



## God's Need Meeting Strategy

Adapted from "Get into the Game" series by Wayne Murray.

Many think they must be superstars before they can be used by God. You may be surprised to hear of how God used a man named Edward Kimball. Likely you are not familiar with that name. However, it is quite likely you have seen the results of his ministry before God.

Blogger Travis Agnew tells the story:

**"You can count the apples on the tree, but who can count the apples in a seed?" goes the old aphorism.**

So, it is with the influence of a single person.

Take Edward Kimball, for an example. Never heard of him? Rest assured – most people have never heard of him.

Kimball was a Sunday school teacher who not only prayed for the hyper boys in his class, but also sought to win each one to the Lord personally. He decided he would be intentional with every single last one of them. Surely he thought about throwing in the towel. If you have ever taught the Bible to young boys, you know that the experience can often be like herding cats.

One young man, in particular, didn't seem to understand what the gospel was about so Kimball went to the shoe store where he was stocking shelves and confronted him in the stock room with the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That young man was Dwight L. Moody. In the stockroom on that Saturday, he believed the gospel and received Jesus Christ as his Savior. In his lifetime, Moody touched two continents for God, with thousands professing Christ through his ministry.

But the story doesn't end there. Actually, that's where it begins. Under Moody, another man's heart was touched for God, Wilbur Chapman. Chapman became the evangelist who preached to thousands. One day, a professional ball player had a day off and attended one of Chapman's meetings, and thus, Billy Sunday was converted.

Sunday quit baseball and became part of Chapman's team. Then, Chapman accepted the pastorate of a large church and Billy Sunday began his own evangelistic crusades. Another young man was converted whose name was Mordecai Ham. He was a scholarly, dignified gentleman who wasn't above renting a hearse and parading it through the streets advertising his meetings.

When Ham came to Charlotte, North Carolina, a sandy-haired, lanky, young man, then in high school, vowed that he wouldn't go hear him preach, but Billy Frank, as he was called by his family, did eventually go. Ham announced that he knew for a fact that a house of ill repute was located across the street from the local high school and that male students were skipping lunch to visit the house across the street. When students decided to go to interrupt the meetings of Mordecai Ham, Billy Frank decided to go see what would happen.

That night Billy Frank went and was intrigued by what he heard. Returning another night, he responded to the invitation and was converted. Billy Frank eventually became known as Billy Graham, the evangelist who preached to more people than any other person who ever lived, including the Apostle Paul.

If you are like most people, you have served in some capacity and wondered at times if you were making a real difference or not. Maybe you've thought about quitting because you didn't think you were making any difference.

Next time you are tempted to give up, please remember Edward Kimball, whose persistence and faithfulness was tremendously honored by the Lord. The story would have looked very differently if Edward Kimball did not take his Saturday to seek out young Dwight Moody.

You can count the apples on a tree, but only God knows how many apples are in a single seed. **Do your part today in the Kingdom and trust God for the results.**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Travis Agnew, "The Chain of Events Leading to Billy Graham's Conversion," [TravisAgnew.org](http://www.travisagnew.org), July 22, 2013, <http://www.travisagnew.org/2013/07/22/the-chain-of-events-for-billy-grahams-conversion/> (accessed July 20, 2017).

## COURAGE

**C1:** In his book, *The Blessed Church*, Robert Morris said, “The full expression of God’s plan for His new covenant people is every believer expressing in powerful ways the fullness of the Spirit’s gifts in the home, the marketplace, the workplace and on the street – so that the lost will be reached and touched.”<sup>2</sup>

After thinking and reflecting on this statement answer the following:

- How has your spiritual growth made a difference in your life?
- How does your spiritual growth effect the growth of the Kingdom of God?

**C2:** To grow spiritually requires discipline. In what areas of your life are you strong spiritually? In what areas of your life are you weak? Write down a growth plan to strengthen your strengths and to improve your weakness.

**C3:** Jesus provides us an excellent example of how we should grow as we live out our life. Reflect on the four areas of Jesus’ growth and answer the following.

**Luke 2:52 (NLT)** Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.

- Jesus’ growth was a choice. What are the choices that have caused you to grow?
- Jesus grew in four areas: Wisdom (mentally), Stature (Physically), Favor with God (Spiritually), and Favor with Men (Socially). Which of these four areas is the easiest for you to grow? Which of these four areas is more difficult for you to grow? Why?

