



INTRODUCTION

Like Alice's adventures in Looking Glass Land (*Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll), where everything she encounters is mirror-image opposite of what she thought to be true, the kingdom of heaven seems upside down and inside out when we first enter. Learning its biosphere and how to navigate its landscape becomes the adventure that defines our lives.

The way up is down.

The way to life is through death.

The way to greatness is through servanthood.

Kingdom living turns all of the world's platitudes and conventional wisdom on its head. The two are diametrically opposed. The first exposure to kingdom life principles is mind-boggling. It seems that it would require a mind transplant to absorb the absurdity of it.

So, mind transplant it is. When you are born into the kingdom, the kingdom is born into you. Your mind is reformed and regenerated. The old operating system is replaced with a new one. The new operating system runs all the programs differently. Old things have passed away and everything has become new. You have the mind of Christ, and He can make direct deposits from His mind into yours.

He can think His thoughts through your mind. The LORD has taken out your hard-as-rock, stubborn mind and transplanted a mind that is open and living and receptive.

The mind-set of the world tends to value big. The bigger the better. Flashy—sparkly big. So, when you first notice that the kingdom gives small all the value, it takes a while to absorb it. We are so used to being oriented toward big, that the reorientation toward small feels unnatural. But, small is where all the action is in the kingdom.

SMALL IS THE NEW BIG

Think of something big. A mountain? A tree? Get a mental picture of something you call big. Now, consider that it is made up of tiny, tiny atoms. Atoms are made up of even tinier neutrons and protons. Neutrons and protons are made up of elements so small that they can't be seen with the strongest microscope.

No such thing as big. Everything we call “big” is just a whole lot of “small.”

Small upon small upon small finally equals big. There is no “big” without lots and lots of small.

Nature, as God created it, is the image of the invisible kingdom of heaven. His creation illustrates the principles of His kingdom. In kingdom living, small matters. Small is the key to big. Choice by choice, act by act, decision by decision, obedience by obedience . . . a large life is made up of a whole lot of small.

Nanotechnology is all the rage. The technology of the future, some say. The possibilities are endless and the power comes from the size of the nanoparticle. It is tiny. The nanoparticle is so small that it can pass through the skin and through the outer layers of organs. Medicine can be delivered by nanoparticle. Skin treatments can be delivered by nanoparticle. Because the delivery system is so small that it can pass through barriers like skin or organs, it can deliver medicines or chemotherapy or vitamins deeper and more efficiently. The power of small in action.

The Word of God, delivered by the Holy Spirit, is—like a nanoparticle—transdermal. It is more than skin deep. The Spirit carries the power of the Living Word deep into the heart and life and transforms from the inside out. Spiritual nanotechnology means that the healing and renewal that might otherwise sit on the surface can be absorbed in the deep and hidden places. It takes the power of small to bring big results.

LIVING LARGE

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full,” Jesus states in John 10:10. We are created for fullness and abundance. We are designed to bud and flourish. We are constructed so that we crave and pursue big dreams and long to have lasting impact. We want to live large. God wants us to live large. He has designed a huge salvation that we are to live out in our daily lives.

How do we work out the bigness of our salvation? How do we find the full and abundant life we desire? By paying close attention to the small.

It is our common tendency to dismiss the small while we wait for the large. We are likely to look right past the small because we are only interested in the large.

The word translated “to the full” in John 10:10 can mean “excessive.” It has the sense of extravagant and overflowing. God has big plans for our lives. He intends for us “exceeding abundantly” more than we intend for ourselves. The big life He has for us is built small by small.

A 28-DAY JOURNEY

I want to invite you to join me for 28 days in an exploration of how the Word of God presents the power of small. You might want to take this journey with some friends, or with a spouse, or a prayer partner. I find that I process things best when I talk them out with someone I trust. I find something about the give-and-take of honest conversation helps me formulate my thoughts more clearly. The feedback and interaction among confidants forces me to clarify ideas I might otherwise leave filmy and vague. The fellowship also gives me accountability. We can hold each other up and cheer each other on. So, I have designed this book so that you can do it alone, but also so that it can easily be used in groups. I want it to fit the rhythms of your life, so I have made every seventh day a reflective day to evaluate, process, and discuss how the 28 days are progressing. Whether you do that alone or with fellow travelers, meeting together weekly, I think you need to stop and steep every now and then. I know I do.

Each day you will find a “small change” suggestion—one thing you can do or incorporate into your life to build a life lived large.

I suggest that you purchase a journal, if you are not already using one. Each day you will find challenges and probing questions to consider. On each seventh day you will have ways to evaluate and record in your journal. Keep a record of your small changes in your journal. You might find the *Live a Praying Life* Journal would fit your needs.





HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



Commit to 28 days. Decide on a time of day and a place where you will meet the Lord and open yourself to His nano-work in your life. Be as faithful to that commitment as possible.

Record thoughts and responses in this book section: Think Small, Live Large on page 169. It will help you nail it down, and will give you a record to look back on.

