

HOLY SPIRIT BUILDING TRUST  
DISCERN CHARACTER  
PRAY IMPACT  
CALLED  
SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP  
LEADERSHIP MISSIONAL

FOLLOWING JESUS  
RELATIONSHIP  
BELIEF SHARE LEAD  
TRUTH CARE  
THE 2 FAITH DRAW  
CONNECTING

THEOLOGY  
MISSION PURPOSE  
JOURNEY OF CHANGE

COACHING

BUILD INSPIRE  
SPIRIT LED  
KINGDOM GOD  
COACH GROW DRIVEN  
PRAYERFUL  
INTENTION  
DISCERNMENT

by Jonathan Reitz

This aspires to be *a theology of coaching*.



A certain danger exists whenever you begin an article or a post or an ebook under the heading of “A Theology of...” The stage is set for broad, all-inclusive and because of that, it’s easy to abuse what the article is trying to say.

Even with that danger, A Theology of Coaching is an idea whose time has come...but only under certain guidelines. This theological piece is only about the ways a small number of faith-driven coaches have seen God work in coaching conversations. These certainly are not the only ways God has worked in coaching, but merely the way this group of coaches has seen movement.

Maybe rather than calling this The Theology of Coaching or even A Theology of Coaching, a more useful title might be [6 Core Ideas for Coaching, that Happen to be Theological](#). Or better still, think of these as [6 Core Theological Ideas That Will Help You Coach Well](#).

This is important because I’m not a theologian. I don’t claim nor aspire to be one. I’m a guy who follows Jesus—sometimes closely and sometimes at a greater distance—who happens to have seen Jesus work in some coaching situations.

These situations are worth some further study or attention.



To be clear, I'm sure there are more than these six theological concepts. These get the conversation started, and these are inclusive enough to connect to a number of other key ideas.

These thoughts do not come from a particular denominational orientation. They are the universals that should be able to be seen through any particular Christian theological lens.

Without a doubt, theology drives these thoughts...they are about the study of how God works in coaching situations. And using the true scientific method, the predominant data gathering approach is observation.

Let me say before we go any farther: God does work in coaching relationships. I've seen it. So have dozens—even hundreds or maybe thousands—of my fellow coaches. These are men and women that have been trained in the CoachNet system or some other system...SOME of them are even Christians.

### **I don't say that as a joke.**

God does not discriminate about where he works in coaching conversations. One of the great privileges in being a coach and coach trainer is to see the active hand of God make a difference in the lives of people being coached. **At the risk of devaluing my own profession, the coach does not matter. Even the faith of the coach isn't paramount. Everything in the coaching relationship has to point to Jesus. He's what matters.** And He's all that matters.



**Key advice for coaches reading this:** At the core of the theology of coaching is just that: Jesus is all that matters. He's the one doing the work in the coaching conversation...it's NOT the person being coached (although they are active) and it's CERTAINLY NOT the coach. Your main role as coach is to point the relationship toward Jesus.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified". (1 Corinthians 2:1, 2 ESV)

It's probably not as easy to choose in coaching, as most clients pick their coaches based on relational connection or the coach's expertise...but you can make a key choice BEFORE you begin a new coaching engagement. In fact, I challenge you to do this: Regardless of where your own faith walk is, point the relationship toward Jesus. That's what the person you're coaching needs. That's what you need too.



*Regardless of where your own faith walk is,  
point the relationship toward Jesus.  
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That's what you need too.*

You can talk about measurable change, organizational development, forward momentum and all that as much as you want...without the coaching relationship pointing to Jesus, it's just a strategy.







In the CoachNet Training System, we begin every coaching conversation and every coaching relationship with a focus on what we call *The 2*.

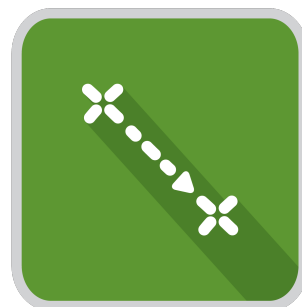


This keeps us absolutely wired to make the relationship the coach and client share the prime place where Jesus works. You might call it a strong group mentality, or an Eastern worldview, but the CoachNet training system is built on the belief that following Jesus is not about what Jesus has in store for me...**but**

***rather what Jesus has in store for us.***

Why else would gathering for worship be so important? And why else would Jesus say to us that “wherever 2 or more are gathered together in my name, I’m there too...” Or why else would Jesus send the disciples out 2x2?

