

Bill Johnson: The Promotion Worth Pursuing

Promotion is how we advance in position, rank and influence. And though titles don't always reflect our significance in the kingdom of God, they can be measurements by which we see our role to the world around us. But what must be maintained as a value of the kingdom is that the only promotion worth pursuing is the one that comes from God.

All other promotions are ultimately setbacks in our personal development and potential. Self-promotion undermines the process that God has assigned for each of our lives. Whatever I *obtain* through self-promotion, I'll have to *sustain* through self-promotion. It's like a beach ball with a leak. The only way to keep it full is to continue pumping it full of air. It's a lot of work. And it takes away from the purpose of the beach ball, which illustrates the plan and promotion that God had in place for us.

Instead of spending our time and effort on our purpose in life, we pour them out for things that bear no lasting fruit. And there's a day coming when we will each stand before the Lord to give an account for how we lived our lives. On that day the fruit that remains is all that will matter to us.

Promotion is in the heart of God for each of us. He is the perfect Father who delights in our growth and maturity as we learn to represent Him well in all areas of life. We do this by becoming like Jesus in character and then by stewarding the increase of responsibilities as a citizen of His kingdom. Proper stewardship of gifts and opportunities in life opens doors for us to step into more significant roles as followers of Jesus.

Titles, Money and Power

It probably needs to be said at this point that promotion for the believer is not always about title, money or power. Though it may include any number of external things, it really is about being more like Jesus in our inner world. More specifically, it has to do with our thought life, our emotional health and our nature to lean toward or away from the will of God. Representing (read re-presenting) Jesus on earth is the goal. From that place of personal victory, we can demonstrate the reality of His presence and kingdom to the world around us, which automatically brings an increase in responsibilities and potential impact.

There's no question that His promotion sometimes includes title, position, power and resource. But those things make for terrible goals on our journey. Seeking first the kingdom of God is the challenge we face. Seeking first the kingdom means to pursue the reality of the King's dominion being released over the broken, diseased and inferior situations in life. The promise He gave us is that all the other stuff needed to fulfill our purpose would be added to us. Becoming more like Jesus positions us to be effective in bringing lasting change to the world around us.

We become a danger to ourselves when our focus or objective becomes the things that are supposed to be added to our lives as the fruit of our God-given priorities. When that happens, our pursuit of the kingdom becomes a smokescreen for our real ambition of personal gain. Our place of significance is to seek the full expression of the lordship and kingship of Jesus into needful situations we run into throughout our lives. If we choose to seek the reward instead of His rule, we cut short our development and restrict our ability to experience and manifest the reality of His kingdom through our surrendered lives.

To "seek first the kingdom" is the process; "all these things will be added" is the outcome. We love outcomes. He treasures the process or journey. To grow in this kingdom, we must learn

to treasure what He treasures and give attention to the things that have captured His heart. When we become kingdom-minded people and truly make that the priority of our pursuits in life, we place ourselves in the position that He celebrates most. When we get those priorities mixed up, He cuts back our rewards to the measure we can faithfully steward without losing our heart for His kingdom. {eo}

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