

ARE YOU READY FOR MORE? Part 2

Positively Positive & Always Full of Grace

The Big CHALLENGE

If you want MORE of the Lord in your life, WHAT is it going to take?

- * If you want to see an increase of His power & influence in your life, what are you going to have to do to PREPARE the WAY & OPEN the DOOR?
- * If we want more of His tangible, manifest PRESENCE & transforming POWER in our church, what environment are we going to have to create to FACILITATE that?
- * The Answer: Shift the DIAL, increase the TEMPERATURE, swing the PENDULUM on our 6 KINGDOM CULTURE values.

→ Are you aware of what you reckon needs to change / shift if you want to see more of God in your life or if we want more of God in our church?

→ Is there a danger that we're 'lukewarm?' How do we make moves towards 'red hot?' (Revelation 3:14-12)

Why is Kingdom Culture COUNTER-CULTURAL?

POSITIVELY POSITIVE: Two main causes of the avalanche of negativity:

- a) The ENEMY is going to try to sow his NEGATIVE seeds & weeds in your fertile garden bed (John 10:10).
- b) We tend to see through two powerful, but distorted lenses
= MAGNIFYING the NEGATIVE & DISQUALIFYING the POSITIVE

However, because of WHO God IS, what He's DONE, all the things He's PROMISED, we should be the MOST POSITIVE PEOPLE out there.

→ Do you agree with the premise that our modern world is characterised by chronic negativity? Why do you think that is? What knock-ons does it have? How much of that is down to the Enemy v human nature?

→ Do you struggle with magnifying the negative & disqualifying the positive? Why do you think that is? How does it manifest? How do you think you might change that?

→ Why should we be the 'most positive people' out there?

ALWAYS FULL OF GRACE: We live in a world of UNGRACE.

* But, as RECIPIENTS of grace, we must follow Jesus' EXAMPLE of grace & become AGENTS of grace.

* The church should be a HAVEN of GRACE. After all, Jesus STOOD FOR, TAUGHT & DEMONSTRATED radical, life-changing grace.

→ Do we live in a world of 'ungrace?' Do you think it is becoming more & more graceless? In what ways? Does that make it harder to be a Christian? Does that give us fresh opportunities to stand out & share the good news?

→ "Jesus stood for, taught & demonstrated radical, extraordinary, life-changing grace." Discuss!

What does POSITIVELY POSITIVE look like in our context

1. We are not UNREALISTIC, but we are OPTIMISTIC.
2. We always choose to BUILD UP, not to TEAR DOWN.
3. We are unstintingly ENCOURAGING.
4. We are ever looking for GOLD in the DIRT.
5. We recognise that it's more important for US to be ONE than for ME to be RIGHT.
6. We LOOK BEYOND circumstances which may appear to be negative & instead POINT people TOWARDS Jesus.
7. We purpose to be PROMISE people, not merely PROBLEM people.
→ Any of those jump out at you? Any that are natural to you or difficult for you? Any you feel our church is strong in or that need particular work?
→ How did Jesus exemplify each of those?

What does ALWAYS FULL OF GRACE look like in our context

1. We look with COMPASSION at people's HURTING HEARTS, rather than JUDGING their affected ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS.
2. People get the RIGHT RESPONSE, whatever they throw at us.
3. Consistent outpourings of KINDNESS.
4. We have the implicit understanding everyone is on a JOURNEY & we can't expect everyone to be at the SAME PLACE.
5. We humbly accept we're only ever one RASPBERRY away from needing grace ourselves.
6. TRUTH must never be divorced from its PARTNER grace.
7. Always full of grace CHALLENGES ungrace.
→ Any of those jump out at you? Any that are natural to you or difficult for you? Any you feel our church is strong in or that need particular work?
→ How did Jesus exemplify each of those?

How does that LEAD to MORE?

Positivity & grace help to OPEN up, rather than CLOSE down.

- * Negativity & condemnation ERECT WALLS; Positivity & grace PULL THEM DOWN.
- * Negativity & condemnation HARDEN HEARTS; Positivity & grace SOFTEN them.

→ Do you agree that shifting the dial by becoming more positive & more gracious leads to more of the Lord? Why & how? How does that apply to your personal situations & relationships & how does it apply in church life?

→ "What is holding us back from 'more of the Lord?' Is it Him? Is God a withholder, a promise-breaker or running short? Or is it us? Are we the restrictors, restrainers & rebutters. If we want more, we need to create conditions where any of those resistive forces are minimised." Discuss!