Why else would Jesus work through coaching relationships? That’s the thing: Coaching itself is not a Biblical principle. The elements are all there, but the reality is that the study of how God works in coaching is really what a Theology of Coaching is all about.





Remember the way Jesus put it (always a good idea): “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14–16 ESV)

That’s the ultimate challenge for a Kingdom driven coach. Run your coaching relationships like this.

Here’s the thing: Jesus promises to work – and do the kinds of things that we can’t do – when we point Him out and point our relationships toward Him. He said so: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” (John 12:32 ESV)

Before you change your coaching style and memorize the Sinner’s Prayer or the 4 Spiritual Laws, know that the pointing toward Jesus can be overt or covert. You don’t have to become a fundamentalist. As long as the relationship points to Jesus, this is what He says will happen.



Coaching powers change. Jesus’ powers change. The two of them in combination is a glimpse of God’s kingdom that is spectacular to think about.

The foundation for the 6 Key Ideas of *A Theology of Coaching* is pointing the relationship toward Jesus. You’re already a better coach if you do that.



Let's get to them. The 6 Key Ideas don't really flow in any particular order—at least after the first one. I think of them like an interlocking puzzle.

When I was a kid, we had a wooden ball. It was a puzzle. One piece slipped out –if you knew where to look, and how to help it slip—and then the rest came apart pretty easily.

It was a pretty awesome piece of engineering when you looked at it as a whole. Each piece was well crafted and designed to fit together. Once the key piece was inserted, you couldn't pull that wooden ball apart with all your strength.

I hope this theology of coaching is kind of the same way. Well thought out, equally well designed, and held together with the kind of tensile strength that takes ten men to break.

One piece holds it all together...the rest of the construct comes apart with very little effort if you take the key piece away.





## **Idea #1:**

*“All of the good things that  
Jesus promises happen in  
a relationship.”*

Let's dive in. Here's the key piece.  
Without this one, the rest of the pieces fall apart pretty easily.

## This is Theological Idea #1:

**All of the good things that Jesus promises happen in a relationship.**

Nobody really receives the fullness of what Jesus offers by themselves. At the core of it all is John 1:3—"All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Here's the part we human beings get wrong: We think it all starts when we're in relationship with each other! How many organizations—especially churches—just want to stay together and because of that togetherness, think everything will be all right (and Jesus will come)?



But you know what? If we want to get The 2 right, that's the wrong relational priority. We've got to start with relationship with Jesus. Maybe the 2 is actually a 3...and Jesus is the third person. Maybe coaching is really a trinity. That sounds like something God would engineer...





## **Idea #2:**

*“Always start your coaching with relationship with God, THEN relationship with the other person.”*

## Theological Idea #2:

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Always start your coaching with relationship with God,  
THEN relationship with the other person.

Jesus always wins. When he starts winning in our priorities and choices, that's when the fun really begins. You've heard the line in the old hymn: "Til he appeared and the soul felt its worth..."



That's what we're aiming for in our coaching. And it only works when we (the coach) have a healthy relationship with Jesus. We feel valuable, and can then connect in a meaningful way with the other people we are coaching. The relationship can be right.

The 2 has to be set up with the correct priorities.

- You've got to frame up the arena for Jesus to do his best work: That's what ensures it's not about the coach.
- That's what sets up our coaching relationships to have the kind of success and effectiveness—because those things do exist in God's kingdom—that we really want to have.
- Think about the 2 as more of a 2 + 2. The first 2 is Jesus and us. The second is us and our coaching clients.



Get The 2 + 2 right and you're going to make a difference.



This is the hardest part of the entire process. If this isn't right, coaching is a very good tool for getting things done, but it leaves the most powerful part off the table. The 2 + 2 has to be right. I'm not sure I can say that often enough or loud enough.







### **Idea #3:**

*"Everything is spiritual,  
everything is kingdom.  
There is no secular/  
sacred or church/  
business distinction."*

### Theological idea #3:

Everything is spiritual, everything is kingdom.

There is no secular/sacred or church/business distinction.

