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Grounders:

Have you considered how the kingdom of God grows and assimilates in your communion, in your community, and in your culture? Most ministries, including businesses, attempt to start big and eventually, they grow small. They attempt to assimilate in others from the outside-in. Unfortunately, both are examples of *pretense, which is the problem*. However, the *solution is authenticity*. Authentic ministries *start small and grow large, and they assimilate from the inside out*. This was Jesus' message in a pair of parables: *The Parable of the Mustard Seed* and *The Parable of the Yeast* (Matt. 13:31-33).

Authentic ministries have mustard seed growth: they start small and grow large (Matt. 13:31-32). Jesus threw the earthly truth of a mustard seed alongside the spiritual truth of the growth of the kingdom of God—His reign, rule, and order in the hearts and lives of people on this earth now and in the future. He noted the small size of the mustard seed, "*Smallest of all your seeds*" (Matt. 13:31). It was planted in the ground, almost unseen. Jesus' kingdom started small. Two thousand years ago, the expectation of the listeners was not unlike ours today. They had expected the Messiah's kingdom to start big. Jesus turned their expectations *upside-down*.

Jesus said that His kingdom would grow large, referencing the size of a fully grown mustard plant, "*Yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree*" (Matt. 13:32). Although His kingdom started small with God coming down, it had grown to reach many nations by the time of Luke's writing of Acts.

Is God prompting you to start a new ministry to advance His kingdom in you, in your community, and in your culture? Start small. Authentic growth is upside-down from the culture's motto, "Start big." The proud heart must be humbled; humble hearts must grow authentically with one another; and the people on the upside must reach those who are down. Communion kingdom growth with God starts small in your heart (Jas. 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23; Lk. 17:21). Community kingdom growth starts small with authentic relationships (1 Cor. 3:6-7). Culture kingdom growth starts with reaching its small (2 Cor. 9:10).

Authentic ministries have yeast-like assimilation: inside-out (Matt. 13:33). Assimilation is permeation and transformation. It is mixing throughout in order to change. Jesus painted the picture of a woman kneading yeast, or leaven, into the dough. After the yeast was mixed throughout the dough, the fermenting process could not be stopped. Jesus likened the earthly truth of the yeast to the spiritual truth of His kingdom. Once Jesus had inaugurated His kingdom on earth by coming inside it as a man, its transformation could not be stopped.

Is God prompting you to start a new ministry to advance His kingdom in you, in your community, and in your culture? Work inside-out. Authentic kingdom assimilation is inside-out. Communion kingdom growth with God starts in your heart and works inside-out in your life (Matt. 23:25-26). Community kingdom growth starts inside relationships and then works its way out (Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 4:5-6). Culture kingdom growth starts inside a culture (perhaps with the inner city) and then works out (Matt. 25:40, 45).



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Want authentic kingdom growth in your communion, community, and culture? Start small, and work inside-out.

Upside-down and inside-out,
Mitch