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by Berni Dymet




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How to Be a Kingdom Builder

Are you a kingdom builder, or an empire builder? It turns out, that in God's economy, there's a world of difference!

christianity**works**

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how to be a
kingdom builder

by berni dymet

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CHAPTER 1

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Are you a kingdom builder or an empire builder? Tough question I know, but are you more interested in seeing God's interests furthered in this world, or your own?

In the natural, you and I are programmed to be empire builders aren't we? We're constantly thinking about furthering our own interests in our little corner of the planet ... in a sense, building our own despotic little empires. It's just the way we've been programmed. And yet Jesus – topsy-turvy Lord and Saviour that He is – calls us to turn that whole self-interest thing completely on its head:

Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'

(Matthew 16:24)

That's easy for Him to say; it's a lot harder for you and me to do by living it out in our lives, right? So how do you live it out? The reason I ask that question is that anybody who's ever followed Jesus knows that feeling when you've tried and tried and tried and tried ... and yet still you fail. Still you find yourself pulling up short. Still you see the selfishness or the arrogance or the insecurity or the faithlessness that you wish wasn't there, rearing its ugly head in your life.

You want to be a Kingdom builder, and yet you realise that really, you're just trying to build your own empire. Ever been there? Yes – me too. So ... what's the answer?

Well, Jesus has the answer, and it goes much deeper than you and I might think:

No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from



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thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of their heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks. (Luke 6:43-45)

In other words if you and I truly want to take up our cross and follow Jesus, if we really, really want to become Kingdom builders rather than our own despotic little emperors, it's a matter of the heart. Good things and bad things, all that we do, begin in the heart. Jesus also pointed out that murder begins in the heart, right? (Matthew 5:21-26). So what you and I need is a change of heart, not a change of actions.

Come on! You and I know that we can do anything if first, it begins as a work in our hearts. The problem is, there are some things deep down inside that you and I simply cannot do. There are some major works required in our hearts, that only the Holy Spirit can do. So to answer this question – *how can we become kingdom builders rather than empire builders?* – we

need to go to a man who had a right heart and see what it was about his heart that enabled him to build the Kingdom of God, rather than his own personal empire.

Now this man, David, ultimately became the greatest King that Israel ever had. So if anybody could have been an empire builder, it would have been him right? And yet he was far more interested in building God's Kingdom than His own empire. Here's why. A thousand or so years after the life and reign of David, Luke, the Apostle, is writing the book of Acts. This is what he writes under the power and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

When he had removed him, he made David their king. In his testimony about him he said, 'I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart, who will carry out all my wishes.' (Acts 13:22)

Do you see? The heart comes first, then the actions. David was a man after God's very own heart and as a result, he was a man who would carry out all God's wishes. Now, the great thing



Now the great thing about choosing David to talk about being a Kingdom builder is this: David was a terrible sinner.

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about choosing David to talk about being a Kingdom builder is this: David was a terrible sinner. He was an adulterer, a murderer, a bandit and marauder. He had times when he was faithless in his life causing huge punishment to fall on the nation of Israel. In fact, he did things that you or I would never dream of doing.

In other words, he was a sinner just like you and me, only much, much worse than us. And the point of God calling HIM a man after His own heart, is that God knows we're not perfect. He doesn't expect us to be perfect, but He wants our hearts to beat as one with His.

Recently in my personal devotion times, I've been reading through the books of 1st and 2nd Samuel in the Old Testament. Now of course, as always, certain passages leapt out and I highlighted them, thought about them and prayed over them, as you do when you're reading God's Word. But the biggest thing that struck me was the huge sweep of the story of God and David. I think sometimes it's easy to miss that.

We read this verse, or that verse, this chapter or that chapter – it's as though we chop up God's Word and we miss the huge story of God's love and salvation that runs through from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation. So it's a great thing sometimes just to read the Bible as a story and ask, *what's the whole story telling me here?*

And this particular story showed me what it was that made David a man after God's own heart. What was it about the heart of this mighty warrior, this sinner who despite all his failings, made him *a man after God's own heart?*

And here's the answer: time and time again David showed through his actions that he considered the nation of Israel to be God's Kingdom and not his empire. Israel wasn't his, it was God's.