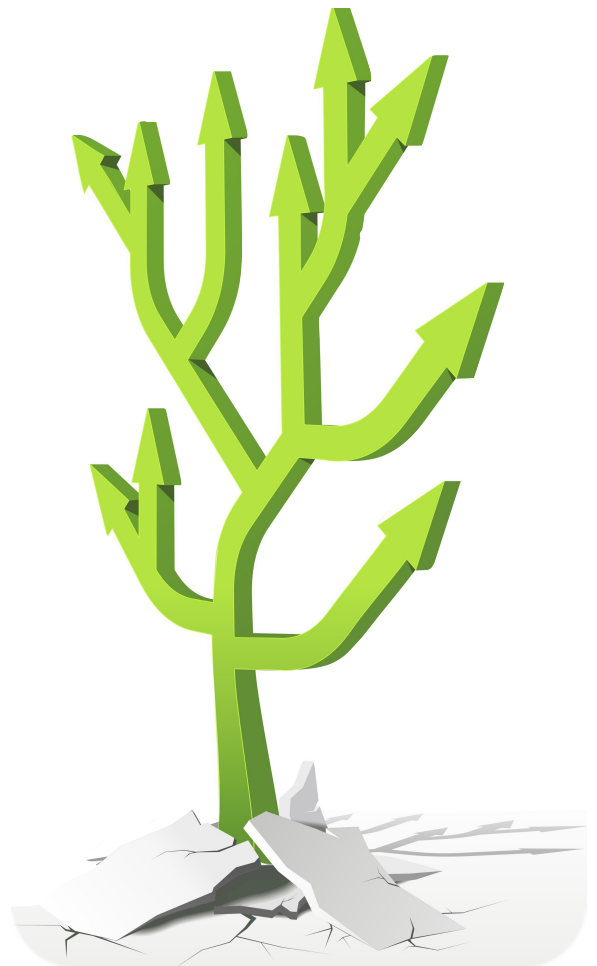
If everything happens in relationship, every relationship has the potential to be used for kingdom purposes. I like to call this The Obvious Kingdom. Everyone – every relationship – is a part of God's kingdom.

But not every person, and certainly not every relationship, KNOWS that they're a part of God's kingdom. Once you know you're a part of the Kingdom, it changes how you interact with EVERYONE.

When you know you're living in the Kingdom, every sentence changes. The things you see and hear change. The Kingdom is EVERYWHERE, when you know it's there. It's OBVIOUS.

That's what Kingdom Driven Coaches bring into a coaching conversation. You know you're in the kingdom, and that knowledge drives your interactions. You get to invite people into the Kingdom. Take this seriously.

Even if the other person doesn't know they're in the kingdom, you still know you are. You become a vehicle through which the Holy Spirit works.





#### **Idea #4:**

*“Without a clear sense of mission, coaching comes apart. The ultimate faith driven coaching is on a mission to make disciples.”*

## Theological idea #4:

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Without a clear sense of mission, coaching comes apart.

The ultimate faith driven coaching is on a mission to make disciples.

In the CoachNet system, we use the image of three-legged stool to set coaching relationships up for the maximum likelihood for success. The three legs are:



**Relationship + Purpose + Intention = Coaching**

The Relationship part we've covered. Intention means using the skills that are available to a coach in the coaching relationship. It defines what you do (and what you don't do when you're coaching).

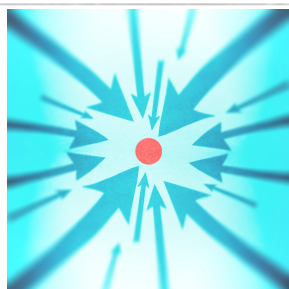


The Purpose part is what this theological idea touches.

Purpose can be broken into two sides: 1) the person-being-coached has a purpose and 2) the coach has a purpose.



The person-being-coached brings what they want to accomplish or what they want to be different into the relationship. Often this changes over the course of the relationship as the person-being-coached begins to make progress. Good coaches know that this purpose has to come out of the mouth of the person-being-coached. A Kingdom Driven Coach has a purpose as well: Every facet of the coach's interaction has to further the mission of making disciples.



*A Kingdom Driven Coach has a purpose as well:  
Every facet of the coach's interaction has to  
further the mission of making disciples.*

The relationship points to Jesus and the Obvious Kingdom. You may not have a moment of praying The Sinner's Prayer with a coaching client—in fact you probably won't—but a Kingdom Driven Coach works with a client in such a way that the client can't help but see Jesus.

Here's the bottom line: ultimately it must be clear that coaching is not to develop disciples of the coach, but of Christ. This drives the coach's purpose and rubs off on the client.





### **Idea #5:**

*“Personal change comes first  
if you want to get to deep  
lasting change.”*

## Theological idea #5:

### **Personal change comes first if you want to get to deep lasting change.**

Let's be straight with each other: the people you coach will be changed. Since we're being straight, I'll go one further...you will be changed as well.

Alan Hirsch and Lance Ford write in ["Right Here, Right Now"](#): "Jesus says 'my disciples are sent on a mission, just like I was sent on a mission.' To be LIKE Jesus means not only embrace his character and message, but we embrace his mission as well."

