

Interview: Ken Jorgenson

Contributed by Editor
Thursday, 25 October 2007
Last Updated Thursday, 24 January 2008

A former assistant to Pastor Ted Haggard and small groups pastor at New Life sits down to talk about family, ministry, and men in isolation.

By Daryl Holmlund

Ken Jorgenson and Daryl Holmlund have been friends since high school, having helped lead the UC Bible Club at Loveland High School in Loveland, Colorado. Since graduating from LHS in 2000, Ken has been living in Colorado Springs where he has been involved in one way or another with New Life Church for a number of years. He started off by attending their 24/7 internship program and then served on staff in a number of positions, including as an assistant to Pastor Ted Haggard and as one of the church's small groups pastors. Though no longer on staff with the church, Ken continues to reside in Colorado Springs with his wife, Brenna, and daughter, Breckyn. Daryl recently caught up with Ken in a conversation via instant messenger.

Daryl Holmlund: Ok, so Ken, what have you been up to lately?

Ken Jorgenson: What am I up to...

Hmmm.... After serving New Life for 7 years, on-staff for 5, Brenna (my wife) and I felt like it was time for a season of reflection and refreshing

So, after months of praying, we felt like the Lord opened up an opportunity to work with a close mentor of mine in the broadcasting arena… Here, I'm an Account Executive for 6 Southern Colorado radio stations.

Our daughter, Breckyn, just turned 1 a week ago... She has single-handedly changed our lives in the most unimaginable ways. I'm cracking a smile just thinking about her now...

DH: It sounds like life is very full and blessed for you right now. You said that you've loved being able to work in the corporate world - have you found yourself having lots of opportunities to minister to people that you work with?

KJ: Yes I have. Although, I'm really in the relationship building and platform building stage of my work relationships -

I've been on for 5 months now, and I'm just getting to the place where we're having couples over for dinner, and taking others out, etc... As the trust is built, I'm encouraged at the wide opportunity before me.

The transition from the paid-ministry world to the corporate world has been an interesting one. It's come with challenges such as learning how to operate in a very non-believing arena. It has also come as a great season of refreshing for Brenna and I. We're enjoying having our weekends. Our Ministry seems more "pure" (for lack of a better term)... It's coming out of the desire of our hearts rather than from obligation due to a paycheck.

We're loving the new life. And we're enjoying watching the transition at the church as just a part of the family, instead of from a leadership perspective.

DH: I wonder if you have any words of advice for men out there in that "very non-believing arena" as far as how to build relationships without allowing "Egypt" get into our lives, so to speak.

KJ: Right... hmmm... I think the biggest thing that I've learned is that changing lives is a slow process. There are many parallels to the farming world. Planting seeds takes little time. Watering, nourishing, feeding, and caring for those plants takes the time. When I first came to Citadel, I was ready to change the spiritual climate overnight. Over the course of the first couple months, the Lord has helped me realize that planting seeds is important... but keeping grace as a part of my daily interaction with my co-workers is very important. It's almost rejuvenating being around non-believers. I have planted some seeds, and folks know where I stand...

Now I'm building relationship and trust slowly... and I've already begun to see co-workers opening up to me and coming to me with questions or for advice. I think the biggest thing is figuring out how you can exude excellence at all you do. If you do that, and you work at creating a magnetic personality... people will come to you when they're ready and open.

That way, you don't have to feel like you have to go to them preaching, etc... They're coming to you.

DH: Speaking of slow change: I remember a time when we got together at ungodly hours to pray before school, but we both got a bit burned out and I think we both found out that each person has to do what he has faith for and what God would ask him to do for that moment or season. Do you think that we sometimes get ahead of ourselves as men, expecting that we should be fully formed men right now, instead of allowing the Spirit to move in our lives one issue at a time?

KJ: Certainly! But not only do we over-speed the process with ourselves... we do that with others too. Our wives, friends, children and co-workers are all in-process. When we begin to realize that who I was 10 years ago is way different than who I am now, and who I'll be in 10 years from now is way different than who I am today... it gives you the ability to have relationships full of grace and mercy, knowing that each other [person] is in process. Mistakes happen. People had bad breath in the morning. People say things they regret... but understanding the in-process principal allows you to move through those difficulties with greater ease. As men, we really deal with that!

