How to build a Gospel Advancing Ministry!

Biblical Outcomes Measure It

There was a point in my life that I weighed about 225 pounds. I had torn my ACL early on in ministry and substituted eating more food for working out.

I curled with my fork and sprinted to the kitchen instead of curling with a dumbbell and sprinting on a track.

Made it my goal to lose weight…went from about 225 pounds to 180 pounds in 6 months…lost weight on high protein/low carb diet…

But I lost muscle mass as well…

A better outcome would have been health, not weight loss. If I really worked on eating the right foods and working out, yes, I would have lost weight but I also would have increased my strength too.

Sometimes it’s easy to count the lesser things when it comes to health and fitness.

What’s true in fitness is true of youth ministry, it’s often easy to count the lesser things, like attendance and forget the things that matter most.

I believe that, just like a healthy body loses fat and gains muscle, a healthy youth ministry grows in the right ways.

It’s these “right ways” that we will call Biblical outcomes.

Value #6: Biblical Outcomes Measure it

*“This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”* Mark 4:26-29

Just like a farmer scatters seed and it grows and grows until it is fully mature and ready to harvest, the Gospel seeds grow and grow until we get the outcomes we have been hoping and praying for.

One of the phrases I love about the farmer in this passage is “whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed spouts and grows, though he does not know how.”

That’s the power of the Gospel message. It is producing fruit and bearing outcomes, even when we are not around. The Gospel and the Word of God are that powerful.

It doesn’t matter who plants a seed…an experienced farmer or a 13 year old teenager all jacked up on Mountain Dew…it’s intrinsically powerful and when sown on good ground…grows.

And this growth is an outcome.

So, let’s see what the Bible tells us about these outcomes.

1. Jesus chose us to bear fruit.

*“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit--fruit that will last--and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”* John 15:16

Getting chosen for basketball teams…I was always the 2nd to the last chosen because I shamed the team captains into choosing me.

We are all chosen first to be on Team Jesus and we were chosen to score…to make baskets, to score touchdowns, to kick goals, to bear fruit.

* 1. It takes a lot of work.

*“…go and bear fruit…”* John 15:16

In the words of Francis Schaeffer this refers to what he calls an active passivity. The work is that of depending on Jesus and being obedient to him in the power of the Spirit. It’s really him bearing fruit through us.

This is really demonstrated in the life of Paul when he wrote,

*“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.”* 1 Corinthians 15:10

We must work to stay dependent on his Spirit and allow the life of Christ to flow through us, working hard every step of the way, and resulting in us bearing spiritual fruit.

* 1. It takes a lot of time.

“*…fruit that will last…”* John 15:16

I especially see this when it comes to raising my own teenagers.

* Growing a garden verses building Lego children (tending and cultivating verses snapping pieces together.)
	1. It takes a lot of prayer.

*“…so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”* John 15:16

Bowling and Pin Ball (prayer and duct tape)

God guide us, show us how to apply your Word to this situation. Show us how to give our teens a passion for you and a passion for souls.

These answered prayers are in the context of producing fruit that will last.

1. Jesus calls us to bear the right kind of fruit.

*“Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”* Matthew 7:17,18

My first encounter with any kind of tree that bears any kind of fruit was a Mulberry tree in Texas (tell story)…I was out there all the time picking fruit and enjoying it. Why? Because it was good fruit!

Nobody likes bad fruit from a bad tree. But everyone loves good fruit from a good tree.

While Jesus is referring to the fruit of truth tellers verses false teachers in this passage, this analogy helps us when it comes to youth ministry.

What’s the fruit of your youth ministry?

The Good Fruit of….Teens on fire for God? Teens knowing what they believe and why they believe it? Teens inspired and equipped to make and multiply disciples?

Or…

The Bad Fruit of…Entitled teenagers who are apathetic in their faith? Teenagers who make God a spoke of their wheel instead of the hub of their wheel? Teenagers who know the truth but deny the power thereof by living a worldly life but showing up to youth group on Wednesday night?

* 1. The strength of the roots determine the quality of the fruit.