You have to be on a journey to be more like Jesus. That's not a coaching thing, that's a Jesus thing. We're called to become more like Him. And when we're changing, the people we coach will change as well.

The ceiling for impact in a Kingdom driven coach goes up as you are coached and changed. This generational approach is how faith is passed on, and that certainly holds in a coaching relationship. To put it simply, you cannot do something to someone until done to or with you.



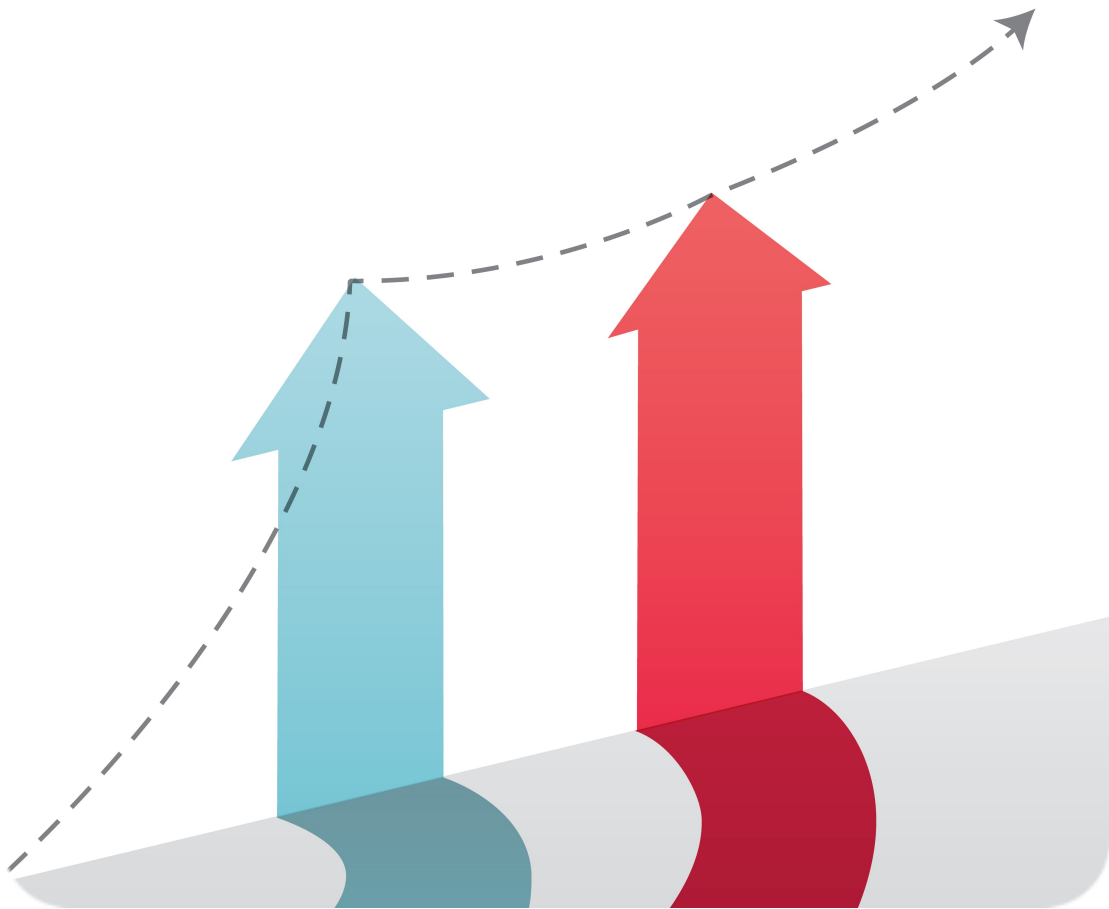
You are changed to be a changer. Coaches, I mean you.

This really breaks down into character & calling. These have sacramental elements to them, in the sense that sacraments are methods by which a bit of Jesus lives in us as we go about our lives.

As Jesus lives in your changing character, you can share Him with the people with whom you have relationship.

As Jesus lives in your deeper understanding of your calling, the people with whom you have relationship see Him coming to life on a day in, day out basis.

You set the bar. Set it high. Let Jesus work on you as He works through you.







## **Idea #6:**

*“Discernment and other spiritual gifts play a crucial role. In order to be effective as coach, need to know and own your spiritual gifts.”*

## Theological idea #6:

Discernment and other spiritual gifts play a crucial role.

In order to be effective as coach, you need to know and own your spiritual gifts.

