

Ignite! Upward, Inward, Outward
Yellowstone Presbytery - Bozeman, MT
June 12, 2026

The Chemistry of the Company – In this unique gathering, let's be alert to what our Lord has for each of us.

Samuel Johnson - we need to be reminded more than we need to be instructed! So, let's be alert to the reminders and new insights our Lord has for each of us.

Ministry concepts and ministry skills – let's grow better and not just older

Practices of our UPWARD love for the Lord who loves us

Have a Centering Vision –

We talk a lot about vision. There is value in having a centering vision.

Can you express your essential vision for what you want to see happen in your own life as a Christian and in your congregation?

- Upward: our love for the Lord who loves us
- Inward: our love for the body of Christ
- Outward: our love for the world God loves

The three movements - Upward, Inward, Outward – are all movements into relationships – with God, the people of God and the work of God in the world

A centering question to ask routinely: Am I and are we growing in all three movements?

Our primary focus with this seminar is on lifestyle practices that move with the movements toward God, the Body of Christ and the world.

Soul Care is Self Care – Rule of Life – QT/PT/PPT

QT – Quiet Time – daily devotions of prayer and Bible reading

PT – Physical Training - Take care of you! Burn out is out.
 You cannot be expendable if you are not renewable.

Not slow down but take time out. Jesus retreated
 John Comer The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

PPT – Protected Planning Time
 Learn to live with the load of the unfinished – Bob Oerter
 Daily and weekly time to update your do list – with priorities

Word-Share-Prayer (Send)

This website has WSP Instructions and many WSP downloads

www.vitalchurchesinstitute.com/pages/word-share-prayer

If your computer won't open it, use your phone to download the studies and email them to yourself or email Stan at estanleyott@gmail.com

Practices of our INWARD love for the body of Christ

The Double Focus of Ministry

Persons and groups – which both develop in the three relationships of Jesus, the Body of Jesus and the World.

People Develop People – Upward, Inward, Outward

What is the church's classic means of developing people?

Preaching, Programs and pastoral care

We see in the New Testament the primary means of developing people was life on life, people developing people, every person gifted, equipped and sent. See I Thessalonians 1 – all lifestyle – no programs!

We could talk about elevating our preaching and our programs, but there is a facet to ministry that used to be much more prevalent – and essential to our future congregational vitality – and that is our personal heart to develop the Christian growth of others along with our own Christian growth – not because we are so great – but like DT Niles put it, as one beggar telling another beggar where to get bread.

Luke 6:40 “A student is not above the teacher but when fully trained is like the teacher” – Jesus. Which implies as Jesus focused on a few, invested more of his time in a few, to develop them in faith and followership Upward, Inward and Outward, then we too are to focus on a few to develop them in faith and followership (Up, In and Out).

Two of the central practices of Jesus were:

1. His heart to impart
 - a. Up - faith and followership
 - b. In - mutual friendship and service
 - c. Out – serve the needs of people
2. His love of the many while focusing on a few.

Grow a heart to impart

Receive people eyes – people eyes are the eyes of Jesus, seeing people not as only they may look but as they actually are.

When people looked at Zacchaeus, they only saw a small man with the power to tax their lives. When Jesus saw Zacchaeus, he saw a heart waiting for encouragement and Jesus said, “I must stay at your house today.”

- People eyes are the eyes of Jesus Christ for people.
- People eyes are the capacity to focus on one in the midst of many.
- People eyes see the hurting and comforts them.
- People eyes see the eager to grow spiritually and encourages them.
- People eyes are shepherd eyes that care for the sheep.
- People eyes look for ways to inspire faith and to meet human need.

The hinge moment of ministry (Michael Lindsay) – the hinge that swings me from seeing me to seeing thee.

The disciples said, “Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” But Jesus replied, “You give them something to eat.” Mark 6

Jesus to Peter, “I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” Luke 22

Jesus to Peter: Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, feed my sheep. Mt 21

The transformation is from sheep to sheep who shepherd!