Over and over again, David showed respect for authority. Even when that authority was murderous and despotic, he forgave those who persecuted him; he honoured those who were nothing. As I read about those things, I could see the heart of God beating in and through



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David's attitudes and actions. And as tough a life as David had, I found myself praying, *God, make some of those changes in my heart too.*

And let me tell you, there's power in a prayer like that!!

Friend, you and I can't produce good actions out of a bad heart. When there's arrogance, selfishness and pride dwelling in our hearts, in a hidden room there that we've locked up tight to keep God out, then there's no way that we can have the God-given security to honour the authority that God has set over us.

When we hand everything over to God, *except just this one little thing*, let me tell you, *this one little thing* is going to ruin our lives, whatever it may happen to be. *This one little thing* is going to be the devil's foothold; his beachhead from which he'll plunder our whole lives; our effectiveness in ministry. Because, the devil definitely wants to keep you and me in our natural, sinful state.

What does the Bible say?

Do not make room for the devil. (Ephesians 4:27)

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

(Romans 13:14)

If, in your heart of hearts, you want to be used of God to be a part of building His Kingdom rather than your own empire, then that thing that you're hanging onto that you know is wrong; the one thing that you've locked away tight and kept from God, you *one little thing*, needs to be handed over to Him.

I know you're never going to be perfect; so does God. But wilful rebellion in your heart, will rob you of your role as a builder of God's Kingdom.

There's nothing surer than that:

In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for special use, some for ordinary. All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work. (2 Timothy 2:20,21)

CHAPTER 2

I WILL NOT RAISE MY HAND AGAINST GOD'S ANOINTED

At no place and at no time is our tendency towards looking after our own interests more sorely tested than when a person in authority over us is being unjust or unfair; when they're treating us badly. The more 'me-centric' our society becomes, the more we think about our rights.

I deserve better than this!! He can't treat me like that!! That's just not fair!!

And these days, people leave their jobs and find another, because they don't like the boss; they don't like their colleagues; what's going on doesn't suit them.

But let me ask you this question: what if

that boss who has been treating you harshly needs a godly man or woman around them, to support them through a crisis that's going on behind the scenes? What if, in fact, God means to use you as His disciple in this place to share the love of Christ with this brute of a boss? What if God's plan is to transform this person's life, in fact his or her whole family, by you sharing the Gospel of Christ with them. But instead, you go get a new job because ... it's just not fair?

Of course that's not always the case. Sometimes God does call us to move on. But other times, we're all too ready to throw in the towel when God is calling us to hang in there for His glory.

Over and over again in this booklet we've been asking ourselves the question: *are you and I Kingdom builders, or empire builders?* Are we more concerned about God's plans and interests in this world and playing our small part, or are we focussed on our own self-interest?

And this example that I have just given you is a perfect litmus test for the degree to which



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you and I are Kingdom builders or personal empire builders. What would you do in this situation?

Would you seek hard after God to find out if He really wants you to stay and what role He wants you to play? Or would you just go to the job pages and start looking for a new job? We've seen so far that King David was a man after God's own heart and as such, even though he ultimately became King of Israel, he treated Israel as God's Kingdom, not His own personal empire.

And nowhere do we see this more than in his relationship with Saul. Here's a quick thumbnail sketch of the situation. Saul was the very first King of Israel, but in all sorts of ways he'd gone off the rails and God had taken his anointing off Saul, and put it on young David. The problem was, Saul was still officially the king even though every man and his dog could see that God's anointing, God's favour and power had come off Saul and fallen onto David.

But Saul was determined to cling to power at

all costs and so Saul set about hunting David down to kill him.

It's like the world can see that God has a plan for you. However the man whose job you're meant to take decides to murder you. Pretty extreme – wouldn't you agree?

Now David by this time in his life had become a skilled warrior. He was a great leader of men, and he'd won just about every battle he'd engaged in to this point. So with those skills and a band of loyal followers, – why not kill Saul? It makes sense! Nobody would get upset; the whole nation could see that Saul's time had come to an end, and that David's time as king had well and truly come.

It's as plain as the nose on everybody's face!