Kingdom Driven Coaches want to discern where the Holy Spirit is moving and join in.

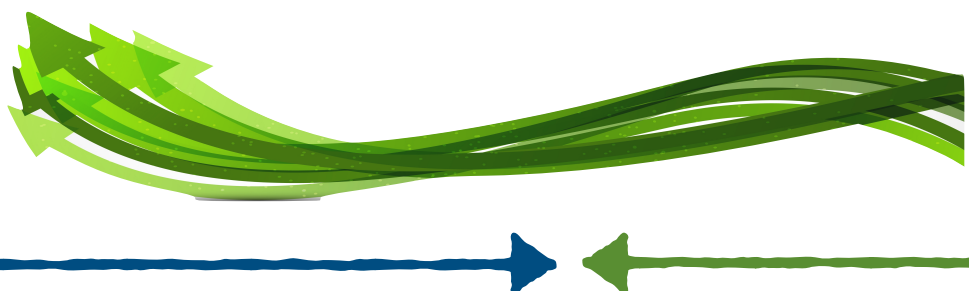
When they join in, they also want to know what has the maximum likelihood of being authentic. This means understanding how to coach discerns, when they are hearing the voice of God, and what their gifts will allow them to do with authenticity.

If you can't hear the voice of God, you can't join with his movements or do what he says. If you can't sense where the spirit is moving through discernment, you can't get on board where the action is.

The bigger danger in all of this is that your coaching will instigate actions that the Spirit has not blessed. A kingdom driven coach is motivated solely by what's going on in God's kingdom. ***Everything else—no matter how seemingly valuable—is a distraction.***

Accurate discernment and an understanding of your spiritual gifts, as a coach, is the best possible way to ensure a clear focus and Kingdom advancing priorities for **your coaching**.

Developing your discernment skills and learning to hear the voice of God is the fastest way to improve your coaching.





*"With great power comes  
great responsibility."*

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Like I said at the beginning of all this, this ebook is not an exhaustive listing of all the theological things that are going on in a coaching relationship.

But this little book does describe the key things that happen when you're coaching from a kingdom perspective. It's exciting to see. The Creator of the Universe, the Savior of All Men and the Holy Spirit of God are in this thing we call coaching.

I would suggest to you that the Trinity is a part of every coaching conversation—whether the coach and client know it or not. Remember though, that if you're reading this book, you KNOW you're a part of the Obvious Kingdom.



And that's powerful. Very, very powerful.

There's a scene in the 2002 movie Spiderman, where Peter Parker's Uncle Ben says to him "With great power comes great responsibility." But what most people didn't know is that Stan Lee—the creator of Spiderman—or some Hollywood screenwriter didn't come up with this truth.

The French writer and Philosopher Voltaire actually said it first. He wrote in *Oeuvres de Voltaire*, Volume 48, that very same phrase. [\[1\]](#)

1. Voltaire. Jean, Adrien. Beuchot, Quentin and Miger, Pierre, Auguste. "Œuvres de Voltaire, Volume 48." Lefèvre, 1832 [↗](#)



Kingdom Driven Coaches take it back to Luke 12:48: To whom much is given, much is expected. When you're coaching from this framework, you've been given a LOT. And you've got the power of the Trinity on your side.

Use that power. Use it well. It's a great responsibility.

I know I'm not alone when I say this responsibility is daunting.

When I coach, I've had a sense of just how powerful and intimidating this can be. I want to use this well.

I don't feel like I'm in my coaching relationships alone. Jesus is there. When I get this Theology of Coaching right, I'm not on my own when I go into a coaching session.

My client doesn't just get me, he or she gets everything the Obvious Kingdom has to offer.



It's a sacred trust. And I get to steward that trust. It feels like I'm on holy ground.

Lately I've started to take my shoes off to coach (I only coach by phone so it's ok).

That holy ground demands it. Because my client is there. And I am there. And we are not alone.

And that, is what makes *A Theology of Coaching* most effective.





About the Author

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**Jonathan Reitz** is CoachNet's Director of Training and CCA (Chief Coffee Addict). Jonathan has been coaching since 1996 and has worked with over 500 clients in the church, the non-profit sector and the business world.

***"Coaching plays a part in the kind of leadership the world needs," says Jonathan Reitz. "I want to be a part of that."***

When talking about Jonathan Reitz, people say words like: coach, leader, change agent, multiplication, tall, author, strategic, speaker, consultant, people developer, planter, organizational developer, culture, Cleveland, process and dude.

He enjoys people with insight, great faith, and impeccable style. **You know, people like you.**

Specialties:

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