

The background of the entire cover is a silhouette illustration. It depicts three hikers with backpacks walking up a trail. The hiker on the right is looking through binoculars. They are surrounded by evergreen trees. In the distance, a large mountain peak is visible against a bright yellow sky with a sun or moon. The title text is overlaid on this scene.

# THE KINGDOM LIFE JOURNEY

HOW TO LIVE WITH KINGDOM-MINDED PURPOSE

**DEAN RIDINGS • BOB JONES**

SCOTT BALLENGER • MIKE MARTIN • DARREN ROUSE • DOUG GEBHART

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# Foreword

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” —Matthew 6:33*

## **Welcome to the Kingdom Life Journey**

Welcome! Glad you are joining us on this journey!

Jesus’ words to His first followers are a call to all of us to join Him on a great adventure—what we call the Kingdom Life journey. It is one in which we are steadfastly committed to “seek first” God’s Kingdom and righteousness while we yet have breath. Our destination—the very throne of God.

As with any journey, success often depends a whole lot on who joins us on this adventure and the gear we include in our backpack.

Who is coming along on this journey? First, we trust God to be our Guide. We are grateful that Jesus did not leave us on our own. Rather, He sent the Holy Spirit to live within and lead us: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever. . . . But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:16,26).

Also joining us are companions—fellow seekers. We like the picture of a couple of disciples on the road to Emmaus and what happens when we are committed to journey together (see Luke 24:13-35). They had put their trust in Jesus, only to see Him die upon the cross. Now, defeated and discouraged, they wonder what to do, where to turn next. Though they do not realize it, it is Jesus who comes alongside them to talk about the events of the day. What happens next still happens today: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).

What gear should we pack? Essential items include a compass, a map, and a flashlight. In fact, our three-in-one tool is the Bible. We are convinced that the Bible is God’s Word to us. Paul, the apostle, said it this way to his young protégé Timothy: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Similarly, the psalmist

declared: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).

The direction is true north, the Kingdom of God. As you set out on this journey, remember, don’t go it alone. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Commit to another person, two or three people, or perhaps a small group to process this with. And be sure always to have an open Bible between you.

We are so glad to be on this journey with you!

# Introduction

*“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” —Matthew 24:14*

## The Gospel of the Kingdom

What is *the gospel of the kingdom* that will be preached around the world before the second coming of Jesus? To answer this, let us look at why Jesus came in the first place.

Throughout the Bible we understand that God is King over all the universe. Every created thing is under His rule. The psalmist put it succinctly: “For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm! God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne” (Psalm 47:7-8). Jesus, the Son of God, is Creator and Sustainer (see Hebrews 1).

Yet because God does not *make* people love and follow Him, He puts the decision in our court. He gives us “free will,” an opportunity to abide under the realm of His rule or not. Some reject Him and are thus under the influence of an evil one (see John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8). They face an eternity apart from God in hell, a place created for the evil one and, therefore, all who choose to follow him (see Romans 3:23).

We will look more closely at this evil one, Satan, later in this workbook. For now, it's important to know that apart from Christ we are a part of the enemy's kingdom. Jesus put it this way when He confronted a group of people who were unwittingly under the enemy's influence: “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

Yet here is the gospel of the Kingdom in a nutshell: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Or, as the apostle Paul put it: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

God offers and wants everyone to receive this free gift of salvation, “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Peter 3:9b). We become believers in Christ when we accept Him as our Savior, “because, if you

confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved” (Romans 10:9-10).

Every believer in Christ, every believer that will be with us in heaven, is part of God’s Kingdom. The realm of His rule includes the people of God—those who anticipated Jesus (Old Testament saints), and all of us on this side of the cross who put our trust in Him (New Testament followers of Jesus, all who confess, repent, and come to the Father through the Son).

This is why when Jesus began to preach, He declared: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (see Matthew 4:17). Jesus said the Kingdom of God was near because the King was near. Yes, God is King over all the universe; God in the flesh, Jesus, is King. Remember how wise men sought out the newborn King, Jesus, so they may worship Him?

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him” (Matthew 2:1-2).

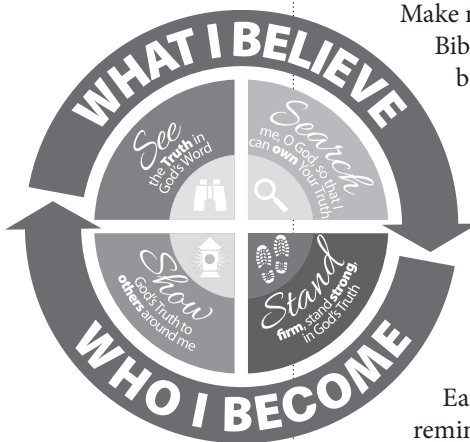
They found Jesus, King of the Jews. And they worshiped Him, for “he is Lord of lords and King of kings” (Revelation 17:14). In coming to earth, Jesus expanded the realm of God’s rule into what has been called enemy occupied territory.

Jesus helped us better understand the Kingdom and how the realm of His rule expands when He taught in parables. Jesus compared the Kingdom to a mustard seed, which starts small but flourishes: “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches” (Matthew 13:31-32).

Make no mistake. Just as Jesus came the first time, He will come again. The Bible warns us to keep watch: “For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now” (Romans 8:22). It will happen “as in the days of Noah,” in the midst of the activities of everyday life (see Matthew 24:37-39).

On this side of Jesus’ return, ***we must understand, live in light of, and strive to advance the gospel of the Kingdom.*** This is why each of us who has worked on this project said from the outset, “If we have a limited time with someone, we would want him or her to fully grasp the gospel of the Kingdom and its implications.”

Early on God gave us the image to the left to illustrate this journey. It reminds us that what we **believe** grounded in the Holy Scriptures leads to



who we **become** *guided by the Holy Spirit*. As the Bible puts it, “Become what you believe” (Matthew 9:29, MSG).

Notice the four distinct stages of this process. You will find all four in each of the following chapters of this workbook. These stages will help us unpack 12 distinct principles of the Kingdom Life.

First, it is essential that we **SEE** in Scripture the Kingdom principle. Next, we **SEARCH** the Scriptures more deeply to better “own” the Kingdom principle. Then, we see how we might **STAND** in this truth in the midst of everyday life. Finally, we **SHOW** what we have learned to others in our spheres of influence—seeing the gospel of the Kingdom advance deeper in our own hearts and affect those around us.

Notice as well that we have provided extra wide margins throughout this workbook. Use this space for additional notes. Especially as you go through this study in a small group, you may also wish to jot down some of the best insights others have to share.

Jesus spoke more about the Kingdom than anything else. It is of utmost importance. Again, we must own it ourselves and share it liberally. One day Jesus will return, ushering in His righteous Kingdom and defeating all of His enemies. The Father says to the Son: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (Hebrews 1:13).

One day we will see this beautiful picture the apostle John saw: “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands” (Revelation 7:9). As the wise men did long ago, we will worship King Jesus. At that time we will experience the Kingdom of God in all its fullness!

May this picture inspire you as much as it does us. May God use this resource to better enable you to live a Kingdom life in light of that day—and be used of God to help others do the same!



# Seeing the Kingdom Vision

Vision is so absolutely essential! As the old adage says, “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there!” Or as King Solomon put it, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18, KJV).

Consider any sports team—volleyball, soccer, football. What’s the vision that the coach keeps in front of his or her players day after day? What propels players on to endure grueling, twice-a-day workouts? It’s to win—the next game, then the next, and ultimately the championship!

On this first leg of the Kingdom Life journey, our overall theme is **Seeing the Kingdom Vision**. It’s a vision that has propelled Christ-followers through the years to press forward no matter the cost—come what may!

We’ll see the Kingdom of God—Almighty God on His throne, beckoning us to come closer, closer still. In these first three chapters, we will focus on “The King,” “The Kingdom,” and “Kingdom Citizens.”

First, we will turn our attention to **the King**. When we are born into this world, all eyes are on us. If we have come from a loving, nurturing home, we are loved, held, cared for, coddled. It’s easy to see why we might come to think “the world revolves around us.” When we talk about “the King,” again, it is easy to see why someone might think he or she might sit on the throne. There is a King in God’s Kingdom, *and it is not me!*

Next, we will focus in on **the Kingdom**. Although we did so to some extent in the Introduction, here we examine more closely “the realm of God’s rule.” Here we will come to own more fully the truth that the King is Creator, Sustainer, and Sovereign Ruler over all of the universe.

Finally, we will see how we fit into the picture. God created us, He knows us, He loves us, and He invites us to be **Kingdom Citizens**. We are not the King, though He invites us to be royalty! What if we do not accept His invitation? And what are the implications if we do?

Before you turn the page and begin to **See the Kingdom Vision**, pause to pray that God will open the eyes of your heart—that in His Word you will SEE each Kingdom principle; SEARCH and understand more fully what God reveals through His

Word about the King, the Kingdom, and becoming a Kingdom Citizen; STAND in the truths God reveals to you; and SHOW in both word and deed these Kingdom principles to others in your circle of influence.

## CHAPTER 1

# The King

*“One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.” —Psalm 27:4*

### We Long to Know the King

God is King over all the universe. He is Creator, Sustainer, “King of kings and Lord of lords,” and we long to know Him. Some have described this longing as a God-shaped hole or vacuum in our hearts, which can only be filled by God Himself. Yet in our independence, we are prone to try a variety of other ways to fill this space deep within us.

Blaise Pascal, in his 1670 defense of the Christian faith titled *Pensées*, perceptively observed that people are searching for something we once had and long to recover. He put it this way:

What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself. (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* VII[425]).

When did we know true happiness? Consider Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, in the days prior to the fall (see Genesis 1-2). How did mankind lose this happiness? Consider the result of Adam and Eve’s rejection of God in favor of the serpent, the devil. Since then we have had this hole, this vacuum, and this longing for it to be filled.

In early church times, the apostle Paul observed this tendency as he walked around Athens. He saw many “objects of worship,” including an altar to an unknown god (see Acts 17: 22-27). Paul declared that this Person is the Lord—the one true God, the King—and that He can be known. He described the King this way:

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by

human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us . . . (Acts 17:24-27).

Can you identify? How have you attempted to address the God-shaped hole or vacuum in your life? Perhaps your longing to do so, either for the first time or to a greater extent, is why you're on this Kingdom Life journey. If so, you join a long list of Kingdom seekers through the ages, such as these well-known men and women from Bible times:

**Moses** (Exodus 33:13)—He longed to know and find favor with the King.

**Rahab** (Joshua 2:11)—She longed to know the God of all creation.

**Ruth** (Ruth 1:16-17)—She longed to know her mother-in-law's God and King.

**David** (Psalm 27:4)—He longed to gaze upon (worship) and seek the King.

**Jeremiah** (Jeremiah 9:23-24)—He longed to know the kind, just, and righteous King.

**Paul** (Philippians 3:7-11)—He longed to know Christ Jesus, his Lord and King.

**Lydia** (Acts 16:14)—She worshiped God and wanted to learn about King Jesus.

Solomon, with a special gift of wisdom from God, observed in his quest for the meaning of life that God “has put eternity into man's heart” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Again, there is a hole, vacuum. Thus, God Himself has spurred us to search and know the Sovereign King.

Jesus, God's Son, is the King incarnate. The long-anticipated Messiah whose arrival the prophets of old had spoken had come to earth as “King of the Jews.”<sup>1</sup> By birthright He received from the Father authority and power to establish the eternal Kingdom of God. Jesus declared that the very first aspect of His work given to Him is making the Father known (see John 17:1-6). To know the King, then, is the first step of discipleship.

Wise men came from the east to Jerusalem to worship the newborn King, Jesus (see Matthew 2:1-2). The wise still seek Him. Thus, we embark on our Kingdom Life journey as we get to know the King—who launched us on this quest, and the only one who can fill that hole or vacuum in our longing hearts.



See

In *The Knowledge of the Holy* A. W. Tozer said: “the most portentous [revealing] fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. . . . Without doubt, the mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of God, and the mightiest word in any language is its word for God.”<sup>2</sup>

Take a moment to jot down some thoughts about your picture of God. How did you come to see Him in this way? What are the implications of how one sees God?

Tozer goes on to say that we take on the attributes of the person or thing—the god or idol—that we worship: “We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God.”<sup>3</sup> Again, we *become like* the god or idol that we worship. Let’s see what God’s Word says about this.

What do you learn about those who worship idols from the following passages?

Psalm 115:4-8:

2 Kings 17:14-18:

What do you learn about those who worship the true God from the following Scriptures?

1 Peter 1:15-16:

1 John 4:19:

Here’s the bottom line: Seeking first God’s Kingdom means seeking to have **true** thoughts of God. We must know and worship the **God who is**, rather than a god (or idol) of our own—or our culture’s—fabrication.



## Search

Let's turn to the Scriptures and examine the lives of several citizens of the Kingdom of God we meet there. Though these men and women were fallible and weak like us, they would come to see clearly the majesty and power of the God who is with us. Ponder the questions provided as you reflect on the lives of these Kingdom citizens:

**Joshua**—Read Exodus 33:7-11 and Joshua 1:1-9. What did God call Joshua to be and do, and how did Joshua know God?

**Rahab**—Read Joshua 2:1-14. How did Rahab come to know the one true God, and what did she do to honor him?

**Abigail**—Read 1 Samuel 25:23-35. What can we learn about reverential respect from Abigail's posture toward David? How might we apply this in our approach to God our King?

**David**—Read 1 Samuel 30:1-10 and Psalm 145:5. What situation did David find himself in, and how did he respond?

**Jehoshaphat**—Read 2 Chronicles 17:1-6 and 1 Kings 22:5-12. How did Jehoshaphat respond to the responsibility that God gave to him, and what kind of man did Jehoshaphat become?



## Stand

### The T.E.A.C.H. Meditation Model

How might you stand firm, stand strong, in the truths you have pondered thus far about God the King, the God who is? In fact, He has revealed much about Himself throughout the Bible.

Let's return to the example of David's longing, "One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

Here is an approach designed to help you begin to follow David's example today as you engage with God's Word, and in particular the attributes the King has revealed about Himself.

Using the word *teach* as an acronym, the **T.E.A.C.H. Meditation Model** will enhance your ability to apply Scripture to the following five key areas of life:

- ⊕ **Thoughts** (increased understanding, awareness of truth)—Being and doing begins with thinking; belief precedes behavior.
- ⊕ **Emotions** (changed values)—Our feelings can lead us astray, or urge us to honor God.
- ⊕ **Attitudes** (acceptance of truth)—God is concerned about our inner being, not just the external.
- ⊕ **Choices** (changed priorities)—We must not be hearers only but people who put God's Word into practice.
- ⊕ **Habits** (changed behavior)—God transforms us that we may discern and perform His will.

Sometimes our study of and meditation on God's Word may produce only one or two life applications, which may be superficial or limited in significance. Not so with the T.E.A.C.H. Meditation Model.

Let's walk through one example to see how the following verse describing **Almighty God** may apply to the five areas of a person's life.

*"O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD, with your faithfulness all around you?" —Psalm 89:8*

**Thoughts** (increased understanding, awareness of truth)—*God is all-powerful; no one is as mighty as God!*

**Emotions** (changed values)—*Stop worrying when I can't accomplish something on my own; rest assured that God is both able and faithful.*

**Attitudes** (acceptance of truth)—*Submit to God as the Almighty who wields absolute power; remain confident in God's ability and optimistic in His care.*

**Choices** (changed priorities)—*Stop living by my strength alone; expect God to work His will powerfully.*

**Habits** (changed behavior)—*Invite Almighty God to work powerfully in my circumstances; allow Him complete reign in every aspect of my life.*

Here is an opportunity for you to try this approach on your own in light of this attribute of the King: **Creator God**.

*“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” —Revelation 4:11*

**Thoughts** (increased understanding, awareness of truth)

**Emotions** (changed values)

**Attitudes** (acceptance of truth)

**Choices** (changed priorities)

**Habits** (changed behavior)

Here are additional attributes of God our King reflected in His Word for you to meditate on using the T.E.A.C.H. method:

- ⊕ Eternal God – Psalm 90:2
- ⊕ Faithful God – Psalm 119:90
- ⊕ Good God – Nahum 1:7
- ⊕ Gracious God – James 4:6
- ⊕ Omnipotent God – Ephesians 3:20
- ⊕ Protecting God – Psalm 46:1
- ⊕ Providing God – Matthew 6:33-34
- ⊕ Righteous God – Psalm 11:7
- ⊕ Saving God – Isaiah 12:2
- ⊕ Sovereign God – Job 42:2



## Show

You've come a long way in discovering truths about the King—the God who is! Review what you have written and highlighted in this lesson. What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with in the next 24 hours to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find the “T.E.A.C.H. Meditation Model” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” handout in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). We encourage you to print out this and other items in the “Ignite” series for your own personal use and to share with others. Who needs to know about this easy, inviting way to meditate upon God’s Word? When might you share it with him or her?<sup>4</sup>

### Summary

When God gave the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), the first two were aimed at the human tendency to create idols. He said:

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for

I the Lord your God am a jealous God . . . (Exodus 20:3-5a).

John Calvin correctly described each of us as “idol factories.” In light of this, before you move on to the next Kingdom principle, ask God to help you grow a view of Himself as Lord, Master, and Sovereign King.

Take some time each day to think about *the God who is—the King of kings and Lord of lords*. As you do, keep in mind these words by Thabiti Anubuyli, “To care more about anything less than the supreme glory of God is treason against God.”

## CHAPTER 2

# The Kingdom

*“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.’ ” —Revelation 21:3*

### A People for His Own Possession

In light of what we looked at in Chapter 1, we have a much clearer picture of the King. He is the King over all the universe and King over all mankind. Our desire to see the Kingdom vision now continues as we focus on what the King is doing. Why did He create the universe? Why did He create people? How do we fit into His plans?

From one end of the Bible to the other, we clearly see that God is up to something *remarkable*. He is expanding His Kingdom as He creates a people for His own possession—a people who will live with Him forever.<sup>1</sup>

***The King is at work in the lives of individual men, women, and children, whom He dearly and deeply loves.*** While our forebears Adam and Eve once enjoyed walking and talking with God in the Garden of Eden, they decided to disobey Him, which separated people from the sovereign, holy King (see Genesis 3). They chose to sin, which put a barrier between them and the Creator.