Consider asking someone or several people to join you on this journey.

Every seventh day, meet with your partner or group to reflect and process. If you are doing the book on your own, take every seventh day to let the Word put down roots as you review and evaluate.





DAY 1



*“The Lord God formed the man
from the dust of the ground and breathed
into his nostrils the breath of life,
and the man became a living being”
(Genesis 2:7).*

Let's start at the beginning. When God first created earth and earth's inhabitants, He built intimacy in. Look how the Supreme God, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth God took such great care in creating one man. One human being from whom all others—billions and billions and billions of others—would come. Starting small is God's way.

I realized something recently that I had not seen quite so clearly before. It jumped out and surprised me. I was considering that the power of God's Word that created the universe is as powerful now as it was in the beginning. When God says "Let there be," molecules accumulate into matter, atoms bond together into mass, cell fuses to cell and things which were not, now exist. When the breath of His mouth rushes out to vocalize His Word, even the tiniest neutrino is ordered into lockstep with His command.

Then I started thinking about His breath. It takes breath to form a word. Have you ever been with someone whose breathing is compromised? They can't speak easily. Breath is the transporter of words and without breath, words are imprisoned inside the mind and have no outlet. God's breath is the container of His Word.

Then I started thinking about how He breathed the breath of life into the human He created on the sixth day—the pinnacle of His creation. The same breath that carried the word of creation in it. That led me to consider—and here is the picture that took me by surprise—that He created the human differently than the way He created everything else.

Everything else was formed by His Word, but the human was formed by His hands.

As I observed with my imagination how God shaped the human—formed him, molded and sculpted him—I was awed by the intimacy of touch that was being acted out. How God left His fingerprints and His DNA all over the human. How He took the time to tenderly create this Self-expression with His own hands. Down in the dirt, one with the clay from which He sculpted. He made the human from the dust of the earth He had just created. Earthy. He had all the mechanisms necessary for living in earth's atmosphere, but he had no life.

Then—and now the intimacy is stunning—then God breathes.

He leans over this earthy man, covers the human's mouth with His own, and breathes.

The man formed of earth is filled with the life of the heavenlies. Heaven and earth meet, and life as God intended appears. What was not, now had become. When God breathed, He breathed into the human. Not around him, or over him. He breathed the Word into him.

With the Fall, the man who started out earthy—all earth—was once again earthy. When Jesus, the last Adam, appeared in earth's environment, once again heaven and earth met. When the day came for the Word to indwell mankind again, He breathed (John 20:22).

HE STILL BREATHES

All of His careful attention and His laser focus on one person. It is still His way. He breathes into you as He creates and recreates you. Forms you with His own hands. The Potter's hands are shaping you. You are His workmanship—His self-expression. The reason that He gives you such meticulous attention, assembling and arranging the details of your life, is because you are a beginning. From you He will produce fruit that will last, and will produce more fruit, and more fruit until the final day.

Where is He working and shaping your life right now? The little nudges, the longing for something more, the hunger for something deeper. You are clay in His hands. Let Him shape His vessel.

THE SHAPING OF A LIFE

Sandra grew up in an influential family, married a wealthy man, lived in a beautiful home, and had two lovely children. Life was good. She was a strong Christian and loved the Lord with all her heart. She used her material goods in generous ways. Anyone would have thought that Sandra had it all.

Sandra reached a time in her life when she began to feel a little twinge of dissatisfaction, a sense that there was something more satisfying that she had not yet discovered. She tried to determine what it was she was

missing. She prayed, she thought, she strained. Finally, Sandra says, “I just leaned into it. I said, ‘Lord, I’m here to do whatever you tell me to do.’ And I relaxed. I thought, ‘God knows how to tell me what He wants me to hear.’”

A big part of Sandra’s life was her church. A wonderful, big, affluent, missions-minded church. She never even entertained the thought that God might be calling her from her church family. Over a period of a few years, God gradually worked in Sandra, moving her to a point where the radical call of God became a deep desire in her heart. It began to occur to her that there were many, many churches in areas less affluent than her own that missed out on the kind of opportunities for Bible teaching and discipleship training that she took for granted. There were other churches that had not one single person able to give financially like she could.

Over a decade ago, Sandra and her family left their much-loved church body to join a church where their spiritual gifts and their finances made all the difference. They found quickly that this new body of Christ and these new friends would become as dear and as meaningful in their lives as any church they had ever been part of.

Sandra says that the move introduced them to beautiful believers that life might never have intersected them with otherwise. Many strong believers have thrived and reached amazing goals under their ministry. Young adults who came from generations of despair have blossomed in life through Sandra’s caring discipleship.

Sandra allowed herself to be shaped by the hand of the Creator, and let Him breathe His desires and ideas into her heart. One woman. Small change. Big results.

SMALL CHANGE

Be acutely aware and immediately responsive to the smallest inclinations to risk for the kingdom and longings in God’s direction. Respond with this prayer: “Breathe!” Let Him breathe into you His desires for you.

