

## Kingdom Yeast in Daily Life by Mark Press

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When I was in grade school, my mother baked bread every Saturday. After playing outside with friends, the three of us brothers would enter the house and that blessed aroma would tickle our senses and make us salivate. There was nothing like that warm bread spread with a little butter and perhaps some strawberry jelly!

Of course, Mom didn't have a bread machine in those days. Bread from scratch was her specialty! And that required using yeast. It was a complicated process, involving several periods of kneading the dough and letting it rise.

I figure Jesus must have been around Mary's kitchen when she was baking bread. He used yeast as a figure of the kingdom: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough" (Matthew 13:33).

What can this image of the kingdom teach us about witness and outreach?

Yeast is a living force. Fermentation does not happen through a chemical reaction, but through the budding reproduction of the yeast cells. As we bear testimony to the coming of the kingdom in Jesus, we live with the confidence that His living presence and His living Spirit are present and active in that Word.

We do not have some "magic formula" to apply to a person or a circumstance to make it "kingdom-like" in taste and touch. No, instead the Holy Spirit works in and through us to bring about a change. He works changes in us through His forgiveness so that our lives become "yeast-like" in our ability to influence those around us.

Yeast is powerful, out of proportion to its size. A small, seemingly insignificant amount changes and empowers a large lump of dough so that it expands. The forgiveness and grace of Christ have power to renew and change and uplift people whose lives have been devastated through sin and evil. Our lives in the kingdom bear witness to the power of Christ to bring new direction, new hope and new purpose for living.

Yeast is also relentless. It continues to expand until it has made its way through the entire lump of dough. So Christ's kingdom continues to expand, to grow, to touch the entire group of people alive in this world. And this kingdom expands as you bear witness to the love of Jesus in your daily relationships. The Savior has called you to love your neighbors, even those whom you may consider enemies, so that His love will be made real to them and so that His grace may transform them into courageous disciples.

The next time you have a piece of homemade bread (or any other bread, for that matter), thank the Lord Jesus for having brought you into contact with "yeasty" people. Ask Him to make you that new yeast for another person who needs to know Jesus and His love. He will do it, for His kingdom's sake! ■

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