Remember, Satan—the devil, the deceiver, the evil one—is real (see 1 Peter 5:8). He was in the garden as a “serpent” who spurred Adam and Eve to turn away from the King. Satan’s kingdom is actively engaged in a spiritual war against God’s Kingdom. While “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), God is actively working to rescue people from Satan’s grasps through the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

We see the King’s love and rescue plan in this central Bible verse: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). To perish means to be “lost,” which helps us better understand God’s Word, which says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

For all who have come to Him through Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul puts it this way, “He [Jesus] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13). And the writer of Hebrews adds, “Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

When this life is over and we step into eternity, we will dwell in the presence of God—He will be our God, and we will be His people. Ponder this picture of a heavenly worship service that the risen Jesus gave the apostle John:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Revelation 7:9-10).

Throughout history—from creation to the fall, through all of the men and women of faith in Old Testament times, to the finished work of Jesus on the cross and the church age—God has been leading up to a future time when people from every tribe, people, and language would become *a people for His own possession*.

Still, you may wonder, why mankind—a people for His own possession? Indeed, God is self-sufficient. He needs no one or nothing outside of Himself. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have existed eternally in perfect love with one another.

Why, then, did the King create us?



*See*

The Triune God did not create human beings out of a *need* for relationship. God is omnipotent; He has power to accomplish His will in and of Himself. He did not create human beings because He could not achieve His purpose without us. The following verses help us understand why God not only created but also desires to live with us.

How encouraging is it to know that we are created, in the King’s own words, “for my glory” (Isaiah 43:7)? What are some implications?

One implication is that we would declare God's glory throughout all the universe, as reflected here: "so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10). What might this look like?

Next, notice that God's compassion for all people is clearly seen in His promise to Abram, that through this ancestor of Jesus, the Father would lavish His love upon the nations of the earth:

"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

Later, God would change Abram's name to Abraham, for he would be "the father of a multitude of nations" (see Genesis 17:4-5). Again, this promise found its fullness in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

God's love for His people Israel—and through Israel to the nations of the world—is clearly seen in both the Old and New Testaments (see Deuteronomy 7:6-11; 9:4-6; and Ephesians 1:3-14).

Therefore, we who desire to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33) are able to know God's purpose for us. All of history has been moving and continues to move toward this eventuality—God is creating a people for His own possession:

- ⊕ a people upon whom He can bestow His love and blessing;
- ⊕ a people who, in turn, will give Him glory forever;
- ⊕ a people chosen from every tribe and tongue and nation.

Next, let's **Search** the Scriptures to find insights about the King's purpose for His people.



*Search*

Read Revelation 21:1-22:5. Here the King reveals that the realm of His rule will encompass a new heaven and a new earth. This is where the people for His own possession will live in the age to come.

Jesus went there after He rose from the dead, promising to prepare a place for His followers where mankind will once again freely walk and talk with the King.<sup>2</sup>

As we examine this extended passage in Revelation—along with other Bible passages to look more deeply into these things (see the notes)—let’s take a closer look at the Kingdom of heaven.

1. The King removes the first heaven and earth: He destroys them in judgment<sup>3</sup> and judges people apart from Christ.<sup>4</sup> What thoughts or emotions does all this stir within you?
2. The King reigns in His glory;<sup>5</sup> The nations submit to Him<sup>6</sup> and His glory lights the city.<sup>7</sup> As you ponder this glorious picture, are you more eager or anxious inside? Why?
3. The King restores paradise and dwells with His people.<sup>8</sup> He provides life-giving water;<sup>9</sup> renews access to the tree of life;<sup>10</sup> removes the painful consequences of sin;<sup>11</sup> surpasses the beauty of Eden;<sup>12</sup> and delegates dominion to His people.<sup>13</sup> How do you respond to this hopeful picture of eternity?

To learn more about the King’s work today, let’s look more closely at the life and ministry of His Son, Jesus, and how He helps us understand the Kingdom of heaven.



Jesus went throughout the land preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. As He did, people saw the power of the gospel every time Jesus healed people’s afflictions and diseases. More and more people drew near to hear what He had to say and put their trust in Him.

Along with the Twelve, soon multitudes of people began to follow Jesus. People “brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them” (see Matthew 4:22-25). That’s why Jesus had come—to heal the sick (see Matthew 9:12), both physically and spiritually.

This is when Jesus' Sermon on the Mount took place. He led His disciples up a mountainside and taught them practical principles for life in the Kingdom. He started out His sermon with eight Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12), sometimes called "rules of happiness."

Interestingly, as we read through these principles today, we see how one leads to the next—how a progression is evident in the order. This can be used to help us assess where we are in the Kingdom Life journey and determine what might be a best next step to grow in Christ—where we are in terms of becoming a people for His own possession.

Here is an opportunity for you to do a personal assessment. As you reflect on the Beatitudes—each stage of the journey—ask the Holy Spirit to be your guide: "Where am I, God—close to Christ or far away? What is my next step going forward?" Put an "X" where you are, and ask God's help in responding to the questions to consider at the end:

**Poor in Spirit:** "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (v. 3).

I am aware of the need for God in my life. I know I cannot go it alone. I need to take my eyes off myself—my worries and concerns—and see Jesus, the Son of God. I need to learn from Him. I long to enter the Kingdom of heaven.

*Far from Christ* ————— *Close to Christ*

**Mourners:** "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (v. 4).

I am aware of sin in general and my own sin in particular. I am truly sorrowful over it. I know there is no comfort apart from confession, repentance, and a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. I have decided to follow Jesus—no turning back.

*Far from Christ* ————— *Close to Christ*

**Meek:** "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (v. 5).

I am a member of the Kingdom of heaven and therefore I do not respond as I once did. I am gentle and self-controlled. I strive to obey God and to live a life led by the Holy Spirit. When I am treated badly I respond with gentleness. I seek to live humbly, like my Savior.

*Far from Christ* ————— *Close to Christ*

**Righteousness-Seekers:** "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (v. 6).

I have a strong desire for the things of God and to grow in intimacy with Him. I devour God's Word, the Bible. I long for others to know how much God loves them and to see His justice prevail. I strive for love and justice and am satisfied as I see God at work.

*Far from Christ* ————— *Close to Christ*

**Merciful:** “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy” (v. 7).

I am aware of my own need for mercy and freely extend it to others. When others treat me badly, I do not respond in like kind. Rather, like Jesus, I am kind, compassionate, and loving. I forgive and pray for others—even those who treat me as an enemy. I share the gospel. I gratefully receive fresh mercies from God each day.

*Far from Christ* ————— *Close to Christ*

**Pure in Heart:** “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (v. 8).

I am cleansed of sin and actively engaged in activities to keep my heart pure. I am able to hear God’s voice and see Him better because He has forgiven me and removed any barriers that hinder relationships. I live in God’s presence. He is alive in my life and my world.

*Far from Christ* ————— *Close to Christ*

**Peacemakers:** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (v. 9).

I am at peace with God through Jesus Christ and actively engaged in helping others find such peace. I am a child of God and long to see all in my circle of influence come to find the same peace as they know and grow in Him. I build bridges between people and God.

*Far from Christ* ————— *Close to Christ*

**Persecuted:** “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (vv. 10-12).

I am experiencing the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)—despite outer circumstances, even suffering. I tell others about the gospel of the Kingdom and will continue to do so, come what may. In life or death, I am blessed to know that the Kingdom of God is my eternal home.

*Far from Christ* ————— *Close to Christ*

**Questions to consider:**

Reviewing your responses, what do you discover about your life in the Kingdom?

What might be your best next step in your spiritual journey?

Who can help you along the way?



## Show

You are discovering life-transforming truths toward seeing a Kingdom vision! You have learned who the King is and how He is working to create a people for His own possession who will live with Him forever. Look back at what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find “Beatitudes Assessment” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” handout in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to know this? Who would benefit from this assessment? When might you share it with him or her?

### Summary

The King has purposed to build a Kingdom of men and women for His own possession, for whom He will be their God and they will be His people.

Once again, try to picture this heavenly worship service that will one day take place:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Revelation 7:9-10).

As the old gospel hymn says, “Lord, I want to be in that number, when the saints

go marching in.” Now is an appropriate time for you to ensure that you are in that number. It is as easy as “A, B, C,” as you will see in this sampling of Scripture:

**Acknowledge your sin:** Like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, each of us has decided to disobey God and do things our way; the Bible calls this sin:

- ⊕ “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6).
- ⊕ “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

**Believe in Jesus:** Known for His love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness, God has enabled us to have a right relationship with Him by placing our trust in His Son, Jesus:

- ⊕ “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).
- ⊕ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

**Confess, repent, be restored:** When we confess, we talk to God about our sin; when we repent, we commit to doing things God’s way; as we do, He restores our relationship with Him:

- ⊕ “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).
- ⊕ “because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

If this is your first time to take God at His word and trust His Son, Jesus, *welcome to the family of God!* If you are renewing your commitment to Him, *welcome home!* Who can you tell about your commitment? Who can help you grow as a follower of Jesus?

Everyone who comes to the Father through Jesus is a Kingdom citizen. This is the focus of the next chapter, which will examine the third and final principle toward seeing a Kingdom vision.

## CHAPTER 3

# Kingdom Citizens

*“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” —1 Peter 2:9-10*

### **We Are “Under Construction”**

“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” Jesus asked His first followers, the apostles.

John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets, they replied. Then Jesus brought it closer to home: “But who do you say that I am?”

Peter spoke for the group, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven,” Jesus responded. “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

Upon this truth—that Jesus is the Christ, the long-anticipated Messiah, who would usher in the Kingdom of God—He built His church. And He used the apostles to advance the Gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom, He called and used the apostle Paul to spread the Good News of the Kingdom and establish churches on his missionary journeys, and the church continues to this day. If you are a Kingdom citizen, we encourage you to get involved in a God-honoring, Christ-centered, Bible-believing church near you!

At the next service you attend, we invite you to take a look around. As many people as you see there, you will find people somewhere along the spiritual journey. Some are not-yet-believers, but there is enough interest to attend and “kick the tires” of faith. Then there are believers who are new to Christ, some more seasoned in their walk with Christ, and still others who actually live, love, and lead like Jesus! Each of us is somewhere along this continuum, and the King is watchfully, lovingly helping us to grow spiritually and become more like Jesus every day.<sup>2</sup>

When we move from “kicking the tires” to putting our trust in Jesus, we become children of the King and thus “Kingdom citizens.” The Bible puts it this way: “God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure” (Ephesians 1:5, NLT).

This is what the Bible calls being “in Christ.” In light of this, the apostle Paul says: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). All who have come to the Father through Jesus Christ are “new creations.” What’s more, elsewhere Paul says Christians are God’s “poetry, work of art,” when he says to Jesus’ followers in Ephesus: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

Later we will look at how God works *through* Kingdom citizens. Here, however, we will focus on His work *in* us. The Bible likens the King to a Master Potter who molds and shapes His children as clay. The prophet Isaiah said it well: “But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand” (Isaiah 64:8).

In this spirit, someone has observed, “God loves you as you are, and He loves you too much to let you stay that way.” We become Kingdom citizens through simple faith: “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). If this is you, *you are a Kingdom citizen!* This is what it means that “God loves you as you are.”

By God’s grace we are not only “saved,” by His grace we are also being “sanctified.” The apostle Paul speaks confidently when he says: “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). This is what it means that God loves us “too much to let [us] stay that way.” We are “under new management” and “under construction”! Put another way, we are all “in process.”

Ruth Bell Graham, beloved wife of famed evangelist Billy Graham, knew this all too well. The fact that God was ever working in her life is part of her epitaph. When she passed away June 14, 2007, her gravestone simply stated: “End of Construction—Thank you for your patience.” She faithfully served her King to advance the gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom while she lived. Along the way, she recognized she was “under construction,” a process that ended when she entered glory to see her King face to face.

Let’s see in the Bible what the King’s construction process in Kingdom citizens’ lives looks like.



# See

Each Christ-follower is a unique creation of God, with his or her own personality, gifts, talents, abilities, and calling. Dutch prime minister and theologian Abraham Kuyper once observed that there is not one inch in all of creation that does not belong to Jesus Christ. What he was saying is that all of life comes under the rule of our King. If that's true, then in whatever career or work you may be doing that does not violate God's Word, you are serving the Kingdom of God.

It is in the context of everyday life that God builds the character and faith of Kingdom citizens. How is the King doing this? First and foremost, He has given us His Holy Spirit to live within us: "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13).<sup>3</sup>

That is, God has made His home in our hearts. What's more, He conducts His construction work from the inside out. Read Galatians 5:16-23 and answer the following questions:

The apostle Paul tells us to "walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). How does he go on to describe "the desires of the flesh"?

By contrast, Paul says that when we invite the Holy Spirit into every aspect of our lives, we can be sure that He will produce "the fruit of the Spirit" in our lives. List each aspect of this fruit.

Interestingly, you can add "despite outer circumstances" to each aspect of the fruit of the Spirit. For example, when the Holy Spirit permeates a person's life, He produces in him or her love . . . *despite outer circumstances*. How have you seen God develop these nine characteristics in your life? How did this come about—does a particular story or situation come to mind?

A second way the King builds the character and faith of Kingdom citizens is through the body of Christ, the family of God. Have you ever considered how many times the term "one another" or "each other" appears in the Bible? Gene Getz, in *Building Up One Another*, says the Greek word for these terms is *allelon*. "In fact," he adds, "excluding the Gospels, the word is used 58 times in the New Testament. Paul leads the list for frequency, having used the word 40 times."<sup>4</sup>

Consider the following examples:

- ⊕ Be devoted to and honor one another (Romans 12:10).
- ⊕ Instruct one another (Romans 15:14).
- ⊕ Carry one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- ⊕ Encourage and build up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- ⊕ Confess sins to and pray for one another (James 5:16).

How do these and other “one another” verses in the Bible speak of our responsibility to walk alongside and help each other live lives that honor and please the King?

Here is an additional way that the King builds up Kingdom citizens. God has uniquely gifted each of us for ministry within His body, the church, and there is a vast array of ways to serve the King and each other using the “spiritual gifts” that He provides.

Read Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:11. You will find a variety of spiritual gifts listed. They generally fall into three categories:

- ⊕ *Support gifts* (such as evangelism, pastor, teacher) are public in nature and center on the ministry of the Word—e.g., “whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11a).
- ⊕ *Service gifts* (such as helps, giving, mercy) are behind the scenes in nature and center on encouraging, building, and strengthening—e.g., “whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies” (1 Peter 4:11b).
- ⊕ *Sign gifts* (such as miracles, healings, discernment) show that a person and his or her message is from God—e.g., “It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will” (Hebrews 2:3b-4).

How might Kingdom citizens grow personally and better help others do the same by knowing and using their spiritual gifts?

What is a best next step for you to identify how the Holy Spirit has gifted you or for you to be more actively engaged in your local church?

There is certainly much more detail we could go into on spiritual gifts. We hope this whets your appetite to learn more! We encourage you to continue your study of these special enablements from God to build up the body of Christ.

We've considered how the King builds the character and faith of Kingdom citizens through the Holy Spirit's work, the fruit of the Spirit, fellow Christ-followers "being there" for one another, and spiritual gifts. To see what this looks like, let's focus in on one Kingdom man in particular.



## Search

We looked at The Kingdom in the last chapter and observed that God is at work creating "a people for His own possession." We find this phrase in the following key passage from the apostle Peter: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Peter's own journey helps us better understand the spiritual journey of Kingdom citizens—men, women, and children in whom the King is working. Let's see how Peter first became a follower of Jesus, and how he grew along the spiritual journey. It all began with his brother, Andrew.

Read John 1:35-39. How did Andrew first learn about Jesus? What does it look like for a person to take Jesus up on His invitation to "come and see"?

As we see in John 1:40-42, the first thing Andrew did was to find his brother, Peter. How did he encourage Peter to consider for himself who Jesus is?

Something significant happened in Peter's spiritual journey that made him drop everything and follow Jesus. Read Luke 5:1-10. How do you account for the drastic change in Peter's life?

Peter was a Kingdom citizen "in process," as were other disciples whom Jesus had called. In his book *Jesus Christ Disciple Maker*, author Bill Hull noted that Jesus moved the disciples through four distinct stages: "Come and See," "Come Follow Me," "Come and Be with Me [in Ministry]," and "You Will Remain in Me." Read Matthew 10:5-15 (or all of Matthew 10 if time allows). Also see Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus' Great Commission. How did Jesus involve Peter and the others in Kingdom-advancing ministry?

It's important to observe that things did not always go smoothly with Peter. At one time Jesus warned him that "Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat" (see Luke 22:31-32). Read Luke 22:54-62 and see how this "sifting" occurred when Peter denied even knowing Jesus. Now read John 21:15-17 and see how Jesus restored Peter in life and ministry. How does this help you better understand the spiritual journey?

Keep in mind that the day Peter put his trust in Jesus, he became a Kingdom citizen. Nothing could change that. He had been adopted into the family of God. As we have seen glimpses of Peter's spiritual journey, it should come as an encouragement to every Christ follower to see just how much walking with Jesus day by day is a process. Sometimes it is two steps forward, then stumbling backwards. It should also come as an encouragement that our gracious King "keeps on keeping on" working in us and also through us—as Peter discovered at Pentecost when he spoke about the Kingdom and some 3,000 people put their trust in Jesus!<sup>5</sup>

What is most important is that we continue to fix our eyes on Jesus! As the author of the book of Hebrews reminds us, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Now let's look at five specific ways Jesus developed His first followers such as Peter, how He did so in the lives of countless others through the years, and how He continues to do so yet today.



When we come to the Father through His Son, we become Kingdom citizens. At that time, God hangs an "under construction" sign on us. As Paul puts it, the King initiates a "good work" in us (Philippians 1:6). He begins to conform us to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29).

The apostle Peter encourages us to partner with God along the way, ensuring we are in the very best position to grow in the Christian life. He says, "make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love" (2 Peter 1:5b-7).

How can this happen? Let's look at how Jesus invested in Peter and his fellow disciples to find five clear ways to grow ever deeper as a disciple. These are reflected in Jesus' High Priestly Prayer, which might also be considered Jesus' disciple-making report to the Father (see in particular John 17:5–18). If you desire to grow as a disciple, follow Jesus' five priorities. Questions below are for reflection, journaling, or personal retreat:

### **1st Way to Grow—Get to Know God**

*“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.” — John 17:6a*

Jesus revealed the Father's compassionate heart to the disciples as He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout cities and villages and observed that people were helpless, hopeless, hurting, and lost. “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (see Matthew 9:35–38).

What might it look like to make it a priority to get to know God? What other Bible passages come to mind? Why not research and reflect on God's attributes?

### **2nd Way to Grow—Get into God's Word**

*“For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them. . . . I have given them your word. . . . Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” —John 17:8a, 14a, 17*

Someone once asked Jesus what the greatest commandment is. Jesus summarized the Ten Commandments this way: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (see Matthew 22:34–40). Isn't that a wonderful summary of the Bible, God's Word, from cover to cover?

