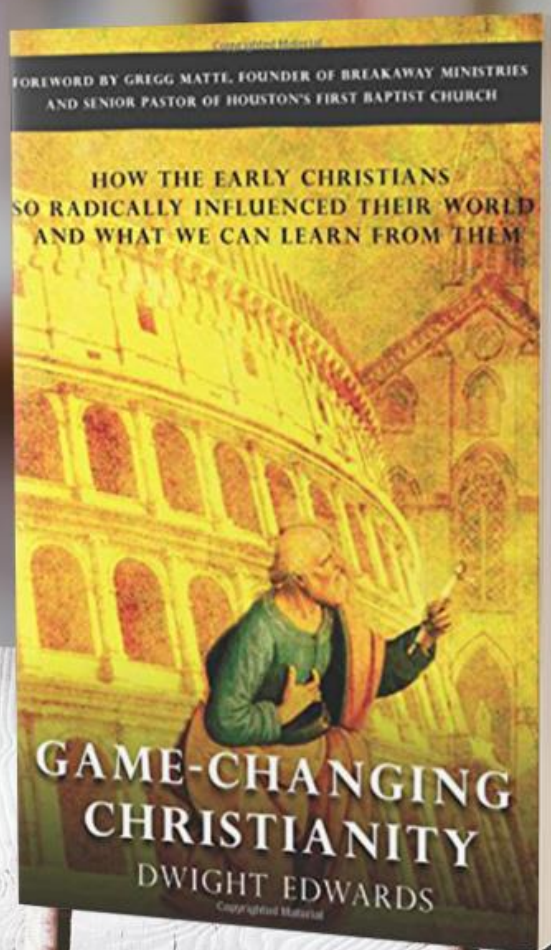


Game-Changing Christianity

HIGHLIGHTS FROM EACH CHAPTER

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Introduction:

“In fact, the stunning historical reality is this – Christianity was at its best when it had no clergy and no church buildings!” **Pg.5**

“Nobody disputes it. The first 300 years of Christianity were epic years. They were the legendary years of unparalleled gospel penetration. In them we find the storied days of the church’s radical, wholesale participation in spreading the gospel’s stunningly good news far and wide. By only the year 150 A.D., Justin Martyr would write, *‘For there is not one single race of men, whether barbarians, or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads, or vagrants, or herdsmen living in tents, among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the name of the crucified Jesus.’* In barely more than a century, an unpromising band of 120 men and women had multiplied so rapidly that their message had infiltrated practically every nook and cranny of their known world.” **Pg.1**

Chapter 1 – *The Call to Dangerous Christianity*

“It is normative for every believer to be a gate crusher, daily storming the gates of hell. Storming them by bold, persistent prayer for others. Storming them by winsome, Christ-scented responses to mistreatment. Storming them by humble, respectful verbalizing of the gospel to those asking “...a reason for the hope that is in you...” I Pet. 3:15 Storming them by providing hope and tangible support for unwed mothers. Storming them by helping free the victims of sex-slave trafficking. Storming them by visiting geriatric centers and loving the world’s forgotten. Storming them by beginning a bible study at your workplace or neighborhood. Storming them by giving generously to those parts of the world where the gospel is most absent. Storming them by mentoring younger believers in the faith. Storming them by loving the Lord with all that we are and our neighbor as ourselves. Storming them by becoming a game changer in other’s lives. This is what I mean by *Dangerous Christianity.*” **Pg. 12,13**

“And let me hasten to say that our first and highest calling is not war. It is love. *‘Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your*

heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Mtt. 22:37-39 **Our greatest calling in life is the cultivating of a white-hot, ever deepening love affair with our God and the releasing of God-tainted love towards those around us. Both saved and unsaved. Nothing rivals the supremacy and importance of this love calling.** Yet according to our Lord, we are here for more than love. His “called out ones” are in a ceaseless, truce-less, cosmic conflict against the very powers of hell itself. “The church”, as one writer put it, “is born for battle.” We dare not settle for anything less.” **Pg. 9**

