?

- Serving begins at God's throne and not at the church doors.
- Jesus didn't die on a cross to make you a greeter at Petra Church.
- He died on a cross to make you a container of his love. A child of his affection. Drink in. Pour out.
- **Serving is a lifestyle of loving God first, and loving his people out of that.**
- He is the wellspring of life that provides the love you need for people.

Layer #2

Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the one who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way that sinners sit in the seat of mockers

2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

- What is the law of the Lord? – the regularity of God's character expressed in human behavior.

3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.

- When we talk about serving, we're not talking about a role you fill or a task that you check off your spreadsheet.
- **Serving comes from your character reproducing the source you drink from.**
- **III: Water tank.**
 - If I'm filling my life—drinking in the pure love of the Father—then it's just going to come out of me.
 - Everything that you've stored up in you, comes back out of you.
 - I'm reproducing what I've stored up.
- This happens in seasons. There are seasons of tremendous output. And there are seasons of retraction and rest.

Layer #3

Jesus came to restore our connection back to our Father and the Father's original design!
(Remember that scene in Back to the Future.)

- We are the bridge between Creation and Creator.

- **God has a kingdom of love, and that kingdom is both natural and spiritual.**
- **John 3:4-6**
“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

- God’s kingdom takes place in the earth and in the Spirit.
- We’re not waiting until heaven; heaven lives in you.
- **Mark 1:14-15**
Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”
- God is breaking back into earth everywhere people say, “Yes Lord”.

Review:

Layer 1: Serving people is the overflow of loving God first.

Layer 2: Serving is just your character reproducing the life of God that’s in you.

Layer 3: God’s kingdom of love is both natural and spiritual.

Layer #4

God uses us in spiritual ways to build his kingdom of love.

We encounter God through the Spirit.

We have access to spiritual power you can’t see with your eyes.

- **1 Corinthians 12:7-11**
Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.
- If we’re going to be a people who are familiar with partnering with the Spirit in recreating the world, then we have to cultivate environments where we are stirring up the Spirit, relying on the Spirit, praying with the Spirit, obeying the Spirit.
- Once you’ve tasted this, you’ll never want to go back.
- *Ill: Word of Knowledge: “God loves your children more than you do.”*
- *Ill: Picture of pregnant woman.*
- *Ill: Word of Knowledge: Guy in N.H. Coffee?*

- *Ill: Word of Knowledge: Randy Clark. Felt pain in back. Impression of man. Mental picture of a man tripping over green hose.*

The gifts of God's power should always point us back to his love.

- **Luke 9:2**
and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.
 - We are being sent out to proclaim and demonstrate God's love.
 - "I have a healer living inside of me." "I have a prophet living inside of me."

Layer #5

God uses us in natural ways to build his kingdom of love.

- **Romans 12:6-10**
6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully...

These are our acts of love in community:

- cooking meals for each other, helping people move
- taking care of the widow, the poor, the refugee

But also vocational

- Don't disqualify your vocation as an act of worship and kingdom building that serves people, brings order to creation, and glorifies the creator, and provides for your needs.
- Don't discount society building as part of God's creation plans.
 - Maybe like Sarah who works in the medical field during a pandemic and she's working 60-hour weeks. Offer it as worship to the Lord, that's kingdom work. You are a blessing to us.
 - Larry works for the code enforcement office (he processes the complaints from residents). "It's not that it's my core calling or passion, but I do get satisfaction out of helping our township stay clean and beautiful."
 - Henry Garman – "I've been more mentored by my Christian business leader than I've ever had in the church."
 - Lori Ortenzi - Pet sitting business that has turned into life coaching.
 - Samantha cleans hospital rooms no one else gets into. She said, "all the people I've prayed for have gone home. So, I must have something going on here?"

- Amanda helps people process their trauma by expressing their pain through artwork.
- Michelle who volunteers part time with Lifecycles.com -- to take young men and women on a bicycling adventure to help build their character as they enter adulthood.
- Gerry builds affordable housing along the Mexican border for refugees.
- Ryan in architectural design who's helping the Tenn Baptist children's home redesign their orphanage homes to function in family relationships.
- Sophia who teaches at an elementary school and runs the kindness club where they help children perform acts of kindness.
- Larry who alongside of his business he sits on the School Board helps to lead our community.
- Katrina gives dignity to the disabled and special needs by spending eight hours a day, two-three days a week talking, playing, working with a particular individual.
- Petra has an entire team of volunteers that decorates and serves the meals here at the church after funerals. It serves the families and honors the deceased.

Final Thought:

The closer I get to God, the more I serve others. And the more I serve others the more I grow closer to God.

My encouragement to you this morning is to live in the power of God's love, and out of partnership with him to build his kingdom of love and peace through supernatural and natural ways!