Remember the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23)? How have you experienced the seed of God's Word growing in your heart? Inspect the fruit in your own life. What actions are you taking (or will you take) to ensure you're taking in God's Word and it's bearing fruit daily?

### **3rd Way to Grow—Talk to God . . . Pray**

*“I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.” —John 17:9*

Jesus often pulled away to pray—to glorify the Father, to receive the Father’s words, and to intercede on behalf of others. He prayed through the night before calling His disciples (Luke 6:12-13). In the Lord’s Prayer, He modeled praying for God’s Kingdom to advance: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven . . .” (see Matthew 6:9-13). Jesus showed how prayer is essential for life and ministry.

What are the qualities of a “prayer warrior”? Do you often pull away to pray? Why not ask God what needs to happen for you to enhance your walking and talking relationship with Him?

#### **4th Way to Grow—Walk With Jesus**

*“While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. . . .”*  
—John 17:12a

As Jesus walked “with them,” His followers listened to Him teach, watched Him do miracles, and learned truths about Kingdom living. Along the way, Jesus touched and trained them; He prepared them to preach the gospel of the Kingdom. “And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal . . .” (see Luke 9:1-6).

When did you begin to walk with Jesus? Along the way, how has He touched and trained you? How is He both preparing and using you to carry on His work in the advance of the Kingdom?

#### **5th Way to Grow—Be Aware of the Battle**

*“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.”* —John 17:15

In their travels, Jesus and His followers saw the effects of the enemy up close and personal. They witnessed how he and his fallen-angel followers (i.e., demons) wreaked havoc in lives. Jesus opposed and exposed the evil one: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

At the outset of Jesus’ ministry, the devil tried to trip Him up (see Matthew 4:1-11). How much more would he try to trip up Jesus’ followers? How aware are you of the evil one’s tactics and influence today? How might spiritual armor help with the

spiritual battle (see Ephesians 6:10-18)?

### Your Next Step

As we commit to these five ways to grow, we will live lives that look ever more like the picture seen in Psalm 1:1–3. When we walk with integrity before the Lord, our lives will be “like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers” (Psalm 1:3). What’s your next step toward such a flourishing life?

When we partner with God in our growth as a Kingdom citizen, the apostle Peter adds that there is a wonderful destination: “there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:11b).



## Show

Now it’s time to look back at what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal take-aways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

As you consider the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like—ask God to show you one or several people who need to hear what you are learning about growing as a Kingdom citizen. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find an abridged version of “5 Ways to Grow” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” handout in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to know this? When might you share it with him or her?

### Summary

When you came to God through Jesus Christ, you became a citizen of the Kingdom of God. You became a “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). You received a remarkable promise as well, that God who began a good work in your life would complete

it (Philippians 1:6). God's work in you will continue until the day comes when you, too, can declare: "End of Construction—Thank you for your patience."

Part 1 of the Kingdom Life journey has been all about Seeing a Kingdom Vision. There is a King, and you are not Him. There is a Kingdom, which is the realm of the King's rule, comprised of a people for His own possession who have been rescued out of the enemy's kingdom: "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13). How grateful are you that God invites you to be a Kingdom citizen?

As a "Kingdom kid," you can be sure that the King is there and cares deeply for you. As you will come to see when the Kingdom Life journey continues, God has a wonderful plan for your life! For more, let's turn our attention to the next signpost along the Kingdom Life journey, Relating to the King!

# Relating to the King

We are made for relationships! Our Creator is a relational God, He made us in His image, and He made us to “be fruitful and multiply” and relate well with Him and with other people (see Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 22:34-40). Imagine what life was like in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve enjoyed a pristine relationship with the King!

Then sin entered the world, and relationships—well, they became complicated. Adam and Eve no longer walked with God; they hid from Him (Genesis 3:7-13). They passed their brokenness along to their children, and one took the other’s life out of petty jealousy (Genesis 4:1-8). And so it goes. The devil is real—he is the serpent in the Garden, God’s enemy and ours. His aim is to steal, kill, and destroy . . . relationships (Genesis 3:1-7; John 10:10).

Yet as we have already seen, God did not leave us lost, alone, like sheep without a shepherd. In fact, Jesus told three stories in Luke 15 that resound with God’s heart for the lost and broken—the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, and all were found! Where there seemed to be no way, the King made a way for us to have a restored relationship to Him!

Part 1 of the Kingdom Life journey was all about **Seeing the Kingdom Vision**: There is a King, Creator of all; in His Kingdom, the King is creating a people for His own possession who will live with Him for all eternity; what’s more, He invites us to be Kingdom citizens.

In Part 2, we will see just how much the King has extended to each one of us an invitation to intimate relationship. The overall theme is **Relating to the King**. Specifically, we will see how the King enables us to **Abide** with, **Imitate**, and **Glorify** Him in our everyday lives.

To **Abide** is to maintain a very close and special union with God through Jesus Christ. Our union with Christ is foundational to our Christian lives. Only in Christ can we approach our Holy Father without fear of His wrath. Only in Christ can we hope to live in a manner pleasing to God.

We also have an opportunity to live in such close proximity to Jesus that we become like Him—we can **Imitate** Him. This is an overwhelmingly impossible task in our own strength. Apart from God we are weak and sinful people who fall short every

day. Yet the King gives us His assurance that He who chose us also molds us to be more like His Son every day. We can imitate Jesus!

Finally, as modern day followers of Jesus and citizens of His Kingdom, our heartbeat should be like that of the psalmist Solomon, who proclaimed: “Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!” (Psalm 72:19). In so doing, we relate to the King as we **Glorify** His great name!

Now, before you begin to process **Relating to the King**, pause once again and pray that God will open the eyes of your heart: that in His Word you will SEE each Kingdom principle; SEARCH and understand more fully what God reveals through His Word; STAND in the truths that He reveals; and SHOW in both word and deed these Kingdom principles to others in your circle of influence.

## CHAPTER 4

# Abide

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” —John 15:5*

### Invitation to Intimate Relationship

Jesus tells a wonderful story that well illustrates the King’s invitation to intimate relationship. On a day yet to come, there will be a banquet feast in the Kingdom of God. As citizens of His Kingdom, we are invited! The King Himself beckons us to come!

In Jesus’ parable,<sup>1</sup> He reflects the invitation this way: “And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled’ ” (Luke 14:23). The highways are the main roads—the King’s Highway and the *Via Maris*, “the way of the sea.” The hedges are the smaller connecting roads.

In saying it this way, the King invites faraway Gentiles along the highways to come to the table. The King also invites nearby Hebrews along the byways to sit side by side with them. This calls to mind the words of Paul, the “apostle to the Gentiles,” who said: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). This is an invitation to grace, mercy, and love. And it is an apt picture of the abiding relationship the King desires to have with each of us.

How do we arrive at that wonderful destination? That is what the Kingdom Life journey is all about. Thus far, we are better able to **See the Kingdom Vision**—the King, the Kingdom, and Kingdom Citizens. Here we begin to unpack how we can best **Relate to the King**. First step—abiding. How do we move toward and ever nurture an intimate relationship with the King?

It began when He took the initiative. When Jesus said that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17), He hand-delivered the invitation to attend the banquet! The apostle John put it this way: “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). His initiating love, John continued, brought us into the family of God: “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

Such truth prompted the apostle Paul to bless the King for His many blessings to

us: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3). What blessings? Paul elaborates (Ephesians 1:4-14). Christ the King:

- ⊕ *chose* us (v. 4)
- ⊕ *predestined* us for adoption (vv. 4-5)
- ⊕ *blessed (accepted)* us (v. 6)
- ⊕ *redeemed and forgave* us (v. 7)
- ⊕ granted us spiritual *wisdom and insight* (v. 8)
- ⊕ enabled us to receive a heavenly *inheritance* (v. 11)
- ⊕ *sealed* us with the Holy Spirit of promise (vv. 13-14)

As with Jesus’ first followers, entering into a healthy relationship with God through Jesus Christ began with Jesus’ invitation to consider His words and the personal implications, to “come and see.” Our relationship with Him goes deeper as we respond to His invitation to follow Him and be with Him in ministry.

And like His first followers, we grow deeper still in an abiding relationship with Him by means of such helpful practices as Bible reading and prayer, appreciating more and more what it is to be a member of God’s family, and telling others about the hope we have in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

As mentioned earlier, think of the banquet to which the King has invited us as the destination. There the King Himself will satisfy the deepest hopes and longings of His followers. Meanwhile, we continue to journey with Jesus toward this destination.

On this side of the banquet feast, Jesus reminds all who would embark on this journey also to “count the cost.”<sup>3</sup> Come what may, let us trust Jesus to guide us ever deeper into an abiding relationship with Him. Let us be open to His work in and through us. And let us go forward knowing that Jesus is intentional about forming the Kingdom of God within His followers.

As you proceed, we encourage you to prayerfully consider this question, “How can I put myself in the very best position to deepen my relationship with God through Jesus Christ day by day?” The more you do, the more fruitful your life will be—“for apart from me you can do nothing.”<sup>4</sup> The more you do, may you also be spurred on by growing anticipation of that wonderful day when the family of God will gather for the great banquet feast in the Kingdom of God!



## See

As you read the following verses from Colossians 2:20 and 3:1-3, consider what Paul tells us about abiding: “If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations . . . ? If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

In what sense have we died and been raised with Christ? How does this relate to our lives in Christ? Jot down a few ideas.

Our union with Christ is foundational to our Christian lives. Only in Christ can we approach our Holy Father without fear of His wrath. Only in Christ can we hope to live in a manner pleasing to God. Scripture pictures this union in a variety of ways, sometimes in word pictures and other times in statements that teach us about it.

Read Galatians 2:20 and Ephesians 2:11-16. What is God revealing to us through His Word about our union with Christ in each of these statements?

Now read 1 Peter 2:4-8 and Ephesians 1:22-23. What do these metaphors tell us about our union with Christ?

As these passages help us to see, we are one with Jesus Christ! We are in Him, and He is in us. In fact, we live in what theologians call a “mystical union” with Jesus. This is a mystery—a truth that we cannot fully explain in this life. Yet this is vitally important to our walk with God. If we are to live as Kingdom citizens who seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, we need to understand what God has revealed to us about this union. Going further, it is imperative that we abide in Him.



## Search

Read John 15:1-11. Now let’s take a closer look at how Jesus described the abiding life. To more fully grasp His meaning, consider the following principles and—as time permits—the additional verses and passages. Underline key words or phrases

and ponder what you see in your journey through the Scriptures. You will be asked to summarize your thoughts below:

First, Jesus is the True Vine (John 15:1, 4-5):

- ⊕ In Greek, the word “true” is *alethinos* (pronounced al-ay-thee-nos), which refers to “the real nature . . . in every respect”—for more, see Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 2:21; Hosea 10:1; John 1:9, 6:32
- ⊕ We depend on Him for growth and sustenance
- ⊕ We cannot bear fruit without our union with Him—Romans 6:1-11

Second, God the Father is the Vinedresser (John 15:2):

- ⊕ Jesus illustrated this in the Parable of the Tenants—Matthew 21:33-41
- ⊕ He removes fruitless branches—John 15:6
- ⊕ He prunes fruitful branches—Hebrews 12:7-11

Third, God blesses those who abide in Christ (John 15:4-5, 7-11):

- ⊕ In Greek, the word “abide” is *meno*, which refers to living, remaining—Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 2:1; 3:14; 10:23
- ⊕ The Father prunes those who bear fruit—Psalm 119:67, 71; Matthew 5:10-12; Romans 5:1-5; Hebrews 4:12; 12:7-11; James 1:2-4
- ⊕ All true believers bear fruit—Matthew 3:8, 7:17-20; John 15:4-5
- ⊕ All good fruit comes from Jesus and the Holy Spirit—John 15:4-5; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9; Colossians 1:10; Hebrews 13:15
- ⊕ God answers the prayers of those who abide—John 15:7
- ⊕ Those who abide in Christ glorify God—John 15:8
- ⊕ Those who abide experience Christ’s love—John 15:9-10; 1 John 4:7-12
- ⊕ Those who abide live in His joy—John 15:11; Psalm 16:11

Here is your opportunity to summarize your thoughts. In light of all that you have considered above, what is “the abiding life” and why is abiding with Jesus essential for Kingdom citizens?<sup>5</sup>

Now that we have a better grasp of what it means to abide with Jesus, let’s turn to the prayer He taught His disciples. For in it Jesus gives His followers a pattern for abiding that will surely draw us ever deeper in intimacy with the King!



One way we can deepen our abiding relationship with the Triune God is by praying the Lord’s Prayer regularly. Let’s consider what it looks like not merely to pray the words Jesus gave His first followers but also to use this prayer as a pattern for our

walking and talking relationship with God today.

It did not take Jesus' disciples long to notice that prayer—conversation with the Father—was a high priority for their Teacher! There came a point, in fact, when the disciples made a request: “Lord, teach us to pray” (see Luke 11:1).

Thus, Jesus gave them what is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer.<sup>6</sup> Yet it probably is more appropriately labeled the Disciples' Prayer, as Jesus explained to the disciples how they should pray. As a result, God has given us a roadmap on how He would like us to pray to Him. Think of each part below as a stand-alone way to praise and worship God.

There are two distinct sections, and both are about God. The first is a proclamation of who God is and His relationship to us, and the second is a proclamation of God as our provider. We move from praising and worshiping God for who He is to praising and worshiping Him for how He provides for us now and will continue to do so in the future.

As you follow this guided way to pray the Lord's Prayer, we encourage you to do two things. First, sincerely pray along as you are guided. Second, keep in the back of your mind that this pattern can be adapted in a number of ways in the future. How might you do so?

Based on Matthew 6:9-13, **Pray then like this** (v. 9):

- ⊕ **Our Father in heaven** (v. 9). *I praise You, God, for creating me, loving me, being my Abba (Daddy) Father, creating all that is good, being a good and powerful God, being in control. . . .*
- ⊕ **Hallowed be Your name** (v. 9). *I praise You, God, for You are holy, just, worthy of worship, trustworthy, more than enough for all my problems. . . . I exalt Your name!*
- ⊕ **Your Kingdom come** (v. 10). *I praise You, God, for You are Creator, Ruler, King of all. . . . Restore Your creation. Redeem Your people. Give us hope. Heal us. Be glorified!*
- ⊕ **Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven** (v. 10). *God, I submit to You. I give You my money, time, and talents; use them for Your glory. Help me share Your Good News and partner with You as You build Your Kingdom and Your church. Help me see and love others as You do.*
- ⊕ **Give us this day our daily bread** (v. 11). *I praise You, God, for providing for me, fulfilling my needs, and giving me more than I could ever imagine now and in the future. Help me to be thankful for what You have graciously entrusted to me.*
- ⊕ **Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors** (v. 12). *I praise You, God, for redeeming me, making a way so I can be with You, sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to die for my sins. Help me to forgive others and not judge them. Soften my heart.*

- ⊕ **Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil** (v. 13). *I praise You, God, for: protecting me, guiding me, giving me Your Holy Spirit, giving me Your Holy Bible, giving me Your church, surrounding me with others who love me, encouraging me. . . .*

Now it is your turn to talk with God in light of the Lord's Prayer as illustrated in the example above. With sincerity of heart before a listening King, fill in the blanks as you feel led:

- ⊕ **Our Father in heaven** (v. 9).

- ⊕ **Hallowed be Your name** (v. 9).

- ⊕ **Your Kingdom come** (v. 10).

- ⊕ **Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven** (v. 10).

- ⊕ **Give us this day our daily bread** (v. 11).

- ⊕ **Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors** (v. 12).

- ⊕ **Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil** (v. 13).

Want to give your spiritual life a boost? Memorize the Lord's Prayer. Then at any time you can simply recite it, meditate on each aspect of it, or adapt it in light of your particular situation to give you an instant way to praise and worship God wherever you are!

Here is one more suggestion, which is based on the fact that Jesus originally taught

His disciples to pray this prayer with one another—notice the first word, “Our.” And that is to find a brother or sister with whom you can pray this prayer.



## Show

Oh, to have an ever-deepening, abiding relationship with your God and King! Once again, we encourage you to look back at what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find “The Lord’s Prayer” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” handout in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to know this? Who would benefit from this encouraging way to abide with the King? When might you share it with him or her? Again, with whom might you get together and use this as a pattern prayer?

### Summary

As Kingdom citizens, our first privilege and responsibility is to build our relationship with our King, Jesus Christ. We have been brought into a vital union with Him. We must put ourselves in the very best position to cultivate and grow in that oneness. Practicing such spiritual disciplines as Bible reading and prayer will certainly help us go deeper in our abiding relationship with the King. They are a natural response to God’s manifold blessings to us in Christ.

Before you move on to the next lesson, why not take a moment to reflect on some of the great blessings that are ours in Christ? For instance, start with the seven listed in Ephesians 1:4-14: Christ *chose* us (v. 4), *predestined* us for adoption (vv. 4-5), *blessed (accepted)* us (v. 6), *redeemed and forgave* us (v. 7), granted us spiritual *wisdom and insight* (v. 8), enabled us to receive a heavenly *inheritance* (v. 11), and *sealed* us with the Holy Spirit of promise (vv. 13-14)!

These blessings describe the reality of who we are in Christ, and only on the basis

of what God has done for us can we move on to live obediently under His Lordship. Grace always precedes obedience. The more we abide with Him, the more we will embrace God's grace and live lives that honor and please Him. The more we abide with Him, the more we will imitate and glorify Him, which are the subjects of the next two chapters!

## CHAPTER 5

# Imitate

*“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” —Ephesians 5:1-2*

### “They Had Been With Jesus”

In the days that followed Jesus’ ascension and the Holy Spirit’s arrival upon His followers, the early church experienced extraordinary growth! We read about it in the first several chapters of the book of Acts. There was a time when Jesus fed the 5,000, yet many were in it only for the meal. By Acts 4, that’s the number of *faithful followers* who had become citizens of the Kingdom—5,000 and growing by leaps and bounds!

Clearly, God was using Jesus’ first followers, the disciples, to make a Kingdom difference in their world. As Acts 4 opens, the same religious leaders who’d called for Jesus to be crucified became “greatly annoyed” with the apostles Peter and John in particular. Why? It’s “because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (Acts 4:2).

You see, Peter and John were filled with God’s Holy Spirit and living Spirit-empowered lives. In fact, by His Spirit they had healed a man lame from birth who’d made his living asking for alms from those who entered the temple.<sup>1</sup> God the Holy Spirit worked in them and through them—just as Jesus had foretold, just as Jesus had promised.

