



The Leaven in the Dough: Small Beginnings in the Gospels



Explore how small beginnings spark great change in the Gospels, focusing on Matthew 13:33 and the transformative power of faith.

Table of contents

<u>Introduction</u>	3
<u>Day 1: 🌱 The Power of Small Beginnings</u>	4
<u>Day 2: ✨ Jesus' Ministry: Starting Small, Growing Big</u>	10
<u>Day 3: 🔥 Kingdom Growth Through Simple Acts</u>	16



Introduction

Welcome to this three-day journey through the Gospels! The Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—are more than just biographies of Jesus; they are powerful narratives that reveal how small beginnings can ripple out to transform lives and the world. One of the most captivating images Jesus uses is that of *leaven* in dough, found in **Matthew 13:33**. This metaphor illustrates how the smallest amount of influence—like yeast in a baker's dough—can impact the entire batch.

In life and faith, it's easy to overlook our small acts, thoughts, or seeds of belief, thinking they are insignificant. However, as the Gospels show, these 'small beginnings' can have enormous, lasting impact. From a humble birth in a manger to a few disciples following Jesus, these seemingly modest starts sparked a global movement that continues today.

Through this study, you'll delve into key Gospel passages that illuminate how God's kingdom grows quietly yet persistently. We will explore stories that show the beginnings of Jesus' ministry, the growth of faith in a few disciples, and the enduring effects of simple acts of obedience and faith. By doing so, you'll gain encouragement to trust God with your own small beginnings and see how He works through them mightily.

Join this journey with an open heart, ready to see the power of tiny seeds of faith to transform your life and those around you. Let's uncover how Jesus used the *leaven* of love, grace, and truth to change the world.





Day 1: 🌱 The Power of Small Beginnings



Your Verse

Matthew 13:33 (NIV) – "He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.""

Supporting Scriptures

- *Luke 13:20-21 – "Again he asked, 'What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.'"*
- *1 Corinthians 13:2 – "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."*



Day 1:  The Power of Small Beginnings

Devotional: Embracing Small Starts with Faith

Jesus' parable about leaven speaks volumes about how God's kingdom grows. Just like yeast, something small and seemingly insignificant can effect profound change over time. In the context of the Gospels, many pivotal moments begin quietly—Jesus' birth in a stable, calling a few disciples, His first miracles. These small acts set in motion an unstoppable movement.

Often, we underestimate what God can do through our small, faithful actions. Whether it's a kind word, a moment of prayer, or a single decision to follow Jesus, these are the leaven that can transform hearts and communities.

Remember, the woman mixes the yeast so it permeates the entire dough. Similarly, our small beginnings are meant to spread and influence the larger world around us. Trust God with your 'small' offerings today. They are never wasted.



Reflect and Apply

1. What small beginnings in your faith journey have grown into greater things?

2. How can you intentionally ‘mix’ your faith into the lives around you today?

3. What discourages you from valuing small acts of faith or obedience?



Day 1:  The Power of Small Beginnings

Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a moment when a small decision changed your life.

2. List ways you can be 'leaven' in your family or community.

3. Reflect on how God might be using small beginnings in your current season.



Day 1: 🌱 The Power of Small Beginnings

Prayer for Today

Lord, help me to trust the power of small beginnings. Teach me to see that even the tiniest seeds of faith can grow into great harvests. Give me patience and courage to be faithful in little things, knowing You are at work through them. Use my humble efforts to impact those around me profoundly. Amen.





Day 2: ✨ Jesus' Ministry: Starting Small, Growing Big



Day 2: ✨ Jesus' Ministry: Starting Small, Growing Big

Your Verse

Mark 1:16-20 (NIV) - "As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed him."

Supporting Scriptures

- *John 6:9 - "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"*
- *Luke 5:1-11 - Peter's miraculous catch after obeying Jesus' command despite doubts.*



Day 2: ✨ Jesus' Ministry: Starting Small, Growing Big

Devotional: Faithful Responders to Small Calls

Jesus began His public ministry with ordinary people, calling them to an extraordinary purpose. Simon Peter and Andrew were simple fishermen. Yet their willingness to respond to a small call—‘Follow me’—became foundational for worldwide transformation.

Like the boy's small lunch of five loaves and two fish, what seems insufficient in our hands is multiplied by God's power. The disciples' obedience turned simple acts into miracles and movements. Their faithfulness in just starting small opened the door to large-scale impact.

When Jesus invites you today, no matter how small your 'net' or resources, take the step of obedience. Trust that God can use your limited beginnings for His infinite purposes. The Gospel story shows us it's not about how big our start is, but how committed we are to following Him.



Day 2: ✨ Jesus' Ministry: Starting Small, Growing Big

Reflect and Apply

1. Are you willing to respond immediately to Jesus' call, even if it seems small?

2. What small resources or gifts has God already given you to use?

3. How does the story of the small lunch challenge your view of insufficiency?



Day 2: ✨ Jesus' Ministry: Starting Small, Growing Big

Journaling Prompts

1. Describe a time when obedience to a small calling led to unexpected growth.

2. Write about how you can 'fish for people' in your daily life.

3. Reflect on areas where you feel God is asking for followership, despite doubts.



Day 2: ✨ Jesus' Ministry: Starting Small, Growing Big

Prayer for Today

Father, help me hear and respond quickly to Your call. Teach me to bring what little I have—time, talents, resources—and trust You to multiply them. Give me courage to follow Jesus, step by step, even when the way seems uncertain. Let my small faith produce fruit for Your kingdom. Amen. 🙌👂🌿





Day 3: 🔥 Kingdom Growth Through Simple Acts



Day 3: 🔥 Kingdom Growth Through Simple Acts

Your Verse

Luke 17:6 (NIV) – "He replied, 'If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.'"

Supporting Scriptures

- *Matthew 13:31-32 – The parable of the mustard seed growing into a large tree.*
- *James 2:17 – 'Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.'*



Day 3: 🔥 Kingdom Growth Through Simple Acts

Devotional: Mustard Seed Faith That Moves Mountains

Jesus highlights that even the tiniest faith can bring about astonishing power. The mustard seed is a consistent image in the Gospels, representing growth from small beginnings into something mighty. It reminds us our faith doesn't have to be grand to be effective.

It's easy to feel discouraged when faith seems weak or invisible. But Scripture encourages us that faith—even very small—combined with action can accomplish great things. This challenges us not to despise small starts but to nurture them.

Your acts of kindness, prayers, or trust—even when seemingly insignificant—are powerful tools for God's kingdom growth. Like the dough permeated by leaven, or the mustard seed growing into a tree, God multiplies your simple steps of faith into extraordinary impact.



Day 3: 🔥 Kingdom Growth Through Simple Acts

Reflect and Apply

1. In what areas do you feel your faith is 'small' right now?

2. How can you nurture and grow that mustard seed faith daily?

3. What steps can you take to move faith into action this week?



Day 3: 🔥 Kingdom Growth Through Simple Acts

Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a time your small faith led to a big change.

2. Make a list of simple faith actions you can take right now.

3. Reflect on barriers that prevent you from acting on your faith.



Day 3: 🔥 Kingdom Growth Through Simple Acts

Prayer for Today

Lord, increase my faith—no matter how small it is today. Help me trust that you can use it to do great things. Empower me to act on that faith with boldness and love, knowing you will multiply my efforts. Let my life reflect the power of small beginnings growing into mighty deeds for Your glory.

Amen. 🌱 ✨ 🙏





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