Chapter 2 – Revisiting the Battlefield

“Reinhold Niebuhr put it so well, *‘You may be able to compel people to maintain certain minimum standards by stressing duty, but the highest moral and spiritual achievements depend not upon a push but a pull. People must be charmed into righteousness.’* Nothing charms people into righteousness more than having their breath taken away by the wonder and awe of the true and living God. **Dangerous Christians are more concerned with helping people fall in love with Jesus than making sure they are following the rules.** This is why Paul was such a continual thorn in the side of the legalists.” **Pg. 30**

“Dangerous Christians don’t scold, they invite. They invite people to a Person, not a set of rules. Simply put, they invite them to trade up. Few men have exemplified this spirit of humility and respect in communicating divine truth better than C.S. Lewis. You can read all his works and you will never once feel talked down to. It is one of the things that make his writings so powerful. Once asked some advice, he wrote back and kindly gave it. But then he added, *‘Think of me as a fellow-patient in the same hospital who, having been admitted a little earlier, could give some advice.’*” **Pg. 33**

Chapter 3 – *The Front Line of Attack*

“Every servant of God is, at best, only a temporary tool in the hand of our eternal God. As Charles Wesley wrote, *‘God buries His workmen, but carries on His work.’* I love the way Paul summarizes his entire take on ministry as God designed it – “So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.” Samuel Brengle, one of the early leaders of the Salvation Army, understood this well. One night he was introduced as the, “great Dr. Brengle.” That night he wrote in his diary,

“If I appear great in their eyes, the Lord is most graciously helping me to see how absolutely nothing I am without Him, and helping me to keep little in my own eyes. He does use me. But I am so concerned that He uses me and that it is not of me the work is done. The axe cannot boast of the trees it has cut down. It could do nothing but for the woodsman. He made it, he sharpened it, and he used it. The moment he throws it aside, it becomes only old iron. O, that I may never lose sight of this.” **Pg. 44**

“Dangerous Christians follow in the footsteps of Paul. They are not sidetracked by drab religiosity, church politics, or lifeless rule keeping. They are men and women radically joined together in risk-taking, Christ-honoring community. They also believe to the core of their being that aggressive, frontline praying is their highest and most urgent calling in fighting the good fight. Let’s look now at what they are fighting for.” **Pg. 50**

Chapter 4 – *The Metrics of Success*

“As Paul sought to determine whether their ministry had been genuinely successful or not, he had an eagle eye for one thing above all else – supernaturally changed lives. Not just changed lives - many religions and ideologies are capable of that. No, this grace-soaked warrior refused to settle for anything less than men and women whose transformation could

only be explained by a power unknown to everyone except Christ-followers. Far, far more important to him than numbers, baptisms, budgets, programs, etc., were walking flesh and blood monuments to the unrivaled, transforming power of the living God. He understood something we desperately need to be reminded of in our day. **Supernaturally changed lives make the gospel an issue like nothing else. Period.” Pg. 52,53**

“Dangerous Christians ‘serve the living and true God’ not *for* God’s blessings but *because* of God’s blessings. **In other words, what thrusts them forward to make the living God visible on the playing field of life is the sheer gratitude and unbridled joy engendered by the wide-eyed wonder of all that the gospel has done for them.** And continues to do. Gypsy Smith circled the globe for almost 70 years, influencing the lives of literally millions of people for the gospel. Toward the end of his life he was asked what kept him going all those years. His answer? ‘I never lost the wonder of it all.’ What a great way to put it! **Game changers are game changers first and foremost because they manage to never lose the magic, the mystery, and especially the wonder of the gospel.** And because of this, their service for God is scented and perfumed with a gratitude and joy which those around cannot miss.” **Pg. 69**

Chapter 5 – A Three-Pronged Attack

“What is particularly striking and unspeakably important is the identity of these early disciple makers. They were the everyday, rank and file believers taken from every strata of society. And for the most part, they discipled those within in their own natural sphere of influence. In other words, tax collector discipled tax collector, older women mentored younger women, fisherman trained fisherman, soldier influenced soldier, etc. Milton L. Rudnick writes, “*During these early centuries Christianity grew so rapidly that the chief agents of growth were, not the leaders of the church nor professional evangelists, but rather ordinary believers...*” **Discipleship**

was always designed to be the work of all believers; not the responsibility or privilege of a select, specially trained group of elite saints. Once passing along the word of God began to be primarily reserved for the professionals (clergy); the freshness, vitality, and radical influence of the church began to dramatically wane.” **Pg. 83, 84**

“Being used by God requires more than an understanding of the scriptures (though this is vital); it also requires an understanding of the soul.