Remember, Jesus’ disciples started out with the invitation to “Come and see.” As they traveled and “did life” with Jesus, He trained and equipped them to carry on His mission. Along the way, He taught them to think big—the advance of the gospel of the Kingdom throughout the whole world.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, by His own example in training the Twelve, He taught them to do so in a seemingly small way—one relationship at a time.

As they traveled with Jesus, He performed numerous miracles—from healing the sick to casting out demons, restoring sight to the blind and bringing the dead back to life. What’s more, Jesus promised His followers they would be used of Him to advance the Kingdom as well.

Jesus put it this way: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:12-13).

How would that happen? Jesus continued: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:15-17).

Jesus can be trusted! He did exactly what He said He would do. As they walked and talked with Him, they came to imitate Jesus—who did “nothing of his own accord, but only what he [saw] the Father doing.”<sup>3</sup> Jesus empowered His disciples, as Peter and John in Acts 4 well reflect!

Rather than seeking reasons to believe the gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom, however, the religious leaders sought to silence the disciples and stop the gospel’s spread no matter the cost. One of them during those days was a Pharisee named Saul, who attempted to stop the spread of the gospel by tracking down and imprisoning Jesus’ followers—adherents of “the Way.”<sup>4</sup>

Yet when Saul encountered Jesus, his life would never be the same. Saul became Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, who would be used of God to spread the Good News far and wide. He would later exhort early church believers, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:1-2).

Of course, the faith is alive and well today—which attests both to its truth and the apostles’ faithfulness. Interestingly, these detractors of Jesus made an astute observation about His followers: “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

Though the apostles were told not to preach or teach in Jesus’ name, they prayed for God’s clear direction. Here is what happened: “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

Today, when a person trusts Christ, the Holy Spirit comes upon him or her.<sup>5</sup> Thus begins the process of sanctification—being formed by God’s Holy Spirit toward Christlikeness.<sup>6</sup> As we allow the Spirit to work in our lives, He produces within us the fruit of the Spirit, which we examined in Chapter 3.<sup>7</sup> This “cluster of virtues”—namely, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control—is not naturally produced. Rather, it’s evident as we, like those first followers, seek to be with and imitate Jesus.

Below, we will look more closely at our call to imitate Jesus, our King. We will examine how He enables us to do just that by the empowering of the Holy Spirit. And we will see what the Bible says about how to put ourselves in the very best position for the Spirit to work in and through us by practicing what we call the “put off/put on” exercise. May the journey continue!



*See*

Jesus explained to His disciples, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40). How can we become like our Teacher? When, if ever, will we be “fully trained”? Jot down your ideas:

By our own efforts, becoming like Jesus Christ is an overwhelmingly impossible task. Yet several times in the New Testament Paul encouraged people to “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”<sup>8</sup> What a bold statement! Are we willing to make such an assertion to others?

Paul had his moments of doubt.<sup>9</sup> He went through a process of maturing as a disciple, as we all must do. God met him at his point of need every step of the way. Like Paul, we can grow in our confidence that the God who chose us is also molding us to be more like His Son. Ponder these verses. What stands out as you do?

Regarding who will make us more like Jesus—Romans 8:28-30; 1 John 3:1-2:

Regarding how we become like Jesus—1 John 3:3; Colossians 3:1-17:

God guarantees that we will be like Jesus—we will indeed be empowered to imitate the King! As Kingdom citizens who seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, we will seek to be more and more like Him every day. The Holy Spirit assures us of success! This is the glory of the New Covenant, as Paul declared to the church at Corinth.



## Search

Let's look at a variety of Bible verses to see how the Holy Spirit transforms Kingdom citizens into individuals who imitate the King. Start by reading 2 Corinthians 3:1-18. In light of this passage and others provided, write your reflections in response to the prompts:

We are living letters—superior letters (2 Corinthians 3:1-3):

We are letters not merely written with ink; New Covenant letters—people (1 Corinthians 9:2):

Our sufficiency is from God (2 Corinthians 3:4-6; 1 Corinthians 15:10):

We can accomplish nothing in our own power: We are not *able*; we are not *qualified* (John 15:5):

All will be accomplished by the Holy Spirit's power: He makes us *able*; He makes us *qualified*:

In the space provided, engage with God. Simply reflect upon and/or pray in light of the following truths:

I. The work of the Spirit is exceedingly glorious (2 Corinthians 3:7-11; John 1:17)

1. The Old Covenant:<sup>10</sup>
  - a. It was a ministry of death
  - b. It had its own glory
  - c. Its glory was temporary
2. The New Covenant:<sup>11</sup>
  - a. The Spirit gives life

- b. It (new life) has even more glory
- c. It is permanent

## II. We are being transformed into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:12-18):

1. We have great hope
  - a. The Holy Spirit is at work in us
  - b. This hope leads to boldness
2. The Holy Spirit transforms us into the image of Christ
  - a. He releases us from the blindness of the Law
  - b. He frees us to behold the glory of the Lord
  - c. He gradually transforms us into the image of Christ

See how great is the Father's love for us in allowing us to live under the New Covenant? God has committed Himself to make sure that we become like His Son—that we are able to imitate Him. He has sent the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower us, and to transform us into the likeness of Christ. Our glorification is assured. In light of these glorious truths, what sort of people ought we to strive to be as citizens of the Kingdom of God? Read on!



# Stand

### “Put Off/Put On” Exercise

The Bible tells us that Kingdom citizens are to “put off” and “put on” certain characteristics. Before we look at two specific lists, let's remind ourselves of the reality of the Kingdom citizen as reflected in 2 Corinthians 5:17. This is the starting point for us in this “put off/put on” exercise.

Why is it important to begin here and keep this in mind throughout? How does Ephesians 2:8 support your response?

Again, before examining two specific lists, read 2 Peter 1:5-11; Colossians 3:5-7, 9b-12a; and Ephesians 4:17-24. In light of these passages, why should we, as the Bible

says, “make every effort” (2 Peter 1:5) to “put off/put on” these character qualities?

Now let’s turn our attention to two specific lists in the Scriptures. What are Kingdom citizens to “put off” and “put on”? Jot down your response in the following boxes:

“Put off”	“Put on”
Colossians 3:5-9	Colossians 3:12-16a
Ephesians 4:25-32	Ephesians 4:25-32

To “put off/put on” is a continual process, led by the Holy Spirit and God’s Word.<sup>12</sup> The “Belief–Become” model illustrates how we partner with God in *heart transformation*. Consider how the following passages illustrate the progression of this model:

- ⊕ See – 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- ⊕ Search – Acts 17:10-12
- ⊕ Stand – Ephesians 6:10-18
- ⊕ Show – Acts 4:19-21

As we seek to imitate the King, we can be sure that the enemy is all the more focused on causing us to fail. His aim? Rather than reflect the King, Satan fell because he wanted to be worshiped as King! He would not be content to imitate the King. Rather, his failed cause is to ultimately sit on the King’s throne! Thus, he will do all he can to rob God of the glory due Him. We are caught in a spiritual battle.

To help you engage in this spiritual battle, see the apostle Paul’s exhortation to pray



on the full armor of God in Ephesians 6:11-18.<sup>13</sup> Making a daily commitment to do so will help you to stand firm against enemy attack and to faithfully imitate the King day by day!



## Show

As this chapter on imitating the King draws to a close, we invite you to look back at what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find the “‘Put Off/Put On’ Exercise” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” hand-out in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to know this? Who would benefit from this helpful exercise? When might you share it with him or her?

### Summary

As modern-day followers of Jesus, we are citizens of God’s Kingdom. As such, the Holy Spirit is transforming us into the image of Christ. God has assured us that we will one day be like Him, for we will see Him as He is.<sup>14</sup> In light of this promise, we can be assured that He will continue to build our character and faith and enable us to become more and more like Him during our sojourn on planet earth.

When Jesus came to live among us, He encountered real people in the messiness of life, just as we do. He lived every moment of His life by the power of the Spirit. Consider reading the four Gospels once again, even if you have read them recently. Ponder how Jesus lived, and so learn how He would have us to live as citizens of His Kingdom here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The apostle John spoke about relating to the King—how abiding in Him (which

we looked at in the last chapter) naturally leads to imitating the King and gives us assurance for all eternity. He put it this way (1 John 4:17, TLB):

And as we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete; so we will not be ashamed and embarrassed at the day of judgment, but can face him with confidence and joy because he loves us and we love him too.

For now, pause and pray afresh that each aspect of your life is yielded to the Holy Spirit. Invite Him to “make Himself at home” in your heart—no hidden rooms, no secret places of darkness. If there is housekeeping to be done, let Him know that today is the day!

May we ever seek to honor our King by growing in Christlikeness. As we imitate the King, we definitely glorify Him in everyday life. And this is the subject of the next chapter!

## CHAPTER 6

# Glorify

*“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” —2 Corinthians 3:18*

### Seeing the King’s Glory

It seems everyone knows the story of Moses. We have seen it unfold on the big screen in such feature length films as *The Price of Egypt* and *The 10 Commandments*. The author of the book of Hebrews offers a helpful summary of Moses’ faith journey, starting with that of his parents:

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them (Hebrews 11:23-28).

When God first got Moses’ attention, it was by calling out to him from amid a bush that burned but was not consumed. God identified Himself, expressed just how much He loved the enslaved Hebrews, and explained that He would use Moses to lead them out of bondage. He promised to be with Moses all the way. And when Moses asked the Lord’s name in order to tell the Hebrews whom had sent him, God replied, “‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And he said, ‘Say this to the people of Israel: “I AM has sent me to you.” ’” (Exodus 3:14).

The book of Exodus unpacks the exciting story of Moses—how God did indeed use him to lead His people out of slavery and to the threshold of the Promised Land. Meanwhile, as Moses led God’s people out of Egypt, there came a time when Moses asked God to show him His glory.<sup>1</sup> He had been on the run from God, until the Lord used the burning bush to get his attention.<sup>2</sup> Since then they had come a long way in their relationship. So the Lord obliged.

Being in God's presence had an incredible impact upon Moses. First, he would trust God as never before both after seeing the Lord's glory and hearing the Lord's glorious self-revelation:

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin . . ." (Exodus 34:6-7a).

Next, it led him to bow in worship and request of the Lord to remain present among His people: "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us . . ." (see Exodus 34:9). From then on, whenever Moses would be in God's presence, the glory of the Lord stayed with him—so much so that his face shined with God's glory, which frightened God's people and prompted Moses to put a veil over his face.<sup>3</sup> Moses would discover, however, that the glory of God's presence would fade.

That all changed with Jesus, "the radiance of the glory of God" (Hebrews 1:3a)! As we have seen in our Kingdom Life journey, we have been extended an invitation to intimate relationship with the King. Along the way, He draws us closer into an **abiding** relationship with Him. There God is about the work of conforming us more and more into the image of Jesus, enabling us to **imitate** Him. The next stage of personal relationship is **glory**; that is, in His presence we see His glory, and in this world we reflect His glory to those around us. This is captured by the apostle Paul in this assurance to early church believers:

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The Lord has established His church to display His glory to all of the rest of creation, a mission given to us because first Adam and Eve and then Israel failed to accomplish it. God's family has been given the mandate to set an example to unbelievers,<sup>4</sup> and even to angels,<sup>5</sup> and, by doing so, bring our Triune God honor and glory and blessing.

Of course, this raises a number of questions: *What does this look like? How can we accomplish such an overwhelming task? How well are we doing?*<sup>6</sup> We will find answers to these questions and more as the Kingdom Life journey continues!



*See*

### **Reflecting the King's Glory**

At the climax of Psalm 72, Solomon prays: “Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!” (v. 19).

As followers of Christ, citizens of His Kingdom and members of His church, this should be our heartbeat. But how does the Lord accomplish this?

This is evident as well in the Westminster Confession of Faith (1643-1652), which was all about reforming the Church of England, yet it also holds practical relevance for Christians today. The Westminster Shorter Catechism puts glorifying God front and center. Its first question and response is this:

**Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?**

**A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.**

While the Westminster Confession of Faith declares that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, being raised in the United States, we tend to think of this as an individual mandate: “I need to glorify God with my life.”

While this is absolutely biblical, as mentioned above, God has ordained that His church—His people corporately—are to glorify Him as well. He has given us the church as the institution through which He will receive the glory due His name.

Reflect on these verses regarding God's dwelling place with His people:

Exodus 40:34-38:

1 Kings 8:10-11:

Reflect on these verses regarding His people gathered in the church:

Ephesians 3:20-21:

1 Peter 4:7-11:

The King will be glorified through His church, through His people joined together in fellowship with one another to worship Him. Yes, this is the local church, the bride of Christ, as messy and imperfect as she has sometimes proven to be through the ages.

As citizens of His Kingdom who seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, we must commit ourselves to one another to honor Him, so that “the whole earth [may] be filled with his glory!” But what is the foundation for accomplishing this?



## Search

### Living for the King's Glory

Let's take a quick walk through the first three chapters of Ephesians to reflect on how Paul pictures the church as one in Christ and living for God's glory. This will help us as Kingdom citizens better relate to one another and thus be radiant witnesses of God's glory.

1. We have all received the same blessings in Christ. Read Ephesians 1:3-2:10. Note the verse or verses next to the items you see below:<sup>7</sup>
  - a. Chosen in Him to be holy \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Predestined to adoption \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Redeemed in Him \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Revealed knowledge of the mystery of unity in Him \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Predestined for an inheritance \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Sealed in Him by the Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Assured of His power working for us \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Saved from God's wrath by His grace \_\_\_\_\_

In the last chapter we observed that these are blessings we *now* enjoy by virtue of the fact that we are in Christ. We receive them at the moment of salvation. God has poured out His grace all over us, and we have the incredible privilege of being citizens of His Kingdom.

2. We are fellow Kingdom citizens in Him. Read Ephesians 2:11-22 and note the verse or verses next to the items you see below.
  - a. He broke down all cultural barriers between people \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. He made peace between all His people through the cross \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. He is building us all into a dwelling place of God \_\_\_\_\_

We have every spiritual blessing in Christ. We are fellow citizens of His Kingdom. These are marvelous truths that give each one of us deep, abiding joy and gratitude toward the merciful God who bestowed them on us. Yet, God has an even greater purpose than our fulfillment. He uses us in relationship to one another as a witness to His own glory. We are an object lesson in God's wisdom for not only the watching world, but even angels in the heavenly places.

3. We are witnesses to God's glory. Read Ephesians 3:1-21 and note the verse or verses next to the items you see below.
  - a. He revealed His mystery to us \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. He manifests His wisdom in us \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. He displays His love among us \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. He shines His glory through us \_\_\_\_\_

After your survey of Ephesians 1-3 and the key principles that surfaced, reflect on what you have discovered:

Living in light of these truths is God's intention for His church—a people in relationship with the King who bask in His glory and reflect His glory in who we are and what we do. Now let's look at how we can glorify God in everyday life.



## Stand

### Glorify God in Everyday Life

Kingdom citizens long to see God's glory influence our homes, communities, even our nation and the world. We offer a hearty "amen" to the words of the psalmist Solomon when he said, "Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!" (Psalm 72:19).

This becomes more and more of a reality as we relate to the King—knowing Him, ever growing deeper toward an abiding relationship with Him, seeing Him touch and transform our lives "from one degree of glory to another" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The prophet Isaiah's encounter with the King of kings in all of His glory helps us to better see how the glory of God affects a life and has a far-reaching influence. This exercise will help you see God's glory afresh.

Read Isaiah 6:1-8 below. As you do, **underline or circle key words and phrases** that reflect upon God's glory, then answer the questions below.

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory!”

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

Review the key words or phrases that you marked. What stands out to you?

What does this passage tell us about the following?

Who God Is	What God Does	The Hope We Have

How did God relate to Isaiah and Isaiah relate to God? How does God relate to people today?

As God reveals His glory to individuals, He enables us to glorify Him and reflect His glory to people around us. Consider how God used faithful Isaiah, who said, “Here I am! Send me.” How have you seen God working similarly in your life, ever moving you “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18)?

Reverently, prayerfully, read through Isaiah 6:1-8 once again. What is God’s Spirit saying to your spirit? How would you express your heartfelt response in prayer?



## Show

Once again, it is time to look back at what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find “Glorify God in Everyday Life” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” hand-out in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to know this? Who would benefit from this encouraging way to glorify our great God and King and reflect His glory to others? When might you share it with him or her?

### Summary

“So God’s glory is the radiance of His holiness,” concludes John Piper of Desiring God Ministries, “the radiance of His manifold, infinitely worthy and valuable perfections.”<sup>8</sup>

The church—God’s people in relationship with one another—proclaims and lives the glory of God. Our activities, borne out of His image,<sup>9</sup> glorify Him. May all we do on earth be for God’s glory.<sup>10</sup>

As we glorify God, we reflect His glory to those around us. This truth is well illus-

trated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: “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 5:16).

The only question that remains is, “How well do we accomplish this?” Now that we better See the Kingdom Vision and Relate to the King, we are poised to address this more fully when we turn the page to the next signpost: Representing the King.

## Representing the King

In early church times, the apostle Paul was passionate that all people everywhere would have an opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom. His desire was to boldly proclaim this Good News of the King and His Kingdom far and wide, especially to those who had never heard. Even when imprisoned for the sake of the gospel, he was unstoppable!

Once, when called upon to make his defense before King Agrippa, he told his own story about how Jesus had captured his attention—and his heart. “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” Agrippa asked. Paul didn’t hesitate: “Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains” (see Acts 26:28-29, NIV).

In his letter to Christ-followers in Rome, Paul lamented that so few among his own people, the Hebrews, had trusted Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Paul was convinced that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (see Romans 9:30-10:13). What Paul said after that rings through the years as a clarion call for us to represent the King with the same passion:

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” (Romans 10:14-15).

Let’s do a quick review of the territory we have covered thus far in the Kingdom Life journey. Part 1 was all about **Seeing the Kingdom Vision**: There’s a King, Creator of all; in His Kingdom, the King is creating “a people for His own possession” to live in His Kingdom and presence for all eternity; King Jesus enables all who believe to become citizens of His Kingdom.

In Part 2, **Relating to the King**, we saw how the King draws Kingdom citizens ever closer to Him. He extends an invitation to intimate relationship: He enables us to abide with Him, imitate Him, and glorify Him daily. As we relate to Him, we no doubt catch the attention of a watching world.

This naturally leads us to Part 3, **Representing the King**. First, as an **ambassador**

of the King, we have the privilege of telling those around us about the beauty and benefits of God's Kingdom—and inviting them to become Kingdom citizens as well! As a disciple of King Jesus, we not only continue to become like our Master but to be His “hands and feet” to those around us—thus, a **disciplemaker** like the Master. Finally, as we live out our commitment to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we serve as an everyday **example** to everyone around us of being “all in” for Jesus!