The Word: QUALITATIVE…to use the fruit analogy mushy bruised apples VS. crisp delicious ones.

*“If we long to see the supernatural FRUITS of revival, we must first do the work of developing the life-giving ROOTS of revival.”* Daniel Henderson

* 1. There are at least five outcomes of spiritual maturity to look for:

Set context of Hebrews 5 passage….

*“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*” Hebrews 5:11-14

* + 1. A Hunger to Understand the Bible

*“…you no longer try to understand.”*

Teenagers asking questions about the Bible is a sign of spiritual hunger…

My son’s girlfriend, Kaylee… “Dad, tell her about the end times!” “Oh crap, I’ve got to tell my family and friends about Jesus before it’s too late!”

* + 1. A Passion to Proclaim the Truth

*“…by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again.”*

In a sense every spiritually mature person is a teacher. Whether it be one on one or one with many, as we grow we share God’s truth with those who are less mature. In a sense evangelism is a form of teaching (explain)….the writer of Hebrews is saying, You should be teaching but instead you are just listening to the same stuff over and over and over and not growing!

* + 1. A Thirst to Go Deeper with the Lord

*“You need milk, not solid food!”*

You don’t give a baby a t-bone steak. You don’t give an adult a bottle with baby formula in it.

The more our kids grow in Christ, the more they have a desire to dive deeper into theology

Evangelism accelerates all this by the way. If you want to get your going into solid food then get them sharing Jesus. They’ll ask all sorts of questions.

* + 1. An Attitude of Dependence on the Spirit

“*Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.”*

What is the teaching about righteousness? I’m convinced from the book of Hebrews that it is the teaching that our righteousness as believers is not based on doing that list of RIGHT things but living in faith on the RIGHTeousness of Christ! The same faith that saves us sanctifies us!

* + 1. A Perspective of Discernment from the Father

“*…the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”*

Red monk verses Blue Miner

Jesus chose us to bear fruit. Jesus calls us to bear the right kind of fruit!

1. Jesus challenges us to bear much fruit.

*“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”* John 15:8

God wants more than faithfulness, he wants fruitfulness! He actually wants mega-fruitfulness. He wants “Much” fruit. The Greek word for “Much” is used to describe a large crowd of people. In the same way God wants a great bunch of fruit in our lives and through our ministries.

* 1. We must bear much fruit in our lives.

***“****But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”* Galatians 5:22,23

The fruit of a godly life that is dependent on the Spirit.

* 1. We must bear much fruit in our ministries.
		1. The right numbers matter.

“*Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted*.” William Bruce Cameron

* + 1. The right numbers matter to God.

*He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,****25****so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’****26****But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?****27****Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.”* Matthew 25:24-27

God wants your youth ministry to grow with the right kind of numbers….

I talked earlier about bearing fruit that will last and referred to Qualitative Growth.

Now, I’m talking about bearing much fruit and referring to Quantitative Growth.

* + 1. The right numbers reflect the right kind of growth.
			1. Number of annual baptisms

*“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”* Acts 2:41

Baptisms are a great way to quantify the right kind of growth. Public proclamation. Risk involved. Different ways and modes of baptism which I’m not going to address right now but one thing I will focus on is that I think many churches, especially evangelical churches downplay.

It’s an easy way to track growth!

* + - 1. Number of Gospel conversations

*“This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.”* Acts 19:10

Many youth leaders do this. I think of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

By the way (give Gospel)

* + - 1. Percentage of new conversion growth (NCG)

*“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”* Acts 2:47

What percentage of your group came to Christ through your group?

200 verses 20

* + - 1. Percentage of teens actively sharing

*“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”* Acts 4:31

100% were sharing! What percentage of your teens share the Gospel at least once a month?

A Final Word of Encouragement:

*“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”* Galatians 6:9

And quantitative growth spurs qualitative growth and vice verse…Tommee Prophet….

Heaven will be unpacking all of these amazing stories of fruit bearing…so don’t get discouraged…but keep on going for much fruit, the fruit that will last