And in fact twice David has Saul in a place where he has the opportunity to take his life, and twice, David declines to do so. Why? Well, here it is. This is what transpires between David and Saul after the first opportunity. Saul is relieving himself in a dark cave. David sneaks up behind him in the dark and cuts the corner of Saul's cloak off as evidence that he'd had the



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opportunity to kill him:

Afterward David was stricken to the heart because he had cut off a corner of Saul's cloak. He said to his men, 'The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to raise my hand against him; for he is the Lord's anointed.' So David scolded his men severely and did not permit them to attack Saul. Then Saul got up and left the cave, and went on his way.

Afterwards David also rose up and went out of the cave and called after Saul, 'My lord the king!' When Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance. David said to Saul, 'Why do you listen to the words of those who say, "David seeks to do you harm"? This very day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you into my hand in the cave; and some urged me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, "I will not raise my hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed." See, my father, see the corner of your cloak in my hand; for by the fact that I cut off the corner of your cloak, and did not kill you, you may know for certain that there is no wrong

or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you are hunting me to take my life. May the Lord judge between me and you! May the Lord avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you. As the ancient proverb says, "Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness"; but my hand shall not be against you. Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A single flea? May the Lord therefore be judge, and give sentence between me and you. May he see to it, and plead my cause, and vindicate me against you.'

When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, 'Is this your voice, my son David?' Saul lifted up his voice and wept. He said to David, 'You are more righteous than I; for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. Today you have explained how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the Lord put me into your hands. For who has ever found an enemy, and sent the enemy safely away? So may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. Now I

know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. Swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not wipe out my name from my father's house.' So David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home; but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

(1 Samuel 24:5-22)

Friend, these are the actions of a man after God's own heart. He won't take his kingship of Israel by force. Why? Because it's not Saul's empire or his, it's God's Kingdom.

So, how do you see things in a time of conflict? Is it about your life, your comfort, your convenience, your empire?

Or God's Kingdom?

CHAPTER 3 WEEPING OVER YOUR ENEMIES

You and I see the world principally from our own perspective. We judge people and circumstances, we weigh our thoughts and actions on the scale of self-interest – what we feel, what we think we need, what we want, how we want to be seen.

And that self-centric attitude gets us into a lot of strife. That's the reason my daily radio program is called *A Different Perspective*. It's about taking a look at the same things that we look at every day you and I, but seeing them from a completely different perspective. God's perspective.

Here's how I see the Bible. When I read the tough truths that God shares with me through His Word, it's as though He's inviting me up into heaven's balcony to see the view from there, lovingly putting His arm over my shoulder and pointing things out from where He sits; from His perspective.

And when we do see this whole melee that you and I call life, through His eyes, our mistakes become obvious; the confusion becomes clearer; the world starts to make sense. And I guess as we chat about becoming someone who is more of a builder of God's Kingdom than a builder of their own personal empire, seeing things through God's eyes is incredibly important.

We saw how David viewed a terrible situation of conflict with the outgoing King of Israel Saul, who was trying to kill him. David's whole perspective on this life-and-death struggle was this: God owns Israel. It's His Kingdom. He appoints the king, and if he wants to remove Saul and replace him with me, well, He's going to have to do it.



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I will not – I WILL NOT – raise my hand against God’s anointed! Despite what my supporters say; despite the fact that I could easily take his life’ despite the fact that I know I should be king. It’s up to God. Just as a quick recap, remember that this is what David said to Saul in that dark cave where he could have killed him:

May the Lord therefore be judge, and give sentence between me and you. May he see to it, and plead my cause, and vindicate me against you.

David knew what was right but he left it up to God. Our normal reaction is self-promotion, because we’re more interested in self than in God. But a man or a woman who is more interested in God’s will, God’s decisions, God’s Kingdom rather than their own empire will leave it up to God.

That’s how you can tell a Kingdom builder from an empire builder. It’s a person who is prepared to suffer loss on their own part, for the sake of gain on the part of God’s Kingdom. Powerful stuff, isn’t it? To me this story



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is a mirror in which I see my own reflection for what it truly is. Well may God say that His Word is sharper than any two-edged sword, able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the human heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

And I'm hoping that you, like me, are asking yourself – *am I really a Kingdom builder, or am I a personal empire builder?*

So ... how else can we know that a person is more of a Kingdom builder? I'll tell you how. It's how they feel about their enemies. How they treat their enemies. Do they weep over the pain and loss and suffering of their enemy or not?