Now, before you begin to process **Representing the King**, it's time again to pause and pray that God will open the eyes of your heart: that in His Word you will SEE each Kingdom principle; SEARCH and understand more fully what God reveals through His Word; STAND in the truths that He reveals; and SHOW in both word and deed these Kingdom principles to others in your circle of influence.

## CHAPTER 7

# Ambassador

*“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*  
—2 Corinthians 5:20-21

### “Here I Am! Send Me”

Imagine what it was like for Isaiah to see so clearly in his vision the Lord seated on His throne, “high and lifted up,” surrounded by angels calling out to one another, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”<sup>1</sup> What might have gone through Isaiah’s mind when he heard the King’s question, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Actually, Isaiah didn’t hesitate: “Here I am! Send me.”<sup>2</sup> That day he became an ambassador of the King!

While Isaiah said “Yes, *me!*,” you may recall that another man in Old Testament times replied just the opposite, “*No, not me!*”<sup>3</sup> The Lord called Jonah to be His ambassador to the Ninevites, the despised enemies of the Hebrews. Rather than proclaiming God’s compassionate message to needy people, Jonah headed in the opposite direction. Eventually, he landed in the belly of a whale, which afforded the unique opportunity to rethink his decision.

God in His grace gave Jonah a second chance. When the whale spat Jonah onto the shore, he wasted no time in turning around, heading toward Nineveh, and preaching God’s message of hope once he arrived. In the end, the Lord asked a piercing question that reflects His heart for the lost: “And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?” (Jonah 4:11).

As we have reflected throughout the Kingdom Life journey, much is at stake for those who do not come to God through Jesus Christ. God’s Word is clear, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. . . . For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 3:23; 6:23). That is why God sent His Son in the first place—to save us from our sins! That is why Jesus raised up disciples, whom He later called apostles—also known as “ambassadors for Christ” (see 2 Corinthians 5:20).

The apostle Paul used the title of “ambassador” not only for himself but for all who

would join him in following Christ. The title is full of significance! In using it, Paul emphasized the ministry of reconciliation entrusted to us as ambassadors of the King. We are charged with presenting His message of hope and peace through faith in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. We see the hostility removed between God and sinners whenever a person believes. We look on in great joy as God's enemies become His adopted children. *That* is amazing grace!

Yet the role of ambassador has many other facets. As we proclaim the gospel of reconciliation, because we are God's representatives, our lives must reflect our Master. For our message to have any credibility, for the sake of His reputation and as His official spokespeople, our central concern must be to please Him, to accurately and efficiently seek His glory, His honor, His praise above all else in our lives. That call involves every aspect of our relationships with others, as we will see later that Paul illustrates in the book of 2 Corinthians.

One more item to note: Sharing the gospel as a Kingdom ambassador takes courage. Consider Paul's life and ministry. On his first missionary journey as Jesus' ambassador to the Gentiles, those who opposed Paul pelted him with stones, dragged him out of the city, and left him for dead.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after, Paul and his fellow missionary Barnabas circled back, "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

King Jesus warned us ahead of time: "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b). Once again, serving as an ambassador to the King takes courage; ambassadors must remember that we are in a spiritual battle as we strive to advance into enemy-occupied territory. We are caught in the midst of kingdoms in conflict!

Yet when we consider the eternal consequences of those who die apart from trusting Jesus—and, again, why Jesus came in the first place as well as His mandate to "be my witnesses" and commission to "make disciples of all nations"<sup>5</sup>—may we faithfully heed the King's call to serve Him with our all as ambassadors for Christ!



### The Apostle Paul's One Heartbeat

Paul's singular heartbeat was to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ whenever and wherever he might be found. Not even a Roman prison could slow him down! In Ephesians 6:18-20, written while he was a prisoner in Rome, he urgently asked the church at Ephesus to pray for him, that he would boldly preach the gospel, "for which I am an ambassador in chains."

What do you think he meant by that phrase “an ambassador in chains”? How could he do this even though he did not have the freedom to go on missionary journeys as he had done in the past?

Paul better helps us to understand the implications of being a citizen of God’s Kingdom. As such, we are no longer our own, we have been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Jesus paid that price for us. In Him we are forgiven, cleansed from all sin, set free from the power of sin, and we live in the grace and mercy of God.

However, we live in His grace and mercy not simply for our own pleasure, but for His glory. Jesus has called each of us to deny ourselves, take up our individual cross daily, and follow Him.<sup>6</sup> Thus, as Paul put it, “we make it our aim to please him” (2 Corinthians 5:9b).

As we have seen earlier, following Jesus means spiritual transformation. The path leads to putting off old, sinful ways and putting on a new life of love and selflessness. It calls us to abide in the King, imitate Him in life and ministry, and glorify Him in daily life.

It also takes us to the privileged place of representing our King before others. Again, as Paul emphasized while imprisoned in Rome, we are to be His ambassadors. There are a variety of tasks ambassadors are called upon to fulfill in the service of the King.

What do the following verses tell us about the *manner of life* of an ambassador?

1 Peter 1:13-21:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27:

What do these passages tell us about the *role* of the ambassador in *witnessing to others*?

1 Corinthians 9:19-23:

1 Peter 3:13-17:

Indeed, the King has granted to His citizens the incredible privilege of representing Him to those around us.

- ⊕ We are His children, and to a watching world, our lives are a reflection of His parenting.
- ⊕ We are His people, and our family, friends, and co-workers see Him through us.
- ⊕ We are His ambassadors, and we are called to bring His message to those in our sphere of influence.

Paul develops this theme further in 2 Corinthians 5, to which we now turn in order to know better how we can represent Him more effectively.



## Search

### The Ambassador's Consuming Passion

During the days that Paul wrote his second letter to the Christ-followers in Corinth, the Roman emperor had what was known as Imperial Legates, ambassadors who represented the emperor. As his legal representatives, they would travel throughout the empire and deliver his messages. They had his same authority; when they spoke, it was as if the emperor himself had spoken. Of course, it was incumbent upon them to be faithful to his message!

Some were extended limited authority to negotiate, such as a treaty. For the most part, though, they would limit their activities to exactly what the emperor had instructed them to say and do. It is this term that Paul uses when he speaks of our role as Christ's ambassadors. All this is from God through Christ. As Paul put it, "that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:19-20a).

In light of this background, let us look at the ambassadors' all-consuming passion. It is evident in the message, motivation, and ministry of Christ's ambassadors. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:9-21**, refer to the additional verses in parentheses as well, and write a brief response to the prompts listed.

The Message of Christ's Ambassador:

The Message of Reconciliation—2 Corinthians 5:14-15<sup>7</sup>

⊕ The need (Romans 5:6-10; Ephesians 2:1-3):

⊕ The gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4):

⊕ The Great Exchange (2 Corinthians 5:21):

⊕ Reconciliation accomplished (Romans 5:1):

#### The Delivery of the Message

⊕ Persuade (2 Corinthians 5:11):

⊕ Implore (2 Corinthians 5:20):

#### The Motivations of Christ's Ambassador:

##### The Fear of the Lord—2 Corinthians 5:9-11

⊕ Judgment for rewards (Philemon 6):

⊕ Desire to please Him:

##### The Love of Christ—2 Corinthians 5:14-15

⊕ He died for us (Romans 5:5-10; John 3:16):

⊕ We live for Him (1 John 3:16-17; 4:7-21):

New Creations in Christ—2 Corinthians 5:16-17

⊕ Free from sin (2 Corinthians 5:19):

⊕ Alive to God (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 6:1-11):

⊕ Indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-11):

The Ministry of Christ's Ambassador:

Ministry of Reconciliation—2 Corinthians 5:18-20

⊕ Goal (Matthew 28:18-20):

⊕ Method (Acts 1:8):

⊕ Heart (Matthew 22:34-40):

⊕ Passion (Matthew 9:35-38):



## Stand

### How to Serve as a Kingdom Ambassador

Richard was startled by Jesus' words in Matthew 7:13-14, and rightly so. Here's what he read: "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that

leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

It’s a reminder that there are two kinds of people in the world: those who are on the road to destruction and those who are on the road to life.

What startled Richard most is the conversation he recalled having with a co-worker who decided he would take the road to hell. He casually declared to Richard, “I want to go there because that’s where all of my friends are.” It was at that moment that Richard realized his co-worker was no longer living—and had received exactly what he asked for.

If that’s disturbing, it ought to be. Richard had this realization in the midst of a morning Bible study with brothers who spur one another on in the way that’s hard but leads to life. Do you have such support? If not, why not look into it?

Meanwhile, in your role as a Kingdom ambassador, God will give you opportunities to help others understand the consequences of their decisions for or against Christ. To help you to prepare, here are three essential strategies.

### ***Strategy 1: Know the gospel***

One of Jesus’ earliest public messages was “repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Just before He ascended to heaven He commanded His disciples, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).

This is the primary way God brings people into the Kingdom. We are God’s ambassadors, using the gospel as His tool for building His Kingdom. If we hunger to be Kingdom men and women, if we delight in what delights our King, we will share the gospel with people around us.<sup>8</sup>

The first strategy, then, is to look at what the New Testament says about the gospel. What is this message of salvation? Let’s examine seven key phrases the apostle Paul used to describe the gospel in **1 Corinthians 15:1-8**.

**1. *the gospel*** (v. 1) – Only this gospel saves (also see Acts 4:12; Romans 1:16-17).

**2. *of first importance*** (v. 3). The gospel is the number-one priority. Discussing evolution versus creation, politics, or morality may simply prove to be distractions.

⊕ What are some other distracting peripheral issues?

⊕ If used correctly, peripheral issues could be avenues to the gospel message, but we must transition to the biblical gospel message as quickly as possible.

**3. *that He appeared*** (vv. 5-8) – This refers to eyewitness testimony of reliable people who could confirm Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection (also see 1 John 1:1-3).

**4. *most of whom are still alive*** (v. 6) – This points to testimony that is verifiable (also see Acts 4:13; God’s testimony is even greater than that of people, 1 John 5:9-13).

**5. *in accordance with the Scriptures*** (v. 3) – Biblical authority has been given in advance (also see Leviticus 16:1-22; Isaiah 53:4-12; Psalm 16:9-10; John 3:14-15; Numbers 21:4-9).

**6. *I preached to you*** (v. 1) – The gospel *must* be spoken, heard, and believed to have an impact (also see Romans 10:13-15, 17).

**7. *what I also received*** (vv. 3-4) – The gospel is about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ and how God uses these events to bring people into a relationship with Him. Because of the eternal implications of this, we need to dig a little deeper and get a better handle on these crucially significant historical realities:

⊕ The Bad News:

- Humanity is dead in sin – Ephesians 2:1-3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 1:18; 5:12; 6:23; John 3:36

⊕ The Good News:

- Christ died for our sins – 1 Peter 2:24; Colossians 2:13-15; 2 Corinthians 5:21
- The Spirit of God raised Jesus from the dead – 1 Corinthians 15:20-21; Luke 24:1-8; Romans 8:11
- By faith in Jesus, we have new spiritual life – Ephesians 2:4-10; John 10:10; Romans 6:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17

## ***Strategy 2: Pray the Scriptures***

The apostle Peter said, “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). The first step toward “always being prepared” to talk about the gospel is prayer—*honoring the Lord in your heart*. Prayer is an essential element in our practical preparation to tell others about Jesus. Not only does it prepare us, it also helps us to hear from God about how best to represent Him as His ambassadors.

⊕ Read Romans 1:16 and Acts 1:8. These verses tell us the gospel itself has power and the Holy Spirit provides His followers with power to share the gospel.

- Pause now to give God thanks for the power described in both of these verses.

- Ask God to use His truth to give you enthusiasm and confidence to share the gospel.
- ⊕ Read Matthew 9:35-38. Jesus describes a “harvest,” people ready to turn from darkness to God’s wonderful light (see Acts 26:18). This implies that many people are ready to be “harvested.”
  - Ask God to use you to lead specific people to trust Jesus as Savior and Lord.
  - Ask God to bring to your mind the names of unbelievers for whom you may pray to accept God’s salvation.
- ⊕ You know a number of nonbelievers. You know people in several ways, including family, work, neighborhood, community, activities, hobbies, and organizations. Use these categories to help you create a written list of nonbelievers’ names:

Family:

Work:

Neighborhood:

Community:

Activities:

Hobbies:

Organizations:

You may also find it helpful to write these names on a 3 x 5 card to keep in your Bible or prayer journal. Pray regularly for each one, that he or she may turn to Jesus.

- ⊕ Read 1 Corinthians 9:19.
  - In light of His Word, ask God what He expects from you when sharing Jesus' gospel.
  - In particular, ask Him to give you a servant heart in sharing the gospel.
  - Also ask for practical ways you can serve people on your list.
- ⊕ Read 1 Corinthians 9:20-22.
  - Ask God to enable you to relate to the people on your list through common experiences.
- ⊕ Read 1 Corinthians 9:23.
  - Ask God to subordinate your will and plans to the importance of sharing the gospel.
- ⊕ Pray for the people on your list in light of the following Scriptures: Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8-9.
- ⊕ Now pray for the people on your list in light of the following Scriptures: Romans 10:9-10; 5:1; 8:1.

### ***Strategy 3: Tell Your Story***

In early church times, in the face of severe persecution and strict warnings not to preach in the name of Jesus, the disciples Peter and John responded: “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20). That is an apt description of how ambassadors speak of their faith in Jesus: They *tell their story*. In other words, they “testify” or offer a brief “testimony.”

We have designed the chart on the next page to help you prepare your testimony. It also includes relevant Bible verses.

You have been praying for the nonbelievers you listed in light of the Scriptures in column one of the chart. These verses are part of a tool called the “Romans Road,” which lists Bible truths you can use to share the gospel.

Column two is headed by Romans 6:23. This column contains three time periods in your life—before, during, and after you became a follower of Jesus. Note how the “Romans Road” verses from column one correspond to the time periods in column two. Column two also provides a way for you to launch into a description of each time period in your life.

Column three provides space for you to write a short description for each time period. Follow the prompts with a few sentences each, and remember to include Scripture from column one.

The Romans Road	Romans 6:23 – <i>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.</i>	Personal Testimony – Sentences  John 9:25c – <i>“I was blind, now I see.”</i>
Romans 3:23 – <i>For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.</i>	I understand what it means to be <u>separated from God</u> . My <u>sinful choices</u> were . . .	[My life before knowing Jesus Christ – I was blind]
Romans 6:23 – <i>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.</i>		
Romans 5:8-9 – <i>But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.</i>	God finally got through to me about the <u>free gift of Salvation through His Son Jesus Christ</u> . This is how it happened . . .	[How I came to know and receive Jesus Christ – How I began to see]
Romans 10:9 – <i>Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.</i>		
Romans 5:1 – <i>Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.</i>	Since I received Jesus Christ into my life <u>everything has changed</u> . Here is what my life is like now that <u>I have been reborn</u> and have new life . . .	[My life after receiving Jesus Christ – Now I see]
Romans 8:1 – <i>There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.</i>		



## Show

Now it is time to look back at what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find “Know What You Believe,” “Prepare to Share the Gospel,” and “Tell Your Story” as “Ignite the Kingdom Life” handouts in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to hear your testimony? When might you share it with him or her? Also, who needs to know about these helpful resources? When might you get together and walk through them with a fellow Christ-follower?

### Summary

As Kingdom citizens who seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, we are called to represent our King as His ambassadors so that others can be reconciled to God.

In this chapter, we have highlighted how the apostles Paul, Peter, and John faithfully served as Kingdom ambassadors. As time permits, consider the lives of other men and women who were faithful ambassadors for Christ in early church times.

Here is another bright example: Philip (see Acts 8:5-40). He proved to be such a Kingdom ambassador that he is remembered today as “Philip the Evangelist”! Notice how he was part of fulfilling Jesus’ command to preach the gospel—“in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8)—as he proclaimed the Kingdom in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:12) *and* “preached Jesus” to the Ethiopian official (Acts 8:35).

Also consider the list in the “Hall of Faith,” Hebrews 11. And make a list of other men and women through the years who passionately proclaimed the gospel. May we, like them, be effective representatives of our King and ambassadors of His Kingdom!

## CHAPTER 8

# Disciplemaker

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*  
—Matthew 28:19-20

### Disciples Who Make Disciples

“I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do,” Jesus said at the opening of His High Priestly Prayer<sup>1</sup> (John 17:4). When He prayed this prayer, Jesus had not yet gone to the cross to die for the sins of the world. So what “work” had He accomplished?

As Jesus continued to pray to the Father, the answer became clear that He was referring to the work of discipleship—*making disciples who make disciples*. Jesus said, “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word” (John 17:6).<sup>2</sup>

In Chapter 3, we saw how Jesus had called His first disciples. They once were far off, part of the crowds. The more they followed Him, listened to His words and watched His actions, the closer they grew to Him. Along the way, they saw their own lives touched and transformed.

As they traveled with Jesus, they saw His compassion for the “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36) and grew in compassion themselves. When Jesus said that all of the law and prophets could be captured in two commands—“love God, love people”—the more their love deepened and their hearts became like His.<sup>3</sup>

By the time Jesus gave them the Great Commission, their training was complete: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). They were ready to help others know and grow in Jesus Christ!

Because the early disciples shared the Good News of Jesus in their lifetimes, faith continued to pass from one generation to another. Others who were far from God became Kingdom citizens, ambassadors, disciplemakers. Because of the faith of these first

followers, this is true of all who know Christ today: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13).

As Jesus’ present-day disciples, our lives are being similarly touched and transformed. As we seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, we become more and more like Jesus every day. With the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, we, like them, move from being *selfish* to *selfless*. By the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit,<sup>4</sup> we, too, represent our King with ever-growing humility and influence in others’ lives.

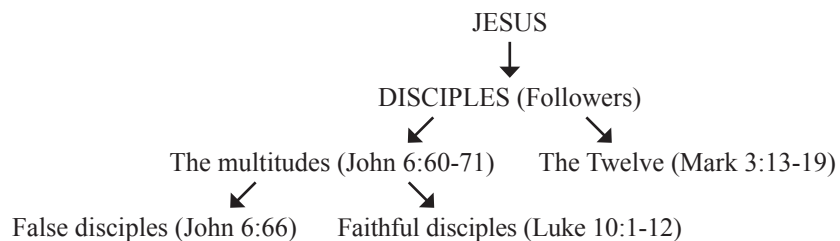
When it comes to representing the King, we have seen how Jesus calls us to be ambassadors of His Kingdom. Here we will look more closely at what it is to *be* a disciple of the King who is used by Him to *make* disciples of the King.

