

What if ?

Dear friends,

During the past weeks, we have begun to unpack not simply the blessing we enjoy in being part of God's Kingdom but also the responsibility we have to share in His Kingdom work.

God never intended the business of His Kingdom to be vague or shadowy or abstract or theoretical, so he fleshed it out and spoke about it in parables. His stories on the Kingdom of God are some of the most challenging found in all of Scripture.

A writer by the name of Sheldon Van Auken wrote; "the greatest argument for and against Christianity is Christians." In other words the most compelling reason why people would consider faith is the lives of other Christians. The inverse is also true as the most compelling reason why people would not consider faith is Christians.

We have experienced the reality of the Kingdom of God in our lives through Jesus. We are called to live out the reality of his presence in ways that don't simply declare it but also that others may experience this for themselves.

God has surrendered the resources of heaven to you and invites you to work with Him to give others a glimpse of His perfect Kingdom.

The Seeds initiative is all about this and the following pages outline 5 key principles and 4 key actions that unpack our understanding of what that is and how we can get involved. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with them so that you maximise the Kingdom impact of your initiative.

Blessings



God's Richest Blessing

5 Key Principles

'SEEDS' DEMONSTRATE THE REALITY OF THE KINGDOM.

"How can we picture God's kingdom? What kind of story can we use? It's like a pine nut. When it lands on the ground it is quite small as seeds go, yet once it is planted it grows into a huge pine tree with thick branches. Eagles nest in it." (Mark 4:30 TM)

Every expression of faith either confirms the reality of God's Kingdom or casts suspicion on it. Critical to your initiative is the sort of faith that says; I can't do this in my own strength, but through Christ, I can!

"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matt 19:26 NIV)

'SEEDS' ARE PLANTED AFTER PRAYER AND THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvellous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own." (Jer 33:3TM)

The Friend, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will make everything plain to you. He will remind you of all the things I have told you. (John 14:26 TM)

Human nature doesn't gravitate towards stillness and listening to God. It is not a case of following a good idea, but God's idea. Time spent in prayer is never wasted time, even if you feel you are not getting anywhere. Resist the temptation to act until you have a sense that God is leading you.

'SEEDS' BEGIN WITH A FINITE RESOURCE

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. (Matthew 13:30 NIV)

God has graced everyone with 'seed' to be used for his kingdom. Beginning with a 'defined' amount of seed, encourages us to invite God to grow the limited seed we have into a harvest of souls.

Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." (Mark 4:8 NRSV)

SEEDS' ARE FOCUSED OUTWARD NOT INWARD

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:10)

Seeds invoke the Kingdom by inviting the community to participate. Whether it be providing the resources for your initiative or being on the receiving end of your blessing. God wants us to look beyond the boundaries that often define the church. It is important that we resist the temptation to use people from the church to resource your initiative.

'SEEDS' HAVE A STORY TO BE TOLD

Be ready to speak up-and tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy. (1 Peter 3:15TM)

Let every detail in your lives-words, actions, whatever-be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way. (Col 3:17 TM)

One of the hardest things to do is tell the story of your initiative in such a way that people know and understand that God is behind your idea. I firmly believe that when we tell people about God's love and his desire to bless others, God releases faith in such a way that people are drawn towards him.

If this is a struggle for you, partner with someone and practise what you will say. Have them go with you either to stand with you or to pray for you as you speak out the reality of the kingdom of God in your life.

4 Key Actions

IDENTIFY YOUR KINGDOM PASSION.

"But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man." (Gal. 1:15-16)

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust also in Him and He will do it." (Psalm 37:3-5 NASB)

Begin by inviting God to open your eyes to the needs of others. Ask Him to birth an idea in your heart and mind. Dare to dream God's dream! Don't rush this process, especially if you feel that God is not saying anything to you. Allow God to speak in His time and His way. It may take weeks for your initiative to take shape. Stay with it and take time, Relax in the presence of God and dwell on Jesus' parables in Scripture.

Write down what is coming to mind or what you are feeling in your heart.

DEFINE YOUR KINGDOM SEED

Begin by asking God to show you how He wants you to use the 'seed' for your initiative. Make sure the seed is clearly defined so that faith becomes the essential component to the fulfilment of your Kingdom work.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6 NIV)

DETERMINE WHAT SEED IS NEEDED TO COMPLETE YOUR KINGDOM WORK

Your initiative is a faith oriented one and you can expect to see a large gap between the seed you have and what you need to fulfil your desire to live out the reality of the kingdom.

Identify what you believe you will need to complete your work, don't be concerned about the size of the gap, God is bigger than that!

Ask God how he intends to fill the gap and release the seed and be open to his leading. Remember that all resources given towards the initiative belong to God!

"If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open. (James 1:5-7 The Message)

TAKE A STEP OF FAITH

The hardest thing to do with a 'seeds' initiative is to take the first step of faith. In taking this step of faith:

- Share your idea with someone else and ask them to be a prayer partner.
- Share your idea with a business or someone beyond the body of Christ in this community and invite them to partner with you.
- Ask someone to contribute to your initiative.

Be prepared to share the story with those you are seeking to support your initiative. Your testimony to them and others can often be the very thing God uses to unlock a variety of doors!

".....for He [God] Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you nor, give you up nor leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless nor forsake nor let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!]" (Hebrews 13:5) The Amplified Bible