

Title: Blog About the Immanuel Lifestyle

December 17, 2014

Greetings all,

I recently wrote a blog note for the THRIVE team, offering some of my thoughts regarding the material that Charlotte and I will be presenting at the April 2015 THRIVE conference. I thought you all might also like to see it.

Blessings,

Dr. Lehman/Karl

Blog for April 2015 THRIVE conference, ***The Immanuel lifestyle, sustaining joyful relationships, and why I want to share this material with everyone in the world:***

We have been created to be relational beings – we have been created to be in relationship with God and with each other. Our minds and spirits have been created to *desire* relationship and to *function best* in relationship, and the Lord has actually designed specific circuits in our biological brains to serve this longing and need for connection. When these relational brain circuits are working as designed, our spontaneous, normal experience will be to feel connected to the people around us, and to feel desire to be connected to the people around us.

Another foundational THRIVE concept is that being glad to be together gives us joy. When you see another person, and that person greets you with a genuine smile and a sparkle in their eye that says, “I’m glad to be with you,” that gives you joy. And if you return that smile, sparkle, and “I’m glad to be with you,” that gives them joy as well.

Putting these pieces together, we get: “When our relational circuits are functioning as designed, we give each other joy by being glad to be together.”

For a number of years now, Charlotte and I have been deliberately applying these principles in our marriage. We are deliberately learning skills and practicing habits that keep our relational circuits functioning well, and we are trying to be very deliberate in learning to give each other joy. As we have been doing this, we have been spending less and less of our time being cranky and unhappy with each other, and we have been spending more and more of our time really enjoying being together. (By the way, these exact same principles, skills, and habits fuel the romantic fun in our marriage.)

Furthermore, these same principles apply to our relationship with God, and deliberately applying these principles in my relationship with the Lord is what I call the Immanuel lifestyle. I sometimes also refer to this as the Immanuel approach to life.

A number of the key pieces of this Immanuel approach to life have been: 1) learning to deliberately keep my relational circuits on and pointed towards God; 2) combining this first piece with other Immanuel approach tools in order to spend regular time with the Lord's tangible, living, loving, interactive, personal presence; 3) learning to be much more consciously aware of whether or not I am sensing God's presence and feeling connected; 4) deliberately and persistently troubleshooting to find and remove blockages; 5) as an important part of this troubleshooting, deliberately and persistently working to heal painful memories that distort my perception of God's character and heart, and that get in the way of being able to connect with the Lord; and 5) spending a lot of time watching the Lord work, both in sessions in which I am receiving and in sessions in which I am facilitating Immanuel healing for others.

Watching Jesus work has been particularly special in my personal experience. I have come to know the Lord in a whole new way as I have encountered his presence in hundreds of my own Immanuel sessions, and as I have watched others encounter his presence in the thousands of sessions that I have facilitated – I have come to know Jesus' presence, voice, character, and heart in a whole new way as I have experienced and observed him working with so many different problems, as I have experienced and observed him responding to so many different situations, and as I have experienced and observed the gentle, wise, creative, beautiful, surprising, elegant, helpful, life-giving, effective, amazing interventions he comes up with.

Putting all of the Immanuel lifestyle pieces together has resulted in an ongoing process of personally, *experientially* learning to know the Lord as a tangible, living, loving, friend-presence, and this has been the most profound and precious experience of my life.

Not surprisingly, pursuing an Immanuel lifestyle over the course of years has produced a steadily increasing pile of spiritual fruit. First and foremost, I have experienced a steadily increasing connection with the Lord. I have become increasingly aware of God's presence and love as a background reality throughout the average day, even when I'm not doing anything deliberate. And when I make a deliberate effort to connect with the Lord, I have become able to perceive his tangible presence and connect with him more easily and more quickly, I have become able to perceive his presence and connect with him more frequently and more predictably, I have become able to perceive his tangible presence with more clarity, strength, and richness, the sense of God's presence as a person has slowly but steadily increased, the perception that my communication with God is interactive has slowly but steadily increased, and my feeling that God is attuning to me has grown slowly but steadily stronger.

I have also experienced a steadily increasing faith in the goodness and trustworthiness of God's character and heart, which has increasingly remained even when the practical details of life are going badly. I have experienced a steady decrease in negative, distorted reactions towards the Lord. I have noticed an increasing ability to receive guidance from the Lord. I have observed steadily increasing, tangible progress with respect to areas of persistent sin. And I have experienced steadily increasing appreciation for scripture.

Furthermore, I have noticed a steady increase in the classic fruits of the Spirit described by Paul in Galatians 5:22. You can ask Charlotte to see what she thinks, but my perception is that deliberately pursuing an Immanuel lifestyle over the past ten + years has resulted in steadily increasing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Finally, when our relational circuits are on line and functioning well, it is hugely satisfying to see other people blessing each other by giving each other joy, to see other people connecting with the living, loving presence of God, and to see people just generally thriving. So Charlotte and I are looking forward to the 2015 annual gathering – we are really looking forward to sharing what we have been learning with the rest of you.