

Manifesting the Kingdom

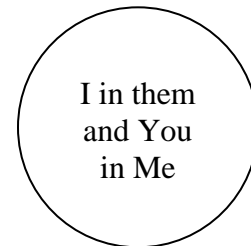
Over the last couple of years many of our conferences have centered on the theme of manifesting the Kingdom. We all recognize that this is a very important subject for this time, because we are desperate to see the King manifest in all of His Glory. We want to see the invisible becoming visible, His power demonstrated in society. We are weary of our own powerlessness and know that we need a breakthrough. We understand that breakthrough comes as a result of our being aligned in obedience to the Word, and from that position we expect divine intervention.

In order for this manifestation to come, I believe that there are three key foundational **relationships** that must be understood and maintained. We must make a commitment to continually develop these relationships and fully integrate each into our daily walk. Jesus outlines these in **John 17:23** – **“I in them, and thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know.....”**

In this verse Jesus gives us three relationships to establish and keep in order. He tells us there are three commitments we must make, and when all three of these are present and active in our lives, we will begin to see His Kingdom come through our lives so that the world will know He is King. The first relationship to establish is our relationship with Him; the second is our relationship with the body; and the third is our relationship to the world. For the sake of understanding, we want to present these three relationships as circles.

1. “I in them”

The first and the primary relationship is the relationship to the King. This relationship is the mystery of the ages, “Christ in you the hope of glory,” the King living in His subjects. How can the almighty God fit into His creation? It is a mystery but the revelation that we’re in Him and He is in us is the foundation for our passion and forms the basis for our intimacy with Him. This passion becomes the controlling passion of our lives so that we no longer live for ourselves but we live for the King.



Passion

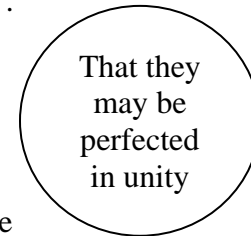
Paul in his letter to the Corinthians tells us that “the love of Christ controls him.” His motivation was to remain under the control of the King in everything. This concept doesn’t fit neatly into our culture; we don’t want anyone to control us. We like to feel we are independent and in control; but the gospel demands a surrender of our ‘rights’ if we are going to learn to seek first the Kingdom.

2. “That they may be perfected in unity”

My passion for God must have an outworking in my relationship to the body. The *link* between my passion for God and the world being touched is the strength of my relationship with the body of Christ. Without unity in the body, the world will only see a distorted Jesus.

The first and second commandments (Matt 22:37-39) tie my relationship with God to my relationship with my brother. It is impossible to function fully in my spiritual calling without getting my relationships healed and in order.

Jesus speaks here of not just unity but being perfected into a ‘unit’. A unit is a group of individuals coming together to accomplish a task. When we hear this word we think of an emergency unit or a military unit. In a unit there is always purpose; members are trained and disciplined to respond immediately. They learn one another’s strengths and weakness and understand how to react in any given situation. This is true team ministry, recognizing that we desperately need each other and understanding that only together are we complete. To function as a unit we need the revelation that no matter how gifted I am, I am incomplete by design.

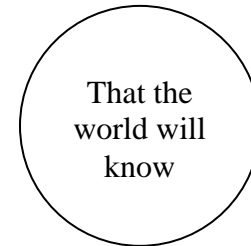


Compassion

Phil. 2:1, 2 links unity of purpose with compassion. To find true unity we must each put on a heart of compassion; this will turn our hearts toward one another, releasing the love of God into our relationships. Compassion will then turn us together to bring the gospel of the kingdom to a world that is desperate for answers.

3. “That the world may know”

Unity that is real will always have purpose. So our purpose is *not* unity; but that, through the unity, the world would see Christ revealed. Our mission is to ‘Make Jesus King’ by becoming a true reflection of His glory and nature. Our commission is to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to relate correctly to God, to relate correctly to each other and finally to impact the world they live in with the message of Jesus.

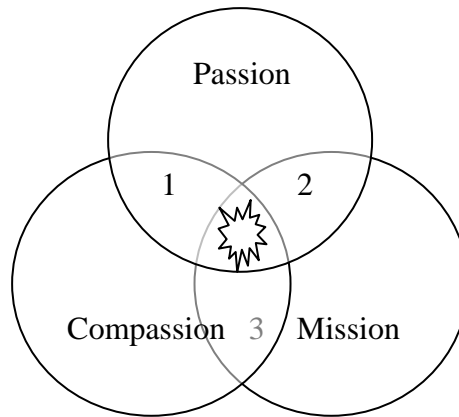


Mission

All three of these relationships are necessary if we are to manifest the Kingdom. We have seen these truths (relationships or commitments) expressed in many different ways. Often church mission statements encompass some form of these three truths. My favorite is “upward in worship, inward in commitment and outward in evangelism.” However we choose to express them we need to see them all at work in our lives

Viewing these relationships as separate is a product of Greek thought. This way of thinking divides things into parts to bring understanding. The concept of ‘body, soul and spirit’ is more Greek, while Hebrew thought would tend to say ‘heart’. In western culture we are very influenced by the Greek way of thinking. This paradigm may be helpful for understanding, but it is dangerous for living. It gets us too spread out and, if we are not careful, we end up running around trying to fulfill all our obligations. In this busyness we begin to believe that we don’t need others to fulfill our purpose.

Hebrew thought sees things much more as a whole and, if we are to function as we were created, these three commitments must begin to overlap. Get these three in balance and you will find a place of effective service. The more these three commitments become one in our thinking the greater the **rest** we experience and the greater the manifestation of the Kingdom.



As these three begin to come together we can see where different facets of ministry fit. The overlap between Passion and Compassion (1) is where most of church life fits. Much of our energy goes into maintaining the relationships between the members of the body and helping them in their relationship with God.

The interaction between Passion and Mission (2) is where intercession fits. Intercession is standing between heaven and earth believing for the release of His promises. Where Compassion and Mission come together (3) is where we see benevolence and the gospel to the poor lived out.

Where all three converge we begin to actually manifest the Kingdom. This is the “sweet spot” – the place of greatest effectiveness. I am not much of a golfer but just occasionally I will hit the ball on the sweet spot. The feel and results are amazing. With no additional effort I get distance and accuracy - what a rush. The same applies to our life in the Kingdom. When we get these three relationships together, the effects are dramatic.

The goal, of course, is not just to overlap the three but to see the three come together as concentric. This is the fulfillment of John 17; this kind of Kingdom manifestation is what will display the Glory of the King to the world.

We see these three relationships in operation in the book of Acts. At Pentecost they were together in one place; relationships were put in order; the focus was toward heaven and heaven responded as the Spirit fell. The result was that they went immediately out into the world.

Seeing the Kingdom come in power is the answer for a broken and hurting world. We have a relationship with the King and we have a commission to the ends of the earth. It is time to connect the two with living relationships. Ask yourself some direct questions.

- Am I in right relationship with the body of Christ?
- Is there genuine unity in my closest ministry relationships?
- Does the ministry team in my home church feel like or function like a unit?
- Are any of my relationships deep enough that I can be truly honest?
- Who would I go to for help in my relationships?

Make a commitment to see breakthrough in real relationship for the sake of the Kingdom. A desperate world is waiting for a John 17 fulfillment.