Jesus bids us to go into the world with the gospel of His great work on behalf of His people. For some, that means wherever we live, work, and play on a daily basis. For others, though, it may mean leaving the comforts of home to go where the gospel is desperately needed “out there.”

What is a disciple? The word “disciple” in Greek is *mathetes*, which means *a learner, a trainee*. It’s the most common name for followers of Christ in the four Gospels and Acts. Let’s consider what living as a disciple meant in Bible times and its application to Jesus’ followers of all time.

In ancient times, it was common for itinerant teachers to attract a group of men who followed and learned from them. These followers usually applied to the teacher to be one of his *disciples* and paid for the privilege, much like we apply for college or grad school today. Yet it was not so with Jesus’ followers. He selected them. He called them out of their own everyday lives. And He continues to do so today.

In fact, the New Testament word *disciple* as it relates to Jesus refers to two or three different groups of people. There was a general crowd of people who followed Jesus around, and there were also the Twelve apostles, a specific cadre of men chosen for special training and mission. It could be depicted like this:



These same groups exist today, so it is fitting for us to learn all that the Lord has revealed about being a faithful disciple—not a *false* disciple—and to follow Him with our all.

So let's take a closer look at what the Bible says about being a disciple and as such being used of God to make disciples!



See

### Old and New Testament Disciples

The Kingdom of God is inhabited by the disciples of Jesus Christ. We follow Him and learn from Him how to honor and glorify the Father by loving Him and loving our neighbors. It is a *process*, and it takes a *lifetime*. So if we are going to be Kingdom citizens who seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, we will learn all we can about becoming a disciple.

Read the following Bible passages and summarize your thoughts concerning what they teach us about becoming a disciple.

What do the following passages teach us about disciples in the Old Testament?

Isaiah 8:11-17:

Isaiah 50:4-6:

What do the following passages teach us about disciples in the New Testament?

John 9:24-34:

John 21:4-8:

What separates false disciples from true followers of Jesus? Let's consider this question in light of the Bible. Briefly reflect on the following principles that surface from these passages:

False disciples:

- ⊕ Are self-centered—John 6:25-34
- ⊕ See Jesus materialistically—John 6:41-59
- ⊕ Eventually turn away from Jesus—John 6:60-66

True disciples:

- ⊕ Cling humbly to Jesus—John 6:67-71
- ⊕ Follow Jesus over their families—1 Corinthians 7:25-35
- ⊕ Put Jesus ahead of themselves—Luke 9:23-27; Acts 5:41
- ⊕ Consider the cost—John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12-13; 2 Corinthians 11:16-29
- ⊕ Seek His Kingdom and righteousness—Psalm 73:23-26; Philippians 1:19-26; 3:2-11

Counting the cost relates to the character of all who seek first His Kingdom and righteousness. It involves our call to humbly seek His Kingdom over our kingdom, His will over our will, as we affirm each time we pray the Lord's Prayer.<sup>5</sup> One priority citizens of the Kingdom pursue is the second side of living as a disciple—being used of God to make disciples.



## Search

### Living a Great Commission Life

Jesus' disciples are actively involved in making other disciples, which flows out of seeking first His Kingdom and righteousness. Jesus did not give His followers the *Great Suggestion* to make disciples—if it is convenient; as time permits. It is not a recommendation; it is a responsibility! Let's take a closer look at what it means to live a Great Commission life.

By way of background, read Daniel 7:13-14. What did God enable the prophet Daniel to see about the coming King? How does this encourage Kingdom citizens to revere and honor our King?

With this in mind, let's look closely at the Great Commission, which is found in Matthew 28:16-20. How are the following principles reflected in this passage? What other Bible passages shed light upon Jesus' statements and thus better help disciples live in light of them?

True disciples worship their King:

- ⊕ Disciples recognize His authority:
- ⊕ Disciples depend on His presence in power:
- ⊕ Disciples make disciples:

By going:

By baptizing:

By teaching:

Becoming a disciple of our King involves a total life commitment. Living as disciples of the King involves offering our bodies as living sacrifices (see Romans 12:1). Disciples represent the King by the godly quality of our lives. We also represent Him by actively seeking to make other disciples by sharing the gospel and following up those who respond to help them grow in their newfound faith.

One of the best examples of a person who lived a Great Commission life is the apostle Paul. His discipling commitment is perhaps best captured in his exhortation to his disciple Timothy: “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

From Paul’s unique perspective, let’s look at three distinct stages of growth in Paul’s discipling of Timothy. How do the Bible passages provided help us understand what goes on in the three stages?

**Stage 1:** *Paul the spiritual parent* (Acts 16:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:2):

**Stage 2:** *Paul as spiritual pacesetter* (1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Timothy 3:10-11):

**Stage 3:** *Paul as spiritual baton-passer* (Romans 16:21; 2 Timothy 2:2):

What difference did Paul’s investment in Timothy make? More than we can imagine!

Consider the impact of Timothy’s life. First, he co-authored the following books of the Bible: 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

In 2 Timothy 4:6-8, Paul reflected that he knew his time was short. He was likely beheaded by the Romans in AD 68. Yet he had placed Timothy in Ephesus to pastor the church there. Thus, Paul’s protégé became *parent*, *pacesetter*, and *baton-passer* to an untold number of others!

Timothy continued to live a sold-out life for Jesus—just like the one who had disciplined him—even to a martyr’s death, which tradition holds happened in AD 97. ***How should we then live?***

Indeed, how can we wholeheartedly submit ourselves to be used of God to “make

disciples who make disciples” in everyday life? Consider the following proven method for helping “everyday Christians” to continue their own spiritual growth and to help others do the same. It is called Side-by-Side.<sup>6</sup>



## Stand

### How to Walk Side-by-Side

Do you have a friend you can trust and share openly with? A friend who brings out your best, prods you in your Christian life, and holds you accountable? Are you this kind of friend to at least one person? Would you like to be?

“Side-by-Side” is a way to make that happen—man to man, woman to woman. It’s two people who make a commitment to meet regularly for mutual growth, mutual support, and mutual accountability. More than merely going through the Bible study of their choice, Side-by-Side partners help each other “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (see Jude 3) in the midst of 21<sup>st</sup> century reality.

Side-by-Side partners may be traditional discipleship or mentoring relationships between “mature” and their protégé “young” disciples, such as Paul and Timothy or Elijah and Elisha. Or they may be “mutual discipleship” or co-mentoring relationships between any two believers—no matter where they are along the discipleship journey—such as David and Jonathan or Paul and Barnabas.

God’s Word paints a powerful picture of what happens when two people meet Side-by-Side. After Jesus’ crucifixion but before His followers grasped that He had risen from the dead, two down-in-the-dumps disciples walked together on the road to Emmaus.<sup>7</sup>

Though they didn’t recognize Him at first, suddenly walking right alongside them was their Master Jesus, the one who had promised them the Holy Spirit and said their works would even exceed His.<sup>8</sup>

They talked of the day’s sad events and examined them in light of the Scriptures—Jesus traveling with them—and everything changed. Their hearts burned within them as Jesus opened their eyes to the truth of His Word and to Himself. Their lives would never be the same!

When you commit to meet with a Side-by-Side partner, be assured that Jesus is in your midst. “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them,” He promises (Matthew 18:20). He will use you in your Side-by-Side partner’s life, and vice versa.

Here is a quick look at what happens when believers walk Side-by-Side

**Side-by-Side partners commit to:**

- ⊕ Meet weekly or regularly.
- ⊕ Prepare for meetings by completing each lesson in the selected study.
- ⊕ Be honest with and accountable to each other.
- ⊕ Pray for and encourage one another.
- ⊕ Repeat the process with another individual, as God leads.

Here is what you and your Side-by-Side partner can expect between and during your meetings.

**Between meetings:**

- ⊕ Complete the lesson—again, using the Bible study of your choice.
- ⊕ Continue to pray for one another and needs that have surfaced along the way.
- ⊕ Give a call; drop a note or email, Facebook, or Twitter message; or stop by simply to “check in.”

**During meetings:**

- ⊕ “Touch base”: Ask, “What are the best and worst things that happened to you since we last got together?”
- ⊕ Ask God to bless your meeting. Go through the lesson.
- ⊕ In an environment of grace and trust, watch for application and life evaluation in light of Scripture.
- ⊕ Hold one another accountable to mutually agreed-upon goals that emerge from your conversations, committing to God and each other to make head knowledge heart knowledge.
- ⊕ Close in prayer. Entrust to God commitments you’ve made along the way and prayer needs you’ve shared.

As the three of you journey together, Jesus will grow the two of you toward greater godliness.<sup>9</sup> Along the way, you and your Side-by-Side partner will have a friend you can trust and share openly with, bringing out one another’s best and in fact living out the “one another” exhortations sprinkled throughout Scripture. *Go for it!*



*Show*

Once again, it is time to look back at what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several per-

sonal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find “How to Walk Side-by-Side” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” handout in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to hear about this easy, inviting way to follow-up Christians—especially those who are new to the faith? When might you share it with him or her? Or perhaps the Lord has put a person’s name on your heart that you might walk alongside—someone in your family, at work, in your neighborhood or community, even someone at church. Pray about it! If God says “go,” when might you invite him or her into a Side-by-Side relationship?

## Summary

Nothing has changed since Jesus walked the earth. He still calls His followers to live as disciples who make disciples. This is what it means to live a Great Commission life. Jesus led the way in raising up His disciples, who went on to help others know and grow in Christ as well. Paul certainly is an apt example, as we have seen with Timothy, who is only one among many disciples Paul developed throughout his ministry.

How might you respond to Jesus’ call? Here are three responses from “everyday Christians” like us. One prayed, “Lord, give me twelve disciples, just like Jesus.” Another prayed, “Lord, give me one disciple per year for the rest of my life.” Perhaps the third person was the most ambitious; this individual asked God “for 300, just like Gideon’s Army.”<sup>10</sup>

What is your prayer? Why not take a moment to put it in writing and date it?

Kingdom citizens have the privilege of representing the King as ambassadors and “disciples who make disciples.” There is a third way we represent the King before a watching world, and that is as an example of the King. This is the subject of the next chapter!

## CHAPTER 9

# Example

*“And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” —Hebrews 6:11-12*

### Peter’s Journey with Jesus

Jesus is the Kingdom citizen’s example for life and ministry. Consider Jesus’ words: “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Jesus took it one step further when He paid the ultimate price for our sins: “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8).

As we think of all the life lessons Jesus taught His followers during His earthly ministry, one of the most profound lessons was that of practicing humility and service in washing the disciples’ feet.<sup>1</sup> Yet when Jesus told Peter, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me” (John 13:8), we realize that the lesson is far deeper than merely having clean feet.

Peter had pushed back, initially refusing to let Jesus wash his dirty feet. But after hearing Jesus’ response, he wanted to be cleansed head to toe. Yet Jesus said: “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean” (John 13:10a).

This interaction between Jesus and Peter serves to remind us that everyone needs a spiritual “bath”—to be washed in the blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. It also reminds us that we are responsible to help one another remain up-to-date with God and “clean” as we “wash one another’s feet.” Jesus said, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15).

In fact, as we trace the steps of Peter’s journey with Jesus, we better see what it looks like to follow Jesus’ **example** and become an **example** worthy of imitation as well. It began with a call to be a disciple, when a miracle catch caused this fisherman to realize he was in the presence of God!<sup>2</sup> That is when Jesus told Peter he would

become a “fisher of men,” and indeed he would!

There came a time when the crowds following Jesus started to thin, as false disciples began to pull away after contemplating the cost of following Him. But not Peter, who spoke up for the Twelve when he proclaimed: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:68-69).<sup>3</sup>

While Peter was a tower of faith at times, that’s not to say he never stumbled. Once he rebuked Jesus; another time he denied he even knew Him!<sup>4</sup> It reminds us that a person can be a positive example one moment and stumble the next. It also warns us that no one is beyond temptation. As the apostle Paul said, “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). Jesus would graciously restore Peter, which gives us hope that God still has a future for us beyond our failure—if we would only return to Him!<sup>5</sup>

While Peter had such “valley” times with Jesus, he also had quite the mountaintop experience with Him at what we know as the transfiguration—where he saw Jesus in all of His glory!<sup>6</sup>

After Peter declared Jesus to be the Christ, his Lord said to him: “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:15-18).

In following Jesus’ example, Peter fulfilled Jesus’ words! Not only did he step up in leadership during those early days after Jesus’ death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, he boldly carried out the gospel’s advance! He preached in what was literally called “the gates of hell”—Jaffa, Caesarea, and according to tradition, also in Rome. Along the way, he overcame personal prejudice, hatred, and contempt to follow in Jesus’ footsteps, carrying out the Lord’s mission “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10)!

Peter modeled following Jesus. Here is a major lesson he learned that he wanted to pass along to Jesus’ followers of then and today: “make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-8). As we follow Jesus’ example and Peter’s exhortation, we will become both *effective* and *fruitful*!

These were among Peter’s final words; the apostle of Jesus Christ knew that his time on earth was short.<sup>7</sup> Tradition holds that he was crucified in Rome under Emperor Nero—upside down, as he did not count himself to be worthy of being crucified in the same manner as Jesus—in the year 64, at the time of the Great Fire in Rome.

Peter took seriously following Jesus' example, for "whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:6). In so doing he became an example for others through the years to follow. To his dying breath, Peter would proclaim: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (1 Peter 2:24-25).

Truth is, we all are examples—for better or worse! How should we then live?



*See*

### **"What Kind of Example Am I?"**

As followers of Christ and representatives of our King, it is imperative that we become like Him. All of us, whether we like it or not, are examples for those around us. Professional athletes may declare that they are not role models for children, but that does not change the fact that they are! The same is true of us who claim to be citizens of God's Kingdom. The only question we must face, then, is this: "What kind of example am I?"

Consider the following words of Jesus that He spoke at the outset of the Sermon on the Mount: "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).

Look again at the above verses—underline or circle key words or phrases that particularly strike you. Especially in light of what you highlighted, what does Jesus say about being an example?

Now let's take a look at several other Bible passages to see what God has to say to us about the importance of living as an example before a watching world.

What kind of example did Israel prove to be?

1 Corinthians 10:1-13:

Romans 2:17-24:

What kind of example did Abraham and Job leave for us?

Romans 4:1-12:

James 5:7-11:

As citizens of God's Kingdom, we have our Lord's assurance that He will complete His work in us (Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 12:1-4). As we have mentioned throughout this Kingdom Life journey, all modern-day followers of Jesus are "in process." Through the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are all becoming more and more like Jesus, who stands as our supreme example.

As we walk in the power of the Spirit, continue to drink deeply of God's Word, and seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, we will grow in Christlikeness so that we can say along with the apostle Paul, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).



## Search

### Living Examples of Christlikeness

There are a number of Bible passages that encourage and exhort us to live as godly examples—from the lives of the judges and kings in the Old Testament to the apostles and each man and woman listed in the Hebrews 11 "Hall of Faith" in the New Testament.

Here we will look at Titus 2:1-15. The apostle Paul wrote to one of his disciples named Titus, pastor to the churches on the island of Crete. On his first missionary journey, Paul, along with his traveling companion Barnabas, launched these churches. Now Titus is in place to support the churches, such as by appointing elders to provide the necessary day-to-day leadership.

The Holy Spirit prompted Paul to write this letter to Titus to counter the words of false teachers who had come to the island. Paul pulled no punches: "They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work" (Titus 1:16). Yet as we will see in this passage, in addition to Titus and the elders he appoints (see Titus 1), God has placed a variety of people in all stages of life to be godly examples for those around them.

Read Titus 2:1-15. Let's look at Paul's instruction to Titus about raising up examples of Christ-followers in the church to model faith not only where they worship but

also in everyday life.

First, let's look at the **imperative** of being an example. Read Titus 2:1, 7, 15 and reflect on what it says about showing others your own example and helping others to be examples:

Second, let's consider the **foundation** for being an example. Read Titus 2:1, 10, 11-14 and reflect on what it says about Christlikeness—how it fits with (Titus 2:1) and adorns (Titus 2:10) sound doctrine—and how sound doctrine produces Christlikeness (Titus 2:11-14):

Third, let's look at the **people** who are to be examples. Read Titus 2:2-10 and reflect on what it says about the following individuals as examples:

- ⊕ Older Men—Examples of Enduring Dignity (also see Job 12:12; Psalm 71:17)
- ⊕ Older Women—Examples of Reverent Teachers
- ⊕ Young Women—Examples of Loving Wives (also see Proverbs 31:10-31)
- ⊕ Young Men—Examples of Sensible Living
- ⊕ Bondservants—Examples of Respectful Workers

Finally, let's look at the **purpose** of being an example. Read Titus 2:5, 8, 10 and reflect on what these verses say about how being an example honors God and His Word (also see Romans 2:17-24); silences critics (also see 1 Peter 2:8, 10); and adds beauty to the teaching of Scripture:



### Five Ways to “Be an Example”

When it comes to having a vibrant walk with God, we need look no further than Jesus Himself as our ultimate example. In Jesus’ life and ministry, we see a clear picture of what it looks like to live a life that glorifies, honors, and pleases the Father.

Long before Christ healed one person, cast out one demon, and ultimately went to the cross to die for the sins of the world, clearly the Father was pleased with Jesus’ character—with who He was—which is reflected in His words at the outset of Jesus’ public ministry: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17b).

The apostle Paul offers an excellent model to follow as well, yet he is sure to clarify that we are to follow him only to the extent that he follows Jesus: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). He is among many godly examples throughout the Bible we can learn from!

It is Paul who counseled his young protégé Timothy to live a life worthy of imitation, for those around him would look to Timothy to model the way. Paul put it this way: “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

As in early church times, people today are looking for examples of what it looks like to be “all in” for Jesus. What about us? How might God use Jesus’ modern-day disciples to be living and breathing examples to follow? What can godly examples teach us?

Certainly the five ways Paul gave Timothy to “be an example” are an ideal target for us! Let’s look at each one. As we do, prayerfully consider what the Holy Spirit is saying to your spirit in light of being a godly example . . .

***In Speech*** — “Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body” (Proverbs 16:24). Words can build up or tear down—which shall it be? Godly examples use words to encourage, admonish, comfort, confront,

strengthen, equip, empower.

*“Words which do not give the light of Christ increase the darkness.”*  
—Mother Teresa

**In Conduct** — “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). You can’t go wrong by asking, “What Would Jesus Do?” (WWJD)! Godly examples have come to God through Jesus; seek to be led by the Spirit; and model in action living like Jesus.

