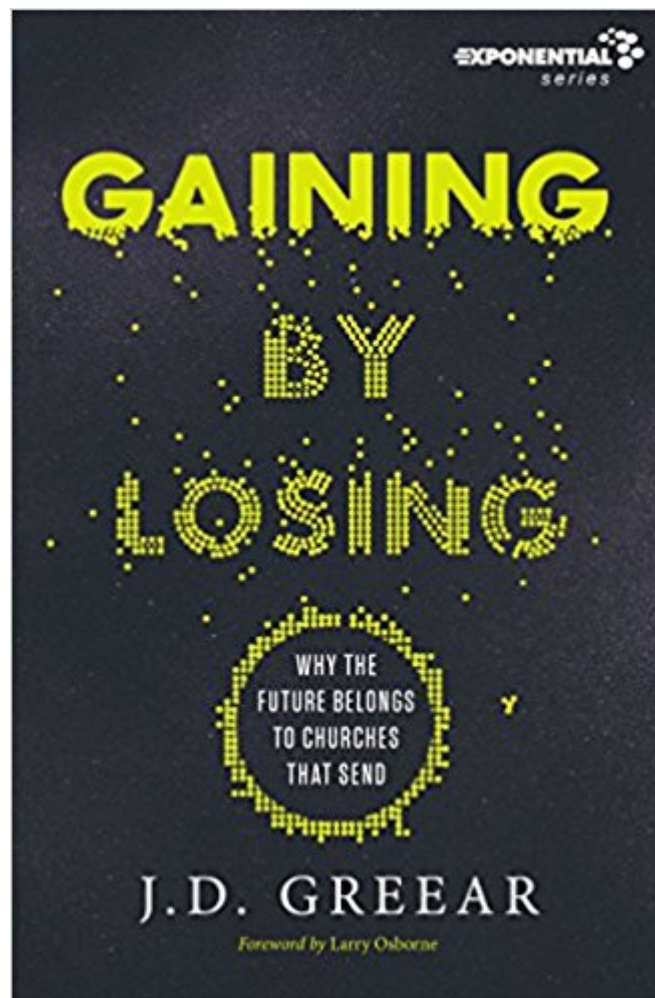




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# Gaining By Losing: Why The Future Belongs To Churches That Send (Exponential Series)



## Synopsis

People are leaving the church J.D. Greear pastors. Big givers. Key volunteers. Some of his best leaders and friends. And that's exactly how he wants it to be. When Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission, he revealed that the key for reaching the world with the gospel is found in sending, not gathering. Though many churches focus time and energy on attracting people and counting numbers, the real mission of the church isn't how many people you can gather. It's about training up disciples and then sending them out. The true measure of success for a church should be its sending capacity, not its seating capacity. But there is a cost to this. To see ministry multiply, we must release the seeds God has placed in our hands. And to do that, we must ask ourselves whether we are concerned more with building our kingdom or God's. In *Gaining By Losing*, J.D. Greear unpacks ten plumb lines that you can use to reorient your church's priorities around God's mission to reach a lost world. The good news is that you don't need to choose between gathering or sending. Effective churches can, and must, do both.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

J. D. Greear is pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. The Summit Church has been ranked by Outreach Magazine as one of the fastest-growing churches in the United States, with a weekly attendance of over 10,000. Greear has a PhD in systematic theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of many books, including *Gaining*

by Losing and Jesus Continued. He lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, with his wife, Veronica, and their four children.

I mentioned at the beginning of the year that this book made my 2016 list because I knew I would disagree with the author on all sorts of issues around body life in a church but admired what I saw as a commitment toward church planting. The book confirmed both of those notions. I think the book's basic strength is that it's written by someone who believes enormous churches where you cannot possibly know the people around you are a good thing. That's because those churches, if they saw the issue of sending properly, have the most immediate opportunity to impact the landscape of Christianity in America. In one chapter, Greear explains that it's wonderful to both be attractional (meaning to try to draw people into church gatherings for evangelism) and missional (meaning we need to go to non-Christians and proclaim the gospel to them in ways that are adapted to their language, background, and culture. The way he explains it is useful and a helpful bridge to people who still think inviting people to church is an effective evangelistic technique (which it almost never is now and will be even less so in the future). One of the first things that hits you in the book is J.D.'s humility in admitting that he did not start off with the mentality and philosophy of ministry he promotes in the book. In several places in the book he comes back to where he had to make substantial course corrections and repent of sinful or bad motivations in order to get to where they are now. His overarching point, made on page 19 and then throughout the book, is that since the God of the Bible is a sending, or missionary God, His followers should be as committed to it as He is. That has to include more than just writing a check to someone living 3000 miles away, it has to be a lifestyle. He effectively draws the comparison of the church as an aircraft carrier that equips the war planes then sends them out for battle as opposed to a cruise liner built for the comfort of its passengers or a battleship that does its fighting in limited amounts of big bangs (p 27-29). The idea culminates a few chapters later when he writes: When the church begins to operate with the assumption that everyone is called, our approach to mobilization will shift dramatically. We won't limit our mission engagement to a bulletin board in the lobby with images of people serving in New Guinea that church members should pray for, as important as that is. We will see every member of our church as a potential missionary to be equipped and mobilized. Our goal is not to send some, or even our best, but to send all into the mission "to our city, across the country, or to the other side of the world. Even though he is a big church guy whose Facebook page looks like a rock concert, in the book he does warn big churches trying to be attractional that many times they can substitute the

