

**Living Life Upside Down**  
**“Being An Upside Down Church”**  
(Part 4)

**Intro:** Video: God-O-Nomics. God’s ways are radically different than the ways of this world! They’re crazy different...even upside down!

*Is. 55:8-9 “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.” (NLT)*

- In other word, God’s way of living life is going to sometimes feel a bit upside down from what we’re used to. (This our series) Since His ways are so radically different, it goes to reason that how He wants His church to operate is going to seem upside down at times as well. It’s not natural...it’s supernatural. His church is of another Kingdom and that Kingdom operates by different values.

*Matt. 16:18 “...I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.” (NLT)*

- When we allow Jesus to be the one to build His church, there is nothing that can conquer it. When we try to build His church, it gets pretty ugly! Jesus wants to keep building Foothills. In order for this to keep happening, we have to continue embracing His upside down values of what His church looks like

What does an upside down church look like? 5 ways God is calling Foothills to be an upside down church.

### **I. An Upside Down Church Is A Praying Church**

*Eph. 6:18 “Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.” (NLT)*

- I love this verse! Notice these phrases: “at all times / every occasion / stay alert / be persistent / for all believers everywhere.” This is upside down praying.
  1. Now, I realize I just spoke on this last week, so I’m not going to spend a lot of time on this one. BUT, I do want to highlight several things. A commitment to upside down praying will make us into an upside down church!
  2. Most churches simply do not have a sold-out, upside down commitment to pray. Most churches have a “token commitment” to pray. The main reason? One study revealed that the average Pastor spends only 7 minutes a day in prayer! No wonder it’s not a priority in their churches! That’s token praying!
  3. If this is the commitment of the pastor, how can the people be any different. So how much time do I spend praying? God has shown me it’s not enough! Currently, the first hour in my office each day is spent in prayer, not to mention other times during the day. God has made it very clear to me this isn’t enough.
  4. How can I expect your commitment to pray to grow if mine doesn’t.
    - Do you have a set time to pray every day?
    - Do you allow yourself to be prompted to pray during the day?
    - Do you pray with your spouse? (Spouses who pray together at least 3 X’s a week have a 1% divorce rate!)

- Do you pray with your church? May 4<sup>th</sup> Worship and Prayer event  
Will you have a renewed commitment to pray? Let's be upside down in this area!

## **II. An Upside Down Church Is A Loving Church**

*John 13:34-35 "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." (NLT)*

*I John 4:7-8 "Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love." (NLT)*

1. Even though the Scriptures are so very clear on what God expects from our relationships, unfortunately, the reputation of many churches today is that they can't get along...they're constantly fighting, judging, and look no different than the world.
  2. Of all the wrong teaching and heresies out there today this is the most over looked one of them all. I call it the great relational heresy of the church. What is it? Teaching people that they can call themselves a follower of Jesus Christ and be unloving.
  3. The church today has bought this lie from the enemy hook, line, and sinker! People think that their service proves they are followers of Christ / giving / prayed a prayer / church attendance / This is NOT what scripture teaches.
  4. The greatest evidence that we are followers of Christ and that He is real in our lives are the relationships we experience.
  5. The greatest evidence to each other that we are Christians / believers should be our relationships. We love each other! The Bible is so emphatic about this that it says that if we don't love each other, we do not have a relationship with God!
    - The test of authenticity in God's Kingdom is a relational test. We cannot call ourselves followers of Christ if there is no family resemblance! LOVE!
    - Deacon meeting years before Foothills.
  6. The Bible also teaches that the greatest evidence to the world that what we teach is real are the relationships we have. "The world will know you are my disciples..." The way to make Foothills a magnet to the people in this community is to show them relationships that are completely upside down.
  7. I realize that this isn't an easy command, but it is essential to becoming an upside down church. We must understand that biblical love is a choice not an emotion / feeling. It is choosing to do the loving thing regardless!
- Will you have a renewed commitment to love people? Who is in your life where God wants you to respond in an upside down loving manner?

## **III. An Upside Down Church Is A Serving Church**

*Eph. 4:16 "He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love." (NLT)*

1. In a typical church, 20% of the people do 80% of all the work. The minority knocks themselves out while the majority sits. In an upside down church...everyone serves. Everyone recognizes they have a contribution to make. "as each part does its own