*“What we do flows from who we are.”*  
—Chuck Colson

**In Love** — “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7). Godly examples love by who we are, what we say, and what we do; we pursue justice, show mercy, reflect compassion for all people, and demonstrate care.

*“You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.”*  
—Amy Carmichael

**In Faith** — “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). Godly examples regularly read the Bible, pray, witness, fellowship, and seek His priorities, will, way.

*“Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable, and receives the impossible.”*  
—Corrie Ten Boom

**In Purity** — “And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). Godly examples are purified by Jesus’ once-for-all sacrifice and seek to be up-to-date with Him each day. Godly examples are holy, innocent, blameless, and seek to walk humbly before God.

*“I can’t overemphasize the value of a pure life.  
A curiosity about evil weakens our spiritual life.”*  
—Charles R. Swindoll

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Now more than ever, may we be godly examples—in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity! In the words of Billy Graham, “We are the Bibles the world is reading; we are the creeds the world is needing; we are the sermons the world is heeding.”

So, what is the Holy Spirit saying to your spirit? Where are you strong? What might

need to be improved? What practical “action steps” will help you better live a life worthy of imitation?



## Show

Once again, it is time to look back at what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find “Five Ways to ‘Be an Example’ ” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” hand-out in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to hear about these very practical ways to model faith day by day—to live a life worthy of imitation? When might you share it with him or her?

### Summary

When a Christian leader experiences moral failure, the story is all over the news. What’s more, people looking for any excuse to deny the faith point to the people involved. It is a convenient reason to reject the faith: “See, that’s why I don’t go to church! It’s full of hypocrites!”

In fact, Jesus’ most scathing denouncements came against the religious leaders of His day. Their walk didn’t match their talk, they laid heavy burdens on people that they themselves could not carry, they sought to impress people, retain power, prove themselves superior to those around them. This was their example before a watching world, and Jesus called them *hypocrites*.<sup>8</sup>

Although we may not be “Christian leaders” and the news media may not be camping outside our door to get an exclusive, still, the world is watching. What will they see when they look at you and me? *Am I a person of integrity or more like a Pharisee?*

As Kingdom citizens who seek first Jesus' Kingdom and His righteousness, we desire to be living examples of Christlikeness. We want to be authentic and live the faith we profess. We yearn to avoid hypocrisy and honor God with our lives. We realize that means having an accountability partner—being real, authentic, and honest with another Christ-follower. Yet we know that there is no substitute for a healthy, up-to-date, walking-and-talking relationship with God. When this is a reality, we will well represent the King—as His ambassadors, disciplinarians, and examples!



# Living with Kingdom-Minded Purpose

We have covered a great deal of territory on this Kingdom Life journey thus far, using Matthew 6:33 as our guide: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

We introduced this study by pursuing the King and His vision for us—there is a King; He rules over His Kingdom and its advance into enemy-occupied territory; and, by His grace, the King enables us to escape the enemy’s clutches and become citizens of God’s Kingdom!

We continued with a fresh look at how we relate personally to the King—He extends to us an invitation to intimacy to abide with Him, imitate Him, and glorify Him.

And then we sought to determine how to effectively represent the King—how to serve Him as His ambassadors, disciplinarians, and examples to the people around us.

Now, as we enter the final quarter of the Kingdom Life journey, as Kingdom citizens we are asking this central question, **“How do I live this out in my everyday life?”**

We certainly have marching orders from our King:

- ⊕ “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39).
- ⊕ “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).
- ⊕ “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20)

One day our mission will be complete: The world will be reached with the Good News of Jesus! In fact, Jesus put it this way: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

Until then, again, it is incumbent upon us to do everything in our power to live with Kingdom-minded purpose: in our homes, where we work, and in our world!

Now, before you begin to process **Living with Kingdom-Minded Purpose**, it is time once again to pause and entrust this final stretch of the journey to the Lord. Ask Him to open the eyes of your heart: that in His Word you will SEE each Kingdom principle; SEARCH and understand more fully what God reveals through His Word; STAND in the truths that He reveals to you; and SHOW in both word and deed these Kingdom principles to others in your circle of influence.

## CHAPTER 10

# In My Home

*“And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” —Joshua 24:15*

### The Rock from Which You Were Hewn

As we think of “family,” the prophet Isaiah has an enduring challenge for us: “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug” (Isaiah 51:1). This isn’t merely for people in Bible times, but it is a call for present-day Kingdom citizens to consider the lives of the people who have gone before.

As we seek to live with Kingdom-minded purpose, the primary place we are called to do so is in the home—among our families. Isaiah’s words challenge us to consider the legacy we received and our desire to leave a God-honoring legacy that will outlive us—through our immediate and extended families, and also through our spiritual family (as the apostle John said to his spiritual son, Gaius, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth,” 3 John 4).

There certainly are a variety of family situations throughout the Scriptures! Let’s take a moment to consider the family relationships of the Old Testament patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph—their spiritual journeys, their lives and times, their extended family relationships (some healthy, others not so much).

As we do, let’s consider this family from the perspective of **Joseph**—the last of the patriarchs. From his perspective, **previous generations**—the “rock from which [Joseph was] hewn”—include the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Abraham’s life is detailed in the Old Testament, from the first mention of his name—Abram, at the time—in Genesis 11 to his death in Genesis 25. Notice his unique call by God (Genesis 12:1-3), glimpses of faithful living (e.g., Genesis 15), and also several challenges he faced along the way (e.g., Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18). Abraham certainly had his challenges as father; still, in light of his trust in God, he’s remembered as “the father of all who believe” (Romans 4:16, NLT).

Now let’s look at **the present generation**. Joseph’s father, Jacob, lived quite an inter-

esting life, which led to his huge family. Jacob's life spans from Genesis 25:19 to Genesis 49:33. His 12 sons—Joseph is the eleventh—would become the 12 tribes of Israel.

There are quite a number of challenges along the way, however. As we focus on our immediate and extended family, consider glimpses of challenges Joseph faced with his brothers. The story begins when Jacob marries and starts a family in Genesis 29 and continues through Genesis 50.

Joseph's story itself spans Genesis 37–50. Challenges include his jealous brothers' agreement to sell him into slavery (Genesis 37:18-35) with all its repercussions, what happened when he first reconnected with his brothers (Genesis 42-45), and what occurred when his brothers feared retribution (Genesis 50:15-21). Most of all, we are struck by God's divine intervention in and through the life of Joseph, which affected not only the Hebrew people but the peoples of the world!

Now let's consider **future generations**. Again, the patriarch Jacob's life spans from Genesis 25:19 to Genesis 49:33, and his sons became the 12 tribes of Israel. In Hebrews 11, read God's affirmation concerning the patriarchs (11:8-22). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are all listed. Jacob is specifically mentioned for this: "By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff" (11:21).

Consider the particular time, place, and investment in the next and future generations as demonstrated by Jacob. In Genesis 49, read how Jacob blessed his children. Just before that, in Genesis 48, read how he blessed Joseph's children in particular—this in light of all God had done in and through Joseph's remarkable journey. Thus, he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh. In Genesis 48-49, picture this patriarch and his intentional efforts to leave a legacy of faith for his family.

This journey through the lives of the patriarchs from Joseph's perspective is an apt example for us to ponder. It helps us consider "the rock from which [we] were hewn," those in the previous generation, and those in the present generation. It draws our attention to future generations—and begs the question concerning what we can do today to invest in the next and future generations.

Answering this question will better enable us to live with Kingdom-minded purpose in the home!



### God's Vision for the Family

Indeed, we live in a time of much confusion regarding the family. Over the past half

century or so traditional relationships have come under intense criticism from those who do not believe in absolute truth. Contrary to the Bible, they promote sexual “freedom,” challenge gender roles, advocate homosexuality, question the value of parents in the lives of children, and so forth. What God says about the family is under attack.

Even within the church as a whole we find a growing uneasiness and questioning of traditional conceptions of the family and relationships. In the face of almost universal cultural challenges, many Christians have begun to lose God’s vision for the family as one of the foundation stones of His Kingdom purposes.

But God has not left us to flounder in the whims of a culture that rejects Him. He has given us His Word and His Spirit and revealed His purpose for our families.

Read the following verses and reflect on wisdom from God in relation to the family:

Proverbs 18:22:

Psalm 127:3-5:

While Scripture seems to indicate that most of us will be most satisfied in life with a family to share it, God has not called everyone to this situation. Reflect on the following passages:

Matthew 19:10-12:

1 Corinthians 7:25-38:

While not everyone must be married, the Lord has revealed Kingdom purposes for the family that we, as citizens of His Kingdom, need to understand and apply. We must know and live out His will so that those outside the Kingdom will observe and give glory to our King.

So what has God said about His purpose for the family? Let’s go back to the beginning and hear how the Lord Himself addresses this question.



## Search

### Kingdom Purposes for the Family

God has ordained the family as the first institution through which He manifests His glory to the world and builds His Kingdom. Let's take a look at the first marriage—where it all began, in the Garden of Eden. Read Genesis 2:15-24 and reflect on Adam's **calling** and his **helpmate**:

God reveals Adam's calling in Genesis 2:15-17. Read the passage, meditate using the prompts provided, and write your reflections on Adam's twofold task—to work ('abad) and to keep (samar) the Garden:

- ⊕ God's provision of His own presence as well as every green plant:
- ⊕ God's test—one prohibition; severe penalty for disobedience:

God provides Adam with a helpmate in Genesis 2:18-24. Read the passage (also additional verses provided) and write your reflections on the following topics:

- ⊕ God's purpose—to display His glory in His people; to display His glory in His Kingdom (also see Genesis 1:26-30; Isaiah. 43:7):
- ⊕ Adam's need—"It is not good . . ." (Genesis 2:18); everything else is good (see Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31):
- ⊕ God's object lesson—Adam named the animals; there is no one found like Adam (Genesis 2:19-20):
- ⊕ God's gift—Adam's helpmate, Eve; Adam's declaration (Genesis 2:21-23):

- ⊕ God's means of fulfilling His purpose—marriage and family (Genesis 1:26-31); to build His Kingdom (also see Genesis 1:28; 12:1-3; 17:1-8); the purpose of relationships (also see Ephesians 5:31-32):

Family is God's idea, and since He is our Creator, the Father definitely knows best! In light of this, marriage and family cannot be defined by the culture around us. When God calls a man as a husband and father, when our King ordains a woman to be a wife and mother, He places both of them in a high position indeed. Husbands and wives display the relationship of Christ and His church to a dying culture. Fathers and mothers must raise the next generation of Kingdom citizens to carry on the work of the King.

If we want to be Kingdom followers who seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, we will begin in our own families!



## Stand

### Raising Up a Family of Faith

Just as marriage is God's idea—a very *good* idea—so the family is His idea. Here's how the psalmist puts it: "God settles the solitary in a home" (Psalm 68:6a, ESV). Other translations use the word "family" or "families"; for example, "God sets the lonely in families" (NIV).

All of us come from families. Granted, not all have had ideal family circumstances. **Yet we who live with Kingdom-minded purpose long to instill faith in our families.** It is our heart's desire to **leave a legacy of faith** that will endure for generations until Jesus returns. In order to do that, we must be intentional.

#### 1. What roles do you play in your family?

Yes, God has placed each of us in the family. Yours may be larger than you realize! Here is an opportunity for you to list your immediate and extended family. Think of your particular roles; for example, if you are married, you're a *spouse*; if you have kids, you are a *parent*; if your kids have kids, you're a *grandparent*. **List the names of your living relatives, each person related to you in the following roles (include other family relationships, such as step-families):**

I am the great-grandchild of:
I am the grandchild of:
I am the child of:
I am the sibling of:
I am the niece / nephew of:
I am the cousin of:
I am the spouse of:
I am the son-in-law / daughter-in-law of:
I am the brother-in-law / sister-in-law of:
I am the parent of:
I am the parent-in-law of:
I am the aunt / uncle of:
I am the grandparent of:
I am the great-grandparent of:

## 2. What is your vision for your family?

Look over the list of your immediate and extended family. What are your hopes and dreams for each one? Let's consider an example of a parent in Bible times who stood as a picture of faith for his family. Jacob and his family are among the people mentioned in Hebrews 11, often called the great "Hall of Faith." Jacob pondered a vision for his family as he stood before them near the end of his life: "By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff" (11:21).

We will look more closely at biblical blessings below, how Jacob blessed his sons. For now, ponder this picture: a patriarch who has a vibrant relationship with God longing to leave a legacy of faith for his family. Now write out the legacy of faith you long to leave:

## 3. What actions will you take now toward realizing the vision you have for your family?

You've thought through a vision for your family, the legacy of faith you long to leave. As you seek to realize that vision—enduring faith until Jesus' return—the apostle Paul offers relevant counsel that it's not going to just happen. You need to take action: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it" (1 Corinthians 9:24). What would it look like for you to "run for the prize" of instilling a godly legacy in your family?

Let's return to Jacob's example. In the book *The Blessing*, Gary Smalley and John Trent observe key commitments Jacob and others throughout the Bible made in blessing their families.<sup>1</sup> They say that the blessing as described in Scripture always includes five elements:

- ⊕ Meaningful and appropriate touch
- ⊕ A spoken message
- ⊕ Attaching high value to the one being blessed
- ⊕ Picturing a special future for him or her
- ⊕ An active commitment to fulfill the blessing

As you seek to "run for the prize" in terms of instilling a legacy of faith in your family—keep in mind each name listed above—how might the five attributes of the blessing inspire you?

#### 4. How might this affect your prayer life?

In closing, entrust to the Lord your vision of a legacy of faith. Along the lines of making “an active commitment to fulfilling the blessing,” determine to pray regularly for each name that appears above—adding names as your family grows. Keep in mind the words of James, Jesus’ half-brother, “the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (James 5:16b).



## Show

It is time once again to look back at what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find “Raising Up a Family of Faith” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” hand-out in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to hear about this practical way to intercede on behalf of their whole family? When might you share it with him or her?

### Summary

Ponder the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23b-38. With each name you will be reminded of Old Testament stories of victories and defeats.

Among the women mentioned in Matthew’s genealogy is Ruth. You may recall that Ruth’s story revolves around her, her mother-in-law Naomi, and a man named Boaz (see the book of Ruth), how Naomi influenced her daughter-in-law for good and for God. It is interesting to note that Ruth was a Moabite, an outsider to the Hebrews. This story is a good reminder that no matter where you came from, the rock from which you’ve been hewn (Isaiah 51:1), the choice is yours how you will

be remembered in the lineage going forward.

Who's in your genealogy? Keep in mind the people you listed in STAND above: "I am the great-grandchild of, the grandchild of, the child of, the niece / nephew of, the son-in-law / daughter-in-law of. . . ." Prayerfully examine your genealogy. Consider glimpses of their lives—times when they encountered God, lived lives of faith, had their own challenges along the way, and so forth. How is God leading you to pray in light of "the rock from which you were hewn"?

For example, it may be expressing gratitude for faithfulness or confessing sin for unfaithfulness (see Nehemiah 1, where Nehemiah confessed not only his own sins but those of his forebears). You may wish to record your prayer here (use additional paper, if needed):

What is God saying to you in terms of making it practical—for example, showing appreciation to someone who sacrificed to help you become the person you are today; forgiving someone whose sin directly or indirectly affected you (whether or not this person's still living); confessing generational sins; and so forth? What is your best next step?



## CHAPTER 11

# Where I Work

*“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” —Colossians 3:23-24*

**New View of Life at Work**

Kingdom citizens work for the Lord, whether we are actively working “8 to 5,” serving our families in the home, studying a field or trade before beginning a career, retired and serving in a new chapter of our life’s work or service, volunteering, or any number of other types of work. You may be starting at the bottom of the corporate ladder or the chief executive officer!

Question is, is God interested in what you spend 40 to 60 percent (or more!) of your time doing? Of course He is! Since God is invested in your entire life, there is no question He is absolutely invested in your work. He has gifted you with special skills and abilities that He expects you to put to good use.

Consider Paul’s words to Jesus’ followers in Ephesus: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). Did you catch that? God has uniquely wired you to do the “good works” He has *prepared in advance* for you to do! You are a steward of those gifts and skills for His glory.

Where do we work? *Everywhere!* Our work is not merely defined by a job. Whatever it is we do, we labor at something or toward a goal. This applies to all that we are attempting to accomplish as we use Matthew 6:33 as our guide: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

We looked at Joseph’s journey in the previous chapter. He is an example for us in all of life and work in particular. As we see in Genesis 37-50, Joseph walked with God throughout his travels. His faithfulness in every job he had before him glorified God and ultimately fulfilled God’s plan to rescue Israel from Egyptian bondage. Whatever his responsibilities, no matter the hardship, he gave it his all and ultimately showed those around him the God whom he served.

Another example for us is the “excellent wife” spoken of in Proverbs 31:10-31. She is given responsibility, trust, authority, and praise. She set about accomplishing all

that she could in such a way that brought a commendable return for her efforts, managing well all that she was responsible for. She brought glory to God through her efforts and priorities—and, again, proved to be an example through the years and to this very day!

We find many more examples in the New Testament as well—from Paul the “tent-maker,” along with Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1-3), to Lydia, a seller or merchant of purple cloth (Acts 16:14). An example in Jesus’ day was Zacchaeus, not only a tax collector but a “chief” one at that (see Luke 19:1-10)! You may recall his story. Since Zacchaeus was a small man, he climbed a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus as He was passing through town.

To Zacchaeus’ amazement, Jesus looked up, fixed His eyes on him, and invited Himself to Zacchaeus’ home for a meal! In addition, Jesus affirmed Zacchaeus’ change of heart when this tax collector talked about a new way of doing business going forward: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold” (Luke 19:8). Suddenly, the chief tax collector glimpsed a new view of life at work—seeing his profession from God’s perspective!

Work has changed considerably for us over time. Our work used to represent a family trade, something that was handed down from generation to generation. Generally speaking, today’s workplace is consumed with improving the bottom line. A job may be downsized, right-sized, merged, split, reimaged, or bought-out. But, again, whether retired, employed, out of work, in a stay-at-home role, or serving as a volunteer, our aim is to do so with Kingdom-minded purpose.

As we get into God’s Word in this chapter, we will find wisdom and receive clear guidance regarding how we are to think about and carry out our work.



*See*

### **How God Sees Our Work**

Indeed, God has ordained work as an institution through which He would build His Kingdom. As we will see, when we determine to walk according to the Scriptures, the result is God’s blessing as He transforms the worker, the work, and the workplace itself!

What do we learn from the following verses about God's view of work?