Philippians illustrates Luke 6:40 – a disciple becomes like the teacher

2:4 In humility count others more significant than yourselves.

2:6 Jesus... did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped

2:20 For I have no one like Timothy, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.

The people eyes of Jesus are second glance eyes. They see the person we pass on the street, the person handing us a coffee at a coffee shop, the person behind the checkout counter at the grocery, the person sitting next to us in church, the neighbor we pass on the street, people we tend to see and forget immediately. People eyes sees them for the first glance but then the people eyes linger for the second glance – the awareness this is God’s child with a lot going on beneath the surface and we may smile at them, greet them, pray for them, and more so, linger and talk with them.

When you receive the people eyes of Jesus, you receive a heart to pass on to others what Jesus has given you! Your heart to impart begins first when you receive people eyes.

Be a noticer – pay attention to the people right in front of you

The Youtube video “Get Service” is great on people eyes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfeXxkbgCVE>

Also the Youtube video “Every Life has a Story 2018”

Love the many – focus on a few

Perhaps the central practice of Jesus Christ was to love the many while focusing on a few. Upon seeing people through his people eyes, he loved the many – taught groups and crowds and gave himself to individuals who crossed his path – the woman at the well, Bartimaeus and many others.

At the same time, no matter the crowds or the random one-time interactions, he focused on a few - actually several fews – the 12, 3, Mary, Johanna, Suzanna, Mary Martha, Lazarus, the 70 Justus and Mathias (Acts 1). Acts 1 120 met in the Upper Room

Were you ever in someone's few? A teacher, professor, mentor?

Luke 6:40 – the disciple becomes like the teacher. Jesus loved the many and focused on a few – and we each are to love the many in our lives and focus on a few (or several fews).

Now if we are going to focus on a few it raises a few questions.

Who are my few?

What do I do with the few?

How do I avoid favoritism?

Who are my few?

Key principle: focus on a few no matter how many your many may be.

There are many “fews” in personal life: Friends, Relatives (family), Associates (work), Neighbors, Church. (FRANC)

There are many “fews” in church life: Session, Deacon, committees ministry teams, circles, Sunday school classes, small groups.

Pray – Lord, who do you want me to focus on?

At the beginning of Jesus ministry did he recruit the 12 and then go to the masses or did he go to the masses and then recruit the 12. Luke 6:12 he goes on a mountain and prays all night calls his disciples and chooses 12

Who are the people I will seek to encourage in the three movements: toward God, the Body of Christ and the World?

There are people we invite to join us (the With-Me Principle) in whatever we are doing. Some just show up in our lives.

The few are those I would in give more of myself to with the goal a developing this person or these persons' faith and leadership and enhancing mine at the same time.

It's really the question of who has an openness to grow and who is willing to run with you personally. This is not the work of a nominating committee work. It's who you are drawn to encourage and or whom God puts into your life.

What do I do with my few? Grow with them as followers of our Lord
Pray for them – have a list if helpful – Colossians 4:12 – for their well being and their spiritual growth!

Share your life – reproduce in others what the Spirit of God is doing in you and enable them to reproduce it in still others (Chuck Miller)

Take them with you – events, sports, coffee - The With-Me Principle Mark 3:14 – with me in what I'm doing. Life with Life – Life on Life

Microgroups = groups of 3 or 4 – for a few weeks or longer
Word-Share-Prayer with 3-4 offers spiritual growth and care = tiny church

Or use curriculum like Practicintheway.org, <https://renovare.org> or centeredandsoaring.com.

Just get them in scripture with you!

Pod-church.com offers a lot about microgroups (it just calls them “pods”)
<https://www.pod-church.com> Written in pandemic days, its for today too!

How do I avoid the appearance of favoritism?

In larger settings, bigger churches, neighborhoods, social groups, nobody will care.

In smaller settings, churches, families, some social groups people will pick up on who is “special.”

Of the few I focus on (or the “fews”)

I do not make public statements about my few.

I do not focus on the few in a public setting.