Nothing, but nothing, equips us for that quite like the classroom of suffering. The woman who has lost her husband can speak to another grieving woman who has lost her husband with a power that those outside this heartache simply cannot. Parents of a disabled child know the reservoir of pain which other parents of a disabled child continually carry around; and therefore can encourage more deeply than those who have never faced this trial. A couple who has experienced the devastation of multiple miscarriages will be helped most by another couple who has walked the same heart wrenching path. Charles Spurgeon, who suffered much during his life, wrote:

“There is no learning sympathy except by suffering. It cannot be studied in a book, it must be written on the heart. You must go through the fire if you would have sympathy with others who tread the glowing coals. You must yourself bear the cross if you would feel for those whose life is a burden to them.” **Pg. 99,100**

Chapter 6 – The Making of a Dangerous Christian

“Game changers do not become dangerous by parroting what other spiritual leaders say about the word of God. They become dangerous by knowing God first hand, by frequently journeying into the land of solitude, and staying quiet long enough to hear His still, small voice. Howard Hendricks puts it so, so well:

*'I am convinced that there are many Christians today to whom God is saying incisively, 'Go hide yourself.' That is a difficult assignment in a busy world. We are compulsive activists, and there are so many voices clamoring for our attention that it is easy to miss the voice of God in the process. You may be asking God to use you, to shape you, to mold you, to give you a cutting edge, not only in the present generation but, if the Lord tarries, in the next generation. **But you will have nothing to say to this generation or the next unless God first speaks to you. The important thing is not what you read or what you hear in a school or in a conference from an individual who is simply an instrument in the hands of God. In the final analysis, the important thing is whether you hear from God Himself.** And if you do not hear from Him, then all that those men and women may tell you will not make sense, nor will it have its designed impact.'*" **Pg. 114**

“However, I believe we often overestimate the role persecution played in the spread of Christianity. I like to put it like this – **Christians won the respect of the people by the way they died; but they won the hearts of the people by the way they lived.** What I really believe won most of the converts was the radical, no strings attached, sacrificial good the early saints wowed their world with. Michael Green agrees, *“They made the grace of God credible by a society of love and mutual care which astonished the pagans and was recognized as something entirely new. It lent persuasiveness to their claim that the New Age had dawned in Christ.”* **Pg. 120, 121**

Epilogue

“The single most important reason for the impact we had in our day was the all-consuming, ever-deepening love affair we had with a Person. A Person named Jesus. He was everything to us. We couldn't get enough of Him. It was He and He alone Who provided a blatantly supernatural peace that enabled us to move forward in a world that was tearing in on us from almost every direction. His joy sustained us when all shreds of human happiness were taken from us. His love was the feast and delight of our

souls, particularly when our families and friends turned their backs on us. Frankly, we never got over the magic, the mystery, and the wonder of this Man from Galilee Who absolutely turned our worlds upside down. We went to every length possible to take the time to simply sit at His feet, listen to His voice, pour our hearts out to Him, and simply relish His exquisite beauty. We were worshippers far before we were anything else.” **Pg. 132, 133**

“And so my dear brothers and sisters; know that we are watching you from above, cheering wildly for your every effort to glorify our Father and make Christ known to the people of your day. We’ve run our race, made our mistakes, and enjoyed God’s successes through us. But now ‘the night has come when no man can work.’ Jn. 9:4

Now it’s your turn. This is your day, your time, your season, and your opportunity to ‘work the works of Him Who sent you while it is day.’ As we used to say – *carpe diem*. ‘Seize the day’ my friends; you’ll never have another chance. See you soon...” **Pg. 144**

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