DH: Ok, to a little lighter stuff (maybe): Do you have a group of guys that you have comanionship with? What's it like?

KJ: No

Just kidding

Yes I do. Brenna and I started a young married's group about 4 years ago. 3 couples along with Brenna and I have been building relationships for a while. It's great, because we're now in the state where the guys regularly get together and the girls do as well. This has been great... We have couple friends, and the husbands all get along too. We're holding each other accountable and encouraging each other in Godliness.

Although... I wish I had Daryl Holmlund a bit closer! 2 hrs is a bit of a drive for me.

DH: Haha. Yeah, I agree (that is, I wish I had Ken Jorgenson around, too). Do you guys ever get up in each other's faces about stuff?

KJ: We have had to confront each other before. It's gotten tough at times... but once the emotion dies down, we're all grateful the others are looking out for us. There have been issues of pornography we've had to confront... and that wasn't fun. But we set up systems and checks to deal with that, and it's no longer been an issue for the brother.

I think it's important for men's groups to have the vulnerability to open up...

But a circle of men crying and sharing about how they masturbated this week (or looked at porn) - week after week after week - is pointless. You need men who will listen in sensitivity, but then lift you up in confidence and at times with very-tough love.

You need to see the fruit of growth within 6 months... if you haven't seen a tangible difference in your struggle... you need to move around men who are doing better than you are. Men on your own level can't lift you higher. Surround yourselves with men who are more experienced in life, wiser in faith and stronger against temptation.... you'll grow from their strength.

DH: Ok, so who have been some of the more influential men / mentors in your life?

KJ: Ted Haggard (until November, obviously), John Bolin, John Maxwell, and Ted Whaley.

Even though Haggard's life fell through last November, I've still learned so much from him. And his outed-struggle in life hasn't changed that.

DH: Only because I know that I have to ask: Ted Haggard, what was the issue? And why do you think so many men in power positions fall hard?

KJ: That is quite a loaded question... and one I've spent months trying to figure out. I think there were many issues that brought this about. First and foremost, he gained too much confidence in himself, which led to a major lack of his fear of the Lord. There's another very interesting aspect... The majority of his executive team (and ALL that worked closely to him in his office) were 20 years+ younger than he was.

This (in my opinion), was structured to keep everyone at an arm's length from getting close to Ted. As a 25-year-old, I wasn't about to ask him about his numerous trips to Denver to "write chapters for his book". If I were a 50-year-old employee, it would have been more appropriate for me to ask him about it. Maybe on a plane ride, I would have checked in with him... but as he was twice the age of all in his office, there were no safeguards of accountability in his life. NONE.

That is the most dangerous place to be--- where no one has access to you.

We laughed hard, played hard and worked hard together... but we never talked about life issues.

DH: Thanks for your insight on a tough situation. Just two more questions: First, Husbands love your wives (Eph. 5:25) - what does this mean?

KJ: Look to the 1 Corinthians chapter on Love to see the depth of this one phrase. Beyond that though, I want to point out that it is followed by "as Christ loves the church"... this means it DOES NOT say Love your wives because they're really nice, or they deserve it, or it's the right thing to do... that's NO WHERE in the equation. We're supposed to (commanded to) Love them as Christ loves us. That is a selfless, undying, devoted love. It's not run on emotions, it's a love based in truth and covenant.

DH: Ok, and finally, give us the Word - do you have a favorite scripture or one that you'd like to share with us?

KJ: Yes... I'm really soaking in the Proverbs right now. I like all of them... but I'm getting very jazzed about the first half of Proverbs 3... it is a list of promises... if you do this, then this... if you do that, then that... These are great promises to hold onto in our daily lives. Money, family blessing, health, direction in life... all those subjects are touched on in this portion of scripture. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, THEN he will make your paths straight" (as far as clarity and direction in life).

DH: Thanks so much Ken. Hope we can get together sometime soon. If you're ever up here give a call.

KJ: Will do. Send me a copy of the Ezine.

Have a great day Daryl.

DH: Yeah, I'll send you the link - and you be blessed, too.