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Morris, *The Blessed Church*, (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2012).

## STRENGTH

**S1:** According to the New York Times: “Members of the clergy now suffer from obesity, hypertension and depression at rates higher than most Americans. In the last decade, their use of antidepressants has risen, while their life expectancy has fallen. Many would change jobs if they could.”<sup>3</sup>

- 13% of active pastors are divorced.
- 23% have been fired or pressured to resign at least once in their careers.
- 25% don't know where to turn when they have a family or personal conflict.
- 25% of pastors' wives see their husband's work schedule as a source of conflict.
- 33% felt burned out within their first five years of ministry.
- 33% say that being in ministry is an outright hazard to their family.
- 40% of pastors and 47% of spouses are suffering from burnout, frantic schedules, and/or unrealistic expectations.
- 45% of pastors' wives say the greatest danger to them and their family is physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual burnout.
- 45% of pastors say that they've experienced depression or burnout to the extent that they needed to take a leave of absence from ministry.
- 50% feel unable to meet the needs of the job.
- 52% of pastors say they and their spouses believe that being in pastoral ministry is hazardous to their family's well-being and health.
- 56% of pastors' wives say that they have no close friends.
- 57% would leave the pastorate if they had somewhere else to go or some other vocation they could do.
- 70% don't have any close friends.
- 75% report severe stress causing anguish, worry, bewilderment, anger, depression, fear, and alienation.
- 80% of pastors say they have insufficient time with their spouse.
- 80% believe that pastoral ministry affects their families negatively.
- 90% feel unqualified or poorly prepared for ministry.
- 90% work more than 50 hours a week.
- 94% feel under pressure to have a perfect family.
- 1,500 pastors leave their ministries each month due to burnout, conflict, or moral failure.

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Vitello, “Taking a Break From the Lord’s Word,” *The New York Times*, August 1, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/02/nyregion/02burnout.html> (accessed July 20, 2017).

- What can you do to ensure your pastor is not one of these statistics?

**S2:** Jesus grew in four areas: Wisdom (mentally), Stature (physically), Favor with God (spiritually), and Favor with Men (socially). Create a 90-day growth plan in these four areas.

- What is your 90-day mental growth goal?
- What is your 90-day physical growth goal?
- What is your 90-day spiritual growth goal?
- What is your 90-day social growth goal?
- Who will hold you accountable in each of the four areas? How will you evaluate your growth in each of these four areas?

**S3:** God's goal is not just personal growth. His desire for you is to take your personal growth and use it to help the team. Read the following scriptures and then answer the questions.

**Exodus 18:14–17 (NLT)**

**Numbers 11:14–15 (NLT)**

- What was Jethro's advice about leading people?

- What was the emotion Moses felt after carrying so many of the people's burdens?
  
- What was the result of Moses doing all the work?
  
- Do you think it is healthy for one person to carry all the burdens and/or do all the work? How can you help lighten the load of your pastor?

## ENDURANCE

**E1:** In Exodus 18:20, Moses' father-in-law Jethro, gives Moses his job description. Read what Jethro tells Moses and then answer the questions.

### Exodus 18:20 (NLT)

- According to this verse, what two areas should you be developing in your personal Christian walk?
- On a scale from 1-8, with 1 being the least and 8 the best, how well are you doing?
- What can you do to improve your walk in the next 90-days?

**E2:** In the New Testament, we find a different way to think. God intends for those sitting in the pews to be the ministers. Read the following verses and answer the questions.

### Ephesians 4:11 (NLT)

### Acts 6:1–4 (NLT)

- What does the verse in Ephesians say to you about the way Paul wanted the church led?
- Should this be a model to lead the church today?
- What is the plan to help ensure the church is led in this manner?

- From the verses in Acts, what should be the business of the church?
- What was the result of people getting into the game and using their gifts, talents, and abilities?

**E3:** Believers have become consumers of religious goods and services. It has been said, “What God has brought you through, He has prepared you to do.”

**James 2:17 (NLT)**

- What does this verse speak to you regarding serving?
- How are you serving the people around you?
- Think of some ways as a group of men you can begin to serve the needs of the people in your sphere of influence.