I give the whole congregation plenty of opportunity to be with me at a more personal level. Join me – in this class, that group.

I minister to the many with the few.¹

Who might be in your few? As you receive these thoughts about loving the many and focusing on a few, names you may focus on may have to mind. Do something with them!

Make it easy for others to focus on their few!

The Principle of Multiplication

From “attenders” to “senders”

¹ Larry K. Weeden, The Magnetic Fellowship, pp 139-141 – Disciping without Playing Favorites by E. Stanley Ott

Use Congregational series – sermons – books – WSP’s - to make it easy for people to invite a few to be with them for short periods of time such as 5-7 weeks. Encourage the use of the Emmaus Principle – do it with a buddy

Bless and Add Microgroups are an easy “add” to what else is going on. They don’t compete with regular groups and programs. They self-schedule.

Create Communities of Grace – home – church – presbytery - community

What are signs of the fraying of the fabric of our webs of friendships, our communities in this day?

Ours is now a culture of anxiety and accusation.

**Communities of Grace Practice the Value of the Person – VOP
Love, Dignity and Respect** (Wayne Alderson)

The Imago Dei – the image of God in every person

Communities of Grace practice the grace of getting along (*makrothumia*)

Makro – macro – large or long

Thumia – heat – or temper (thermometer. Thermodynamics) –

Micro means small so microthumia means a quick temper, short fuse, easily angered.

Macrothumia means the long temper – translated patience

Macrothumia means the grace of getting along.

Grace is expensive. It’s forbearing, withholding grudges

Would you rather be right or reconciled²

Americans typically choose rightness over love

Yet Jesus was clear in John 17 – we are to be one!

Choose between grievance and grace.

Eye for an eye or Forgiveness?

Forgiveness means LET GO

Communities of Grace Build Up One Another

Therefore, build up one another and encourage one another, just as you have been doing! I Thessalonians 5:11

Words of Encouragement: Job 4:4 – your words put people on their feet.

Deeds of Encouragement: “We are to have staying power in the alarm moments of other people’s lives” Oswald Chambers

² Joseph Garlington, The Covenant Church of Pittsburgh

Put on the Shoes of the Paraclete – the one who comes alongside to help.
The whole Trinity 2 Cor 1, I Jn 2, Jn 14

Check out the podcast BuildingOneAnother.com for over 180 episodes on ways to build up and encourage one another.

Communities of Grace practice the 4 S's (Bill Carl)

No secrets – speak directly, no bank shots (we don't do that)
No surprises – keep one another informed
No subversion – no demeaning, no behind the back work.
Lots of support

Create Communities of Grace by Changing the Language

If you want to create a Community of Grace, then working these phrases into the common vocabulary people use – while modeling them – is the ball game!

Soul Care – Rule of Life
Word/Share/Prayer
A heart to impart
People Eyes
Love the many – focus on a few
The Value of the Person (VOP) – Love. Dignity and Respect
Makrothumia – the grace of getting along
Job 4:4 Your words put people on their feet
The 4 S's (no secrets, no surprises, no subversion, lots of support)

Talk them – Model them. Work these phrases and others like them into ordinary conversation, preaching, teaching – constantly and forever! DO them!

Bless and Add in times of rapid change

The real vision of most people and congregations as creatures of habit is “doing what I've always done” or “running last year's programs over again.”

Think about differing approaches to life.

Homebodies	Travelers
Settlers 75% tilt	Pioneers 25% tilt
Roles	Goals
Sustain	Advance
Bless	Add

Pastoral ministry is inherently role oriented. Preaching program and pastoral care – every week- add in the seasons of the church year (advent, lent).

Chinese skater Youtube video – Yang Jingru

WIGS and Whirlwind³

WIGS – Wildly Important Goals

Whirlwind – all the chaff of life swirling demanding attention
(and pastoral ministry is often a CAT 5 whirlwind!)

If we aren't goal oriented personally – and rise above the whirlwind – who in your circle is goal oriented?

We have a centering vision – Upward-Inward-Outward – God, BOC, World

We have a routine – preaching, programs, pastoral care

We have an opportunity – break out of Ground Hog Day!

Lifestyle – Focus on a few - Microgroups

Online Christian Ed – practicingtheway.org tilt center

evolvingchristianfaith.net tilt left bibleproject.com tilt right

Pizzazz and Commitment – going wide and growing deep – a great space for blessing what is and adding what isn't!

Pizzazz events to bring joy to the insider and to attract the outsider

Commitment – as in face-to-face groups to offer care and discipleship

Microgroups for depth and scheduling flexibility

Practices of our OUTWARD love for the world God loves

Receive People Eyes – they “see” inside and outside the Body of Christ

Believe God will use you –And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority...
Matthew 10:5

See yourself as sent Luke 4 – preach the good news, release the captives...

- To show up
- To speak up
- To stand up

³ Chris McChesney. Sean Covey, et al, “The Four Disciplines of Execution”

NEXT STEPS – What will you do differently when you go home?

It is easy/typical to set notes aside after a seminar and get consumed by life

A heart to serve is the Heart of Hineni

Hineni is Hebrew for “Here I am”

– my answer was yes, before you even asked!

At times we are inclined to say HineNO! Ananias - Acts 9:13

- But I’m an Enneagram 2. I’m a Myers-Briggs introvert...
- Or “I set my fear aside, take courage, trust God and DO IT!”
I Chronicles 28:20

Take the risk – assume the burden. Take up your cross daily!

As a pastor asked (Jerry Kirk): Are you a cork or a channel of God’s grace?

Next Steps

Will you attend your own soul-care – QT/PT/PPT

Will you focus on a Few - Who are your few? Will you pray for them? How will you invest yourself in them – a microgroup – a word of encouragement?

Will you foster communities of grace?

By practicing your own soul care and focusing on a few

By practicing and constantly

Growing a heart to impart

Receiving People Eyes

The Value of the Person: Love, Dignity and Respect

Makrothumia – the grace of getting along

The heart to impart to a few and to foster communities of grace is a heart full of hineni! – here I am – my answer was yes, before you even asked!

The Greek approach to education: the more you know the more educated you are.

The Hebrew approach: you are as educated as you do what you know.

Check out the short video Broken Escalator and GET OFF THE ESCALATOR!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47rQkTPWW2I>.

Will you take the risk-assume the burden – take up your cross?

HINENI!

My answer is “YES, Lord, before you even asked!”

How to use Word-Share-Prayer

Word-Share-Prayer (Read-Reflect-Respond-Request) is for use with small groups, committees, ministry teams, and boards. The texts are deliberately a bit short so that committees and teams with limited time can still *"be the people of God before doing the work of the people of God."* For small group meetings, a longer section of text may be used or just more time spent discussing each segment.

For many team and committee meetings, we follow a 7-7-7 format - 7 minutes for individual Bible Study, 7 minutes to share one insight per person and 7 minutes to pray for one another. If we use these sheets for a regular one and one-half hour Bible study, then the biblical passage could be a bit longer and our schedule would be the *Word*-30 minutes, *Share(sharing)* of lives (blessings and prayer requests)-45 minutes and *Prayer*-15 minutes.

For a ministry team/committee allow 7-7-7 minutes (plus or minus) format.

1. Give every person 5-7 minutes to work on it in silence (we don't have people do them as "homework" since many will fail to do so).

If the group is larger than around 7 people, at this point break into 3-4's

2. Spend another 7 minutes or so asking people to briefly share one insight.

3. Ask for one-sentence prayer requests. Spend more time on this if someone in the group is in real distress about something. Otherwise, just a sentence or so per person as we want to lift one another up but haven't the time for more in-depth sharing.

If more than 20 minutes is available, then all of the times may be extended.

Pray for one another out loud by name, giving everyone the complete freedom to pray in silence if they prefer.

Personal Notes and Next Steps