Ephesians 6:5-9:

Colossians 3:22-4:1:

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12:

Clearly, what we do is of great importance to God! The work of our hands matters to our King! There is more to learn about how He sees work. Consider the following passages and jot down your additional reflections about how God views work:

Acts 20:31-35:

2 Thessalonians 3:6-12:

Matthew 5:13-16:

In the Bible, God has revealed Kingdom purposes for our work that we need to understand and live by. We are to serve others through our work and not become a burden to those around us. As we do the work He has given according to His will, people outside the Kingdom will observe and give glory to our King.

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## Search

### God's Purposes for Work

So what has God said about His purpose for work? Let's start at the beginning, before the fall in the book of Genesis. Read the following passages and reflect on wisdom from God in relation to work.

First, let's see how work is a creation mandate—it is *good*. Read Genesis 1:26-31 and reflect on the responsibilities God has given mankind in terms of rule and dominion: subdue (*kabash*) the earth and exercise dominion (*radah*) over the animals:

Second, let's examine the responsibilities God gave to Adam. Read Genesis 2:15-24 and reflect on God's command to work (*'abad*) and keep (*shamar*) the garden and to name the animals:

Third, now let's consider work under God's curse. Read Genesis 3:17-19 and reflect on how sin affected work—the effects being frustration, toil, sweat; thistles and weeds:

Finally, let's consider how work became diversified. Read Genesis 4:17-22 and reflect on how the need for creativity arose—construction, herdsmen and farmers, musicians, blacksmiths:

Look over your reflections above. How would you summarize what God has said about His purpose for work?





# Stand

## Faith in the Workplace

**True or false:** You are serving God more if you are a pastor or a missionary than if you are a plumber, homemaker, teacher, soldier, and so forth. **False!**

In his book *The Great Divide*, Mark Greene talks about what he calls the *sacred/secular divide*: “[This divide] leads us to believe that really holy people become missionaries, moderately holy people become pastors, and those who are not much use to God get a job.”

In Genesis 2:2, Exodus 20:9-11, and elsewhere we read that God ordained work and rest and reminds us that He set the example both in working six days and in resting on the seventh day. Clearly, work is divinely established by God and is holy and not secular (Colossians 3:23).

God intended work to tap into our creative selves, to be a source of provision for our family, to care for the world, and to be a place of community.

Here are five ways Kingdom citizens experience faith at work. Taking time to reflect upon the passages and questions provided will broaden your perspective of how God is at work in your workplace:

### *Carrying Out Kingdom Purposes*

Every job, every role, contributes to the Kingdom work God is doing in this world. At its root, the word “ministry” means “service.” Looking at a person’s whole life as belonging to God, work is for God’s glory, and the workplace is our place of ministry and service to Him and toward what He is doing in this world.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 and Ephesians 2:8-10. How does Paul show us that work is our place of service?

### *Building Character and Faith*

Your work is an opportunity to grow in Christ. For example, God uses hard work to cause us to depend on Him and to develop our character (Galatians 5:22-23). How we work and deal with adversity says a lot about who we are, and is part of God’s refining process in our lives (Psalm 66:10). It is not simple or easy, and we might get in over our heads at times, be embarrassed, fail, lose sleep, and struggle, but being

challenged is no reason to stop trying (Proverbs 18:9).

In light of these statements and verses, what areas of your own character is God developing for His purpose in your workplace?

### ***Reflecting the Kingdom Life***

Whatever your work entails, Kingdom citizens work for Jesus. Knowing this prompts us to work with excellence, creativity, and a servant's heart. Read Colossians 3:23-24 and consider what it says about the Kingdom citizen's work ethic and the ultimate Boss you serve.

As you live out this passage in the workplace, how significant and satisfying can your work be? What kind of influence might this have?

### ***Spurring Spiritual Conversations***

There are some key traits that stand out as a witness for Christ. Your co-workers can respect you for your excellence, competence, and faithfulness. Diligent work no matter the task gets people's attention! Excellence (not perfection) draws attention for good (Proverbs 22:29; 24:30-34); competence comes in using and developing your God-given skills and learning to trust others (Matthew 25:14-30); and faithfulness is doing what you say you will do (Luke 16:10).

How might developing excellence, competence, and faithfulness in your work open the door for spiritual conversations with co-workers?

### ***Meeting Practical Needs***

One of the products of work is income, which enables you to pay bills, provide for needs, and save for the future. Income also allows the opportunity to be generous with tithes, offerings, and alms, especially in areas beyond one's immediate circle of influence (Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Proverbs 30:8-9; and 1 Timothy 6:6-11 and 6:17-18).

In light of these verses, how might you allow God to change your thinking about how you use the resources He provides to you through your work?

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Eric Liddell, British Olympic champion runner (*Chariots of Fire*) and missionary to China, put it this way: “I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure.” How Liddell stewarded his God-given gifts and skills is an example for us.

As a Kingdom citizen who seeks first God’s Kingdom and righteousness in every aspect of life, prayerfully consider how He wants you to steward your gifts and skills. What practical step(s) might you take today toward better doing so—all to the glory of God (Colossians 3:17)?



## Show

Now it is time to review what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find “Faith in the Workplace” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” handout in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to hear about God’s view of work? When might you share it with him or her?

## Summary

God has given us influence in different parts of His Kingdom; in addition to our families, He goes before us as we accomplish the tasks that He has entrusted to us. God gives us purpose in our work in which He makes His glory known to the world and advances His Kingdom.

We are not specifically defined by what we do, yet it is part of who we are. It reflects how He has uniquely fashioned or shaped us to make a God-honoring difference in

this world—more than we may readily see, especially as we seek to glorify Him in all we do.

God has provided us with creativity, integrity, influence, an audience, income, and even ability to assist others—all in the mighty name and for the sake of Jesus. Doing our work as if we are working for the Lord is one of the primary ways that we live with Kingdom-minded purpose!

Once again, along this Kingdom Life journey, Matthew 6:33 is our guide: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” In this section we have been addressing the question, “How do I live this out in my everyday life?” What does living the Kingdom vision look like in the family? In the workplace?

One more question surfaces concerning living the Kingdom Life: “Practically speaking, how do I live with Kingdom-minded purpose in my world—including my leisure time?” As you do, may this cadence of six days of work and one day of rest be a blessing to you as you continue to serve the King in your work—your ministry in His Kingdom!

## CHAPTER 12

# In My World

*“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” —Micah 6:8*

### Walking with a Kingdom Cadence

Here’s where we left off in the last chapter in terms of Living With Kingdom-Minded Purpose—Where I Work: *May this cadence of six days of work and one day of rest be a blessing to you as you continue to serve the King in your work—your ministry in His Kingdom!*

We call this maintaining a **6/1 Kingdom cadence** (or simply **Kingdom cadence**) in our walk with God. This refers to the cycle or rhythm that God modeled for us and blessed us with. It’s living a balanced life, a life with Christ as Lord over every aspect of it seven days a week, with a cadence of “six days of work and one day of rest” (see Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:9; 34:21).

It is living with Kingdom-minded purpose—not only *in my home* and *where I work*, but in every aspect of my life—*in my world!* A variety of passages from the Bible help us better understand the Kingdom citizen’s call to walk with such a Kingdom cadence day by day.

Consider, for example, this observation from Psalm 90, a prayer of Moses: “The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away” (Psalm 90:10). However many years God gives us, it seems the older we get, the more we become aware just how fast the days, months, and years go by!

And consider this reflection from Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, from the report of King Solomon on his search for the meaning of life:

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
 a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
 a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
 a time to keep, and a time to cast away;  
 a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
 a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
 a time to love, and a time to hate;  
 a time for war, and a time for peace.

What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

These words from Moses and Solomon tell us that the cadence of life in their day was not much different than it is in ours. Even Christ-followers can get so caught up in the frantic pace of day-to-day life that we miss the truly important—a walking and talking relationship with God—with what has been called “the tyranny of the urgent”!

Consider what these additional passages reveal about walking with a Kingdom cadence. Let's begin with the words God gave Moses to give to His people toward the end of the wilderness wanderings—and to us by extension—in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

In addition, throughout the Kingdom Life journey we have referred to similar words from Jesus, “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

These passages point us to the heart of Kingdom living, heeding the King's call “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). In this closing chapter, you will see how to live with Kingdom-minded purpose day by day, “in but not of the world.”



*See*

### **Kingdom Cadence: A Creation Ordinance**

A number of themes emerge from the Bible passages below about living out the Kingdom life in this present age. Look up each and reflect on what it says about how walking with the Kingdom cadence—working six days and resting one day a week—is built into creation:

- ⊕ Rest/Recreation is a creation ordinance by God's example – Genesis 2:1-3:
  
- ⊕ It is the first thing in the Law to which God imparts His holiness and sets apart to Himself . . . “Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” – Exodus 20:11:
  
- ⊕ It is a sign of the covenant with God, “a sign forever” – Exodus 31:13, 17:
  
- ⊕ It is a day of rest, “a covenant forever” – Exodus 31:16:
  
- ⊕ It is absolutely essential to maintain a Kingdom perspective in light of day-to-day challenges – Psalms 34:8; 42:1-2; 46:10; 63:1-5; 131:1-3:
  
- ⊕ It foreshadows Christ – Colossians 2:16-17:
  
- ⊕ It pictures future eternal rest – Hebrews 4:3-10 (especially vv. 9-10):

⊕ The Sabbath is made for people – Mark 2:23-28:

⊕ The Kingdom cadence is for the glory of God – 1 Corinthians 10:31:

Review your responses above. In light of what you have written down, how would you describe the importance of living life with a Kingdom cadence?



## Search

### Kingdom Cadence: New Testament Models

Men and women throughout the Scriptures walked with a Kingdom cadence—we have already looked at the lives of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph in Old Testament times; and, time permitting, you may wish to look at the faith walks of such New Testament saints as Mary, Jesus’ mother (Luke 1:26-56); Stephen, the first martyr (Acts 6, 7); and Mary, Lazarus’ sister (John 12:1-8).

Here let’s look more deeply at three New Testament models, Jesus, Paul, and the early church. After considering each example in light of the Scriptures provided, briefly summarize what you gleaned about walking with a Kingdom cadence.

#### *Looking to Jesus—Our Ultimate Example*

The Kingdom cadence is demonstrated **in Jesus’ life and ministry**

- ⊕ A picture of Jesus’ growing-up years involved an incident at the temple – Luke 2:41-52
- ⊕ Notice how naturally Jesus countered Satan’s temptations with Scriptures – Luke 4:5-8
- ⊕ Amid grueling ministry, Jesus modeled taking periods of rest – Mark 6:30-31, John 6:15
- ⊕ Jesus demonstrated the importance of time with the Father throughout Matthew 5-7, “The Sermon on the Mount”; for example, notice the beat of the Beatitudes: “Blessed are you” statements (Matthew 5:1-12); consider Jesus’ expectation that His followers would pray (“And when you pray,”

- Matthew 6:5-15) and fast (“And when you fast,” Matthew 6:16-18)
- ⊕ Jesus trained up the Twelve with a Kingdom cadence – John 17:6-20
  - Revealing God: He taught them how to live God-glorifying lives (v. 6a)
  - Giving God’s Word: He taught them what God requires (vv. 8a, 14a, 17)
  - Praying for them and those who believe through them (v. 20); e.g., us (v. 9)
  - Living life together: “Christianity is more caught than taught” (v. 12a)
  - Protecting them: He taught about the enemy (v. 12b; see John 10:10)
- ⊕ Jesus emphasized a “GREAT life” Kingdom cadence
  - The GREAT commission: Matthew 28:18-20
  - The GREATest Commandment and Second Like It: Matthew 22:34-40
  - The GREAT need in light of the GREAT (plentiful) harvest: Matthew 9:35-10:1
  - The GREAT mandate to “be my witnesses”: Acts 1:8

Summary: What I learned about walking with a Kingdom cadence from the life of Jesus:

### *Following Paul—As He Follows Jesus*

The Kingdom cadence is demonstrated in **Paul’s life and ministry**

- ⊕ Paul and his companions demonstrate the Kingdom cadence on his missionary journeys:
  - “And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down”: Acts 13:13-15
  - “And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer”: Acts 16:11-13
  - A time to make tents . . . a time to go to the synagogue – Acts 18:1-4
- ⊕ “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” – see Philippians 3:12-16; also 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
- ⊕ Worthy of imitation—*tears* for the lost – Philippians 3:17-4:1; also, 1 Corinthians 11:1

Summary: What I learned about walking with a Kingdom cadence from the life of Paul:

### *The Early Church Models the Way*

The Kingdom cadence is evident **in the early church**

- ⊕ “that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” – See Acts 3:19-21
- ⊕ “addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always” – See Ephesians 5:15-21
- ⊕ “teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” – See Colossians 3:12-17
- ⊕ Additional “one another/each other” verses – For example, see John 13:34; Romans 12:10; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:32; Hebrews 10:24-25

Summary: What I learned about walking with a Kingdom cadence from the early church:



## *Stand*

### **Spiritual Secrets for Kingdom Living**

It is eye-opening to see how Jesus emphasized walking with a Kingdom cadence in a number of “the Kingdom of God is like” parables in the Bible—such as Matthew 13:1-52, Mark 4:1-34, and Luke 8:4-18; 13:18-21.

Why did Jesus speak in parables? That’s what His disciples asked Him, and you’ll find His answer in Matthew 13:10-17, 34-35. In a nutshell, Jesus said it’s to help people “to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven” (v. 11).

In the following exercise, prayerfully consider what “spiritual secrets” He reveals about walking with a Kingdom cadence in these parables from the Gospels of Matthew and Mark in particular.

#### *Parable of the Sower*

Read and prayerfully consider the Parable of the Sower and its explanation in Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23. What characteristic(s) of walking with a Kingdom cadence do you see in this parable (e.g., spreading the word around with the aim of fruitfulness)?

As a Kingdom citizen who seeks to fully live the Kingdom Life, how is Jesus calling you to live in light of this parable?

Reflections:

### ***Parable of the Weeds***

Read and prayerfully consider the Parable of the Weeds and its explanation in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. What characteristic(s) of walking with a Kingdom cadence do you see in this parable?

As a Kingdom citizen who seeks to fully live the Kingdom Life, how is Jesus calling you to live in light of this parable?

Reflections:

### ***Several Additional Kingdom Parables***

Read and prayerfully consider the final four parables recorded in Matthew 13 (vv. 44-52): Parables of the Hidden Treasure, Pearl of Great Value, the Net, and New and Old Treasures. What characteristics of walking with a Kingdom cadence do you see in these parables?

As a Kingdom citizen who seeks to fully live the Kingdom Life, how is Jesus calling you to live in light of these parables?

Reflections:

### ***Parables of the Growing Seed and the Mustard Seed***

Read and prayerfully consider the Parables of the Growing Seed and Mustard Seed in Mark 4:26-34. What characteristic(s) of walking with a Kingdom cadence do you see in these parables?

As a Kingdom citizen who seeks to fully live the Kingdom Life, how is Jesus calling you to live in light of this parable?

Reflections:

### ***Conclusion***

Take time to reflect upon what the Holy Spirit is saying to your spirit about these characteristics of the Kingdom. How might these parables—spiritual secrets—help you to walk with a Kingdom cadence and thus better live with Kingdom-minded purpose day by day?

Reflections:



## *Show*

Finally, look over what you have written and highlighted throughout this lesson and consider the following questions: What are several personal takeaways for you? What practical action step(s) emerge?

Take a moment to think of the people you see on a regular basis—family members, neighbors, co-workers, fellow churchgoers, and the like. Ask God to reveal to you one or several people in your world who need to hear some of your takeaways. Who can you get together with soon to share some of your insights and practical action steps?

You will find “Walking with a Kingdom Cadence” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” handout in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). Who needs to hear or be reminded of Jesus’ parables and what they reveal about walking with a Kingdom cadence? When might you share this handout with him or her?

## Summary

We live in a world that constantly calls for our attention, challenges us, and tempts us. We also live in a world in which the King has purposed to build a Kingdom of people who glorify Him as He uses us to advance the Good News of the Kingdom.

In light of the Bible passages and your reflections throughout this chapter, think about what it would look like for you to live with Kingdom-minded purpose in your world. Write down your prayer, vision, or reflections on your desire to walk with a Kingdom cadence:

In closing, consider two additional passages:

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. – Ephesians 5:15-21

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. – 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

As Kingdom citizens, may we walk with a 6/1 Kingdom cadence and strive for godly balance in every area of life. As the people God has placed around us look on at our lives, may we model the Kingdom Life every place that we go, in all that we say, and in all that we do.



# Conclusion

*“And he (Jesus) said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.’ ”*  
—Luke 18:29-30

## Living Out the Kingdom Call

One day the Kingdom of God will be fully realized, and we have an awe-inspiring picture of what that will look like in Revelation 7:9-12:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

We long to be in that number, and we long to be used of God to help many, many others “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” to be there as well! In a nutshell, this is what the Kingdom Life journey is all about—living all out “for the sake of the kingdom of God”!

In light of this, here is an opportunity for you to review the places this journey has taken us and prayerfully consider practical goals in light of each of the four “sign-posts” passed along the way:

- ⊕ Seeing the Kingdom Vision
- ⊕ Relating to the King
- ⊕ Representing the King
- ⊕ Living with Kingdom-Minded Purpose

As you revisit each site you have seen along this way, we encourage you to remember the lessons you learned, monitor your progress on commitments you’ve made,

and set goals that will help you live in light of our theme verse: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).



## Seeing the Kingdom Vision

Here we met the King. Indeed, to become Kingdom citizens who seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, we must have true thoughts of God. As a result of the fall, when Satan deceived Adam and Eve, sin entered the world, we became confused and lost our way. We must know and worship the *God Who Is*, rather than a god of our own—or our culture’s—fabrication. We need to be more like God’s Kingdom citizens in Scripture, who, though fallible and weak like us, saw clearly the majesty and power of God who is always with us.

We examined the importance of understanding the King’s purpose for us. All of human history has been and continues to move toward God at work creating a people for His own possession; a people upon whom He can bestow His love and blessing; a people who, in turn, will give Him glory forever; a people chosen from every tribe and tongue and nation.

Finally, we looked at our role, the invitation we have to be Kingdom citizens. It’s the King who builds His Kingdom, yet He enables us to work on His behalf. He left us on this planet to be His ambassadors, representing Him in all we do. Whether at work, with our families, or enjoying our recreation, we are to be about the business of our King. *It really is all about Him, not us!*

Develop a Kingdom Vision for how you can fulfill your role in the Kingdom.

1. We encouraged you at the outset to take some time each day to think about *the God who is—the King of kings and Lord of lords*. If you haven’t done so already, what might this look like in everyday life? Is there a particular Bible verse or two that captures this vision for