*special work.”*

2. In a typical church, people are consumers. They attend fully expecting the church to provide for them while they give very little or nothing in return. Their thinking is; “What can this church provide for me?”
  3. In the typical church, there are always labor shortages. There’s never enough people to get the ministry done. Service is looked upon as a burden rather than a privilege. Pleas for help are ignored by the majority. It’s someone else’s problem.
  4. In an upside down church, people are contributors rather than just consumers. Every person embraces their responsibility for the health and success of the church. The thinking is not; “what the church can do for me”, but “how can I serve God’s purposes here at my church!”
  5. In an upside down church, serving is not looked upon as an optional activity for followers of Christ but as an essential part of the lifestyle. A non serving believer simply doesn’t make sense in an upside down church. It’s a contradiction.
  6. In an upside down church, there is no labor shortage. Instead there are waiting lists for people to get plugged into a ministry. Because everyone serves, the church is unstoppable. There is no force on earth that can stop a church where everyone serves.
  7. So, where are we at as a church? Are we typical or upside down? We’re not typical...yet we’re not upside down either. There’s great room for growth in this area. We still have labor shortages in ministries. We certainly don’t have any waiting lists yet!
  8. Where are the greatest needs? The needs are in every ministry, but the greatest labor shortage is in the children and student ministries. We’d love to do more but we are hindered by a lack of volunteers.
- There are 168 hours in a week. Are we really so busy that we can’t even give the Lord 2-3 hours a week to make a difference in someone’s life?
  - One of the greatest problems in churches is burn out. WHY? Not enough people serve.
  - Will you have a renewed commitment to serve? Let’s be upside down!

#### **IV. An Upside Down Church Is A Giving Church**

*Ps. 112:5 “Good will come to him who is generous...” (NIV)*

*Prov. 22:9 “A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.” (NIV)*

*II Cor. 8:3 “For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own.” (NIV)*

1. In a typical church, generosity is an optional trait / optional behavior / practiced infrequently / based upon surplus / is irritated when prompted / is practiced by approx. 20% of those who attend while 80% are consumers.
2. In an upside down church, generosity is one of the most valued and cherished characteristics of followers of Christ. WHY? Upside down churches know that without generosity alive in the people, the church is dead.
3. Generosity is reflected in the time we give / the love we share / the causes we serve / the resources we contribute / and the money we invest in God’s Kingdom purposes / and it models the behavior of the Lord we say we follow.

4. To not embrace generosity is to reject one of the major characteristics of the Kingdom of God! Being generous has nothing to do with money and everything to do with following Jesus!
5. Upside down churches understand this and choose to be generous believing God's promises! Typical churches worry about how to protect their resources while upside down churches are more concerned with how to give them away!
6. I am convinced that God wants Foothills to have the reputation in Molalla for being a generous church. Where we have enough resources to bless this community in ways that will amaze people. The only way that's possible is to have everyone choose generosity not just a few. (Hallway banner)
7. Therefore, I want to give you a challenge: Let's do something upside down. Typically, giving goes down in the summer months. Sometimes it's a bit of a challenge. Let's be upside down this summer. We need about \$60K a month to run. (Explain Why)
  - What I am asking is that **we all** decide to contribute (whatever amount) and from May-August, whatever is over the \$60K per month, we will save in order to give away to some need here in Molalla in Sept. It could be \$500 or \$20K.
  - Let's be consistent this summer and see God do something miraculous!
  - Will you have a renewed commitment to give? Can we choose to be upside down?

## V. An Upside Down Church Is A Mission Church

*Prov. 29:18 "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (KJV)*

*Matt. 28:19-20 "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you..." (NLT)*

1. Typical churches have no clearly defined purpose or mission and everyone simply does what is right in their own eyes. They exist for self-preservation and their focus is primarily what happens inside the walls of their buildings.
2. Upside down churches have embraced their mission from Jesus to go and make disciples, and have captured God's heart on how they are to do that in their communities. Upside down churches are driven and obsessed by this call from God.
3. This is one area where Foothills is certainly not typical. We are a church on a mission and we believe we have captured the heart of God for this community. AND, we make no apologies for it either!
- Vision of Foothills: Slide – ***Foothills exists to reach the 1000s of unchurched people in our geographic area with the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and to equip them to experience His presence and demonstrate His power.***
4. There are approx. 45,000 people in a 10 mile radius around Molalla and only about 33% of them go to church.
5. In upside down churches, everyone embraces the vision not just a select few. This can't just be Pastor Dale's vision, it has to be the vision of every follower of Christ at Foothills. God put this church in Molalla so that He could transform a geographic area for His Kingdom purposes! It's God's call upon ALL OUR lives.
6. I am asking you to not lose sight of the vision while I am gone for 8 weeks. In order to help you stay focused on it, we are having Jim Velez (a professional counselor) speak

for 6 weeks on marriage and family issues.

- 6000 postcards going out to every 97038 zip code. What a great time to be inviting people to church. My prayer is that the church actually grows in my absence. Now that would be upside down.
- Typical churches would shift into neutral in the pastor's absence. Upside down churches launch a new offensive for the Kingdom of God. Welcome to Foothills!
- Will you have a renewed commitment to the mission at Foothills? Let's multiply our upside down commitment in seeing Molalla transformed!

I don't want to be a pastor of a typical church. I don't really believe you all want to attend one. Let's choose to be upside down!

1. Let's be a praying church
2. Let's be a loving church
3. Let's be a serving church
4. Let's be a giving church
5. Let's be a mission church

May we truly be a church that accurately represents the Kingdom we pledge our allegiance to and the King we say we follow!