gathering power of entertainment for the transforming power of the cross. It's a helpful warning to those trying to walk the line J.D. is walking and while I bet he and I would see the line at very different places, I'm glad to see that someone who claims to pastor 6,000 people believes there is a line at all. The chapter on racial reconciliation was useful mostly because it didn't just repeat the same drivel that is spouted from many church leaders today. He actually talked a little about what it would take for the church to truly be reconciled across racial lines. I think he overplayed the hand that God expects us to primarily reach unbelievers who are a lot like us, but overall it was well done. One quote in particular was worth sharing. "Multicultural engagement within your city, like international missions, is something that all believers are expected to participate in, but that God moves certain believers to pursue with focused intentionality. The apostle Paul was in that category. Some of us (under the leadership of the Spirit) need to make this cause our cause. After all, it makes no sense to send people 10,000 miles across the globe to reach people of other cultures when we won't send people ten miles across our own city to reach people in different neighborhoods. Why would we cross the seas but not the tracks?" (p172) The flow of the book seemed a little choppy to me, mostly because he "chapterized" the core principles that they emphasize at his church. I'm sure it fits their mostly white, suburban, middle class, enormous church but a lot of it didn't really fit my world at all and a lot of his talking points wouldn't make much sense to the mission field God has given us. That's okay because we have our own core principles but in some ways it interfered with the value of the book for me. Still, as I reviewed my kindle version I noticed at least one highlight in each chapter although there seemed to me more highlighting early on. By the end of the book I was convinced J.D. was someone who really loved Jesus and wanted to see the knowledge of His glory cover Raleigh Durham like the waters cover the sea. I was also convinced I wouldn't last more than a month at his church. The book is a worthwhile read for anyone looking for examples of the kind of culture necessary to be a church that is really focused on the Great Commission. It's a fairly easy read for a 250 page book and most readers could complete it without any problems.

This is a good book and its message is right on. It tells us what we should have known from when we first became Christians. This message must be carried to a lost and dying world. Any preacher and church worth its salt should know that it is all about the Kingdom and the Kingdom is world wide and it spans all the centuries before and after, if there are to be any more. Jesus himself told us in Matthew 24:14, "When this gospel is preached in the world, then the end will come." He also told us

in Matthew 28:18-20, to go into all the world. To teach, baptize, and teach. When we have done these things He will return. We gain the growth of the Kingdom, by "losing", i.e., sending those who have become Christian out into a lost and dying world. May God grant us the wisdom to follow through. Gain Kingdom growth by sending out for exponential expansion.

I believe this book was written to give the facts of what Jesus said, and how that applies to living sent and sending others. It shouldn't surprise me, given we are all fighting our flesh, that there are so many people that seem to "know" Truth, yet are criticizing the book for not giving a clear cut plan on how to send, or because they think Greear's church is creating a franchise. First, do you ever wonder why the lost look at Christians as hypocrites? How about our behavior? If we'd focus as much on the love of Jesus as we do thinking about ourselves and critiquing our brothers and sisters in Christ, it may be much more believable for the lost. Let's remember we are all on the same side. Okay, about the book. It is written in a way that is easy to understand, and as I mentioned already, to explain our role as disciples of Christ in sending. It is not to tell us specifically how, but if you want a little help, there is a section at the end of the book with some good starting points. For those who say he is franchising his church, my only answer would be that there is no way you read the book or know how they plant. And no, I am not a member of their church. I'm on the other side of the country. Those who say it's easy to sacrifice 200 when you have 8,500, really? Sacrificing any number when you have any number is a sacrifice, especially when they come from the small percentage of the church that actually serve and tithe. I find comments like that to be an excuse for the reason why the person making that statement isn't sending well. Bottom line is the second we accept Christ, we are disciples. Disciples follow Jesus and do something to help in the spread of the Gospel. They don't spend more time criticizing or making excuses.

In my church we based our sermons and small group studies on this book for two months. This book guides you through seeing that we need to really look into ourselves and see what kind of person and/or church we want to be...There is NO color in the love of Christ!! Amen...

Truly enjoyed JD's book on how we gain when we lose. The world hears this and scoffs. Reality is that many times the church hears and scoffs as well. Praying for our movements to attract more and more Kingdom leaders as we gain by losing!

The author gives great Biblical motivation for giving ourselves and the people God back to the one

who redeemed us to see the kingdom of God grow!

Recommended for you to read this leaders!!!!

This book is a must read for all church leaders. The Kingdom of God truly gains when we hold our individual churches with open hands and become sending churches. This book will challenge you and inspire you to not make disciples to keep them but to make disciples to send them.

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