Eventually, Saul and his sons (including Jonathan who had been a dear friend and ally of David's) are killed in battle. God does, in fact judge and act *against Saul* and his house, and *for David* and his house.

Now, think about how you would respond in David's shoes. Saul's been trying to hunt you down and kill you – not to mention the fact that he's been sitting in a chair that God

has clearly anointed you for – and the message comes to you that Saul is dead.

How would you react?

A sigh of relief? Some tears even over the fact that you no longer have to fear for your life? Would you run Saul down to the people around you – *Fool that he was, he deserved everything he got. See, God's finally found in my favour. I was right all along?* All pretty natural reactions I'd have thought.

You might even throw a bit of a party or a celebration.

But let's take a look at how David reacted:

After the death of Saul, when David had returned from defeating the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag. On the third day, a man came from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground and did obeisance. David said to him, 'Where have you come from?' He said to him, 'I have escaped from the camp of Israel.' David said to him, 'How did things go? Tell me!' He answered, 'The army fled from the battle, but also many

of the army fell and died; and Saul and his son Jonathan also died.'

Then David asked the young man who was reporting to him, 'How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan died?' The young man reporting to him said, 'I happened to be on Mount Gilboa; and there was Saul leaning on his spear, while the chariots and the horsemen drew close to him. When he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. I answered, 'Here sir.' And he said to me, 'Who are you?' I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' He said to me, 'Come, stand over me and kill me; for convulsions have seized me, and yet my life still lingers.'

So I stood over him, and killed him, for I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. I took the crown that was on his head and the armlet that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord.' Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them; and all the men who were with him did the same. They mourned and wept, and fasted until evening for Saul and for his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and for the house of Israel, because

they had fallen by the sword. David said to the young man who had reported to him, 'Where do you come from?' He answered, 'I am the son of a resident alien, an Amalekite.' David said to him, 'Were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?' Then David called one of the young men and said, 'Come here and strike him down.' So he struck him down and he died. David said to him, 'Your blood be on your head; for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the Lord's anointed.' And David intoned a lamentation song over Saul and his son Jonathan. (2 Samuel 1:1-18)

David mourned over the loss of his enemy Saul. David struck down the man who killed Saul. Now there's a heart after God. There's a man who's a true kingdom builder, rather than an empire builder.

There's a man after God's own heart.

TIME TO PRAY

A Final Prayer

Dear Lord, we know that we can never be like David, and in many respects we don't want to be. We never want to sin against you the way David did through adultery and murder and even more. And yet you put Your Spirit in that man, to make Him a man after Your own heart.

Father God, in my own weakness, with my own limitations, would You please do that to me too. I know that I can't do it on my own. I know that I can't change my actions until I change my heart. And I know that there are some things so deep-grained in me, things ... let me call them for what they are – sin – that I simply cannot change for myself.

*But You dear Holy Spirit can – as you bring
Your Word to life in my heart. As You lead me
through trials and temptations and walk by
my side. As You witness Your love deep in my
Spirit.*

*So dear Lord, I ask that You make me a man/
woman after Your own heart. In Jesus' mighty
name I pray.*

Amen



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Berni Dymet is a contemporary Christian communicator with a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus right into the middle of life. He comes from the perspective that this Christianity thing - it isn't just a faith that lives in our heads or even our hearts, but that it actually works right here in the middle of our lives.

Christianity actually works when we dare to accept Jesus Christ into our lives!! Not just as Saviour, but also as Lord.

Millions of people around the globe tune into Berni's radio programs each week. The Lord has given him a special gift for sharing the Gospel in a truly practical way. In a way that really connects into the hearts and lives of real people in real places, transforming their lives. That's what the ministry of Christianityworks is all about. Leading people into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

But Berni's passion, his enthusiasm and his insights into the day to day realities of life are simply tools in God's hands. The real change agent is God Himself.

And to Him - and Him alone - be all the glory.

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How to Be a Kingdom Builder

Some people are kingdom builders, others are empire builders. For some people their main focus is on building God's kingdom in this world. For others it's about building their own, personal little empire. Which one of those are you?

Join Berni Dymet in this booklet as he opens the Bible to discover how you can become more and more a builder of the Kingdom of Heaven.

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