



Chapter 3

Pulverizing Paradigms and the Kingdom of God

Reflections to Journal and Share

- Do you ever think about why you think the way you think? What significant events, family influences and environments from your formative years may have most shaped the way you think today?
- Do you agree with A. W. Tozer's thought that the most important thing about a person is what comes to his or her mind when he or she thinks about God? If so, what are the implications of that for you? What misconceptions of God do you think you might have right now? How might you best expand your understanding of God and correct any misconceptions about who God is and how He does things?
- How do you react to this whole notion of paradigms and the way they can unknowingly shape your life and control the decisions you make? Would you agree that paradigms can be both comfort zones as well as prisons? What are the implications of that for your life, your faith, your spirituality, and your pursuit of God?
- Has anything really changed in 2000 years? Today are we somehow exempt from this necessary process of having all of our cultural and "religious" debris stripped away so we can fathom the full scope and extent of the Kingdom of God? Or do we still have a tendency to cling to our flawed secular paradigms of success, achievement, significance, prestige and importance – all defective notions that need to be first challenged and then pulverized by Jesus?
- How much detoxing would Jesus say still needs to be done in your life? What paradigms might still be holding you captive? Where might you still be blind? Are you asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you those paradigms that need to be changed as well as those areas in your life where you are still blind?
- Meaningful change always starts with a sincere desire to want to change. What do you do when you find that desire missing (as it often is)? Are you praying for the desire to have those barriers and impediments removed by the Spirit?
- What would you suggest as some practical ways for you to remake the restrictive paradigms that need to be changed in your life – to free you up to be more of what God intended you to be?
- Where are you challenged most in this chapter? What did you hear the Holy Spirit whisper to you as you journeyed through this chapter?

A Point to Ponder

One of the flaws in Western discipling today is that we often take a new believer from our narcissistic culture and cover him/her with a veneer of Jesus "Principles." Usually this leaves the core of a new believer untouched and unchallenged. This flawed approach can easily result in a cultural Christian with pronounced spiritual narcissistic tendencies – what's in it for me? This is not the kind of disciple Jesus requires for His Kingdom of servants and shepherds of His flock.

If Jesus walked into your church or parachurch ministry next week and selected a new group of disciples from your fellowship, which of the first dozen "religious" paradigms of your church/denomination/ministry do you think He would start to tear down and remake? Would He remake our self-serving view of God, a view of God that we have constructed to conform to our felt needs? Would our compromised notions of God's holiness or our convenient notions of submission to Him come under His this-needs-to-change gaze?

- Would Jesus challenge our performance and achievement paradigms, and particularly our frenetic lifestyle paradigm?
- Might Jesus find our flawed but cherished notions of what constitutes body life, church growth, "real" worship (and the music that goes with it!), "Quiet Time" and in-depth Bible study to be woefully anemic?
- Might Jesus address our spiritually narcissistic vocabulary by severely restricting the use of the personal pronouns "me" and "my" in our church hallways replacing them instead with "Him" and "His?"
- Might He ban the use of the word "principles" from ever again being uttered in the Kingdom of God? "Principle" is a non-biblical word and a non-biblical notion. There is Eternal Truth to be found in God's Word, but no "principles." It is a Person we love and worship, not a "principle."