



WEEK 5: A FRESH PARADIGM

LOOKING AT THE WORLD THROUGH A GOSPEL RESPONSE LENS

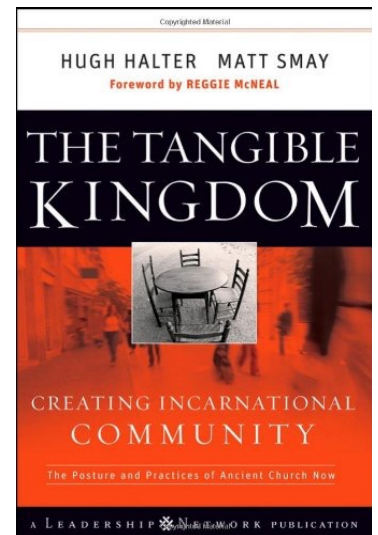
JEFF HOOVER - OCTOBER 11, 2015 - EVANGEL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

- REVIEW:

- Week 1: We looked at **CULTURE**, “the sum total of the knowledge, attitudes, and habitual behavior patterns shared and transmitted by the members of a society.” In particular, we talked about how people in the Northwest are driven by consumerism, limited by skepticism, but awakened by experience.
- Week 2: We asked the question, what is **HONOR** and how does it work? We discovered that honor is the only commandment that God attaches a blessing to... “Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you. (Ex 20:12 NLT-SE) Honor is powerful! It Honor protects the weak, restores the broken, and encourages the faithful.
- Week 3: What does it mean to cultivate an **HONOR-RICH** environment in which believers can grow and mature? This is really a big part of what the church is designed to be. To cultivate is to nurture and help grow. When you cultivate something, you work to make it better. To cultivate anything requires an attention to detail, an understanding of what is being cultivated, and a lot of patience.
- Week 4: In Part 2 of “Cultivating Honor Within the Church”, we talked about **INTERDEPENDENCE** and the glue that holds us together...faith, honor, and grace. We cultivate honor by *remembering*...To cultivate is to nurture and help grow, by *learning*...paying attention to how honor is demonstrated in the Word, then apply that knowledge to our relationships. By *Establishing*...honor as a priority and protecting honor as a necessity. Finally, we cultivate honor when we restore it...when honor slips away.

- HOW YOU SEE THE WORLD IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU SEE

- **Paradigm**...the term is used to describe the set of experiences, beliefs and values that affect the way an individual perceives reality and responds to that perception. In plain english, **the way you look at and respond to things!** Paradigms can either propel us into action or they can shut us down and limit what we do and what we think is possible.
- The **three dominant paradigms** we swim in and a fourth “**gospel centered**” world view:
 - Westernism/Modernism: Oriented around **knowledge**, this empirical worldview took over, and the acquisition of knowledge began to spiral upward. Human beings (not God) were now the center of the universe, happily adopting their newfound godlike status. They believed that through scientific discovery and human reasoning, they could handle just about everything, know everything, or at least figure it out.



The Tangible Kingdom: *Creating Incarnational Community*, by Hugh Halter and Matt Smay

- **Easternism**: Easternism represents the thoughts, customs, and world views of those cultures that were derived from the non-Roman world. Whereas, the church was at the center of the premodern paradigm and man is at the center of the modern, deity or spirituality is at the center of Eastern thought and life. Easternism is a radically **holistic** approach to life, in which what you believe about deities or your deity impacts the way you eat, treat the environment, and behave toward others around you.
- **Postmodernism**: The postmodern paradigm challenges everything the modern paradigm holds dear. Most sociologists agree that postmodernity started to pick up steam in the early 1960s. The '60s were a time of questioning and refusing to allow Western/modern values to rule or to have authority over the collective consciousness of the United States. The government wasn't going to have authority over us, the church wasn't, the military wasn't, our parents weren't. It was a massive rebuttal to Western/modern values. Because of this distrust of political, family, and church leaders, "**personal preference**," philosophical freedom, and relativism took center stage.
 - The 3 Periods of **Modernism**:
 - **Pre-Modern**: 90-1700 aka, the "Dark Ages"...Truth determined by the **church**.
 - **Modern**: 1700-1960 aka, "The Enlightenment"...Truth determined by the interpreting the **Scriptures**.
 - **Post-Modern**: 1960-Present...Truth determined by the **individual**.
- **Gospel Response**: Pure and simple, this new paradigm sees life through a "gospel lens" and responds accordingly.

Primary Paradigms That Influence How We Look At The World Around Us
 from **The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community**, by Hugh Halter & Matt Smay

	Western	Eastern	Postmodern	Gospel Response
Why We Believe	Reason	Faith	Preference	Discovery
How We View Relationships	Autonomous	Holistic	Pluralistic	Inclusive Community
What We Value	Security	Legacy	Gratification	Eternity
How We Influence	Institutions	Tradition	Deconstruction	Modeling
How We Measure Success	Product	Process	Justification	Transformation

- **HOW WE CULTIVATE HONOR WILL BE DRAMATICALLY AFFECTED BY WHICH LENS WE ARE LOOKING THROUGH. SO, WHERE ARE WE?**

- Evangel has been **on the Potter's wheel** for some time now, being fashioned into a vessel of honor, a group of believers with purpose and destiny.

¹ The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, ² "Go down to the potter's shop, and I will speak to you there." ³ So I did as he told me and found the potter working at his wheel. ⁴ **But the jar he was making did not turn out as he had hoped, so he crushed it into a lump of clay again and started over.** ⁵ Then the LORD gave me this message: ⁶ "O Israel, can I not do to you as this potter has done to his clay? **As the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand.** (Jer 18:1-6 NLT-SE)

¹⁵ What sorrow awaits those who try to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their evil deeds in the dark! "The LORD can't see us," they say. "He doesn't know what's going on!" ¹⁶ How foolish can you be? He is the Potter, and he is certainly greater than you, the clay! Should the created thing say of the one who made it, "He didn't make me"? **Does a jar ever say, "The potter who made me is stupid"?** (Is 29:15-16 NLT-SE)

When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the **same lump of clay** to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? (Rom 9:21 NLT-SE)

- **Examples:** How has "the Potter" been fashioning us to **value honor** in people and be willing to **cultivate it** in our local region?
 - **Structure...**Establishing in us a relatively **low value for structure and a high value for relationships** at the risk of questionable appearance. A flexible structure allows for change and will tend to be able to adapt to the wide variety of people who are drawn to an honor-rich environment.
 - **Relationships...**Initiating **relationships with other churches** when we didn't have to. Cultivating honor in the local community through relationships with churches who are different than us has challenged our propensity towards judgmentalism and a religious spirit.
 - **Worship...**Encouraging **expressions of worship**, especially as an investment into the next generation, when it was uncomfortable. Loud music, wild hair, casual dress, tattoos and piercings...sounds like home. But in the midst of all this "creativity" there has also emerged a high value for the presence of the Lord. That would have been unlikely had we not honored what God was and could do, in and through people who were a bit different than us.
 - **Apostolic/Prophetic...**Pursuing **prophetic** ministry when it was unpopular and almost always messy. We had to break free from "Thus saith the Lord..." and "God told me," really pursue God's heart together. What do you do with what you hear from the Lord? **Apostolic** ministry moves things forward by the Spirit's leading. It wasn't and still isn't easy to keep everyone on the path together, but a culture of honor gives us patience with each other as we endeavor to "follow the leading of the Lord" together.
 - **Outreach...**Inviting **outreach into the house** when we were pretty sure we couldn't guarantee its success. Jesus Nights, Weeks of Worship, Three Rivers House of Prayer, Prophetic Conferences, Love Overwhelming, Stir It Up. Our facility has been a "creative womb" for many outreaches. We have seen four different congregation either birthed or significantly strengthened by meeting here!
- God has given us a remarkable lens. He has been crafting it in us as a congregation for years now. As we begin looking out, through the lens the Lord has been creating in us and for us, our **understanding of how honor is cultivated** will become a reality.

Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect...Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. (Rom 12:2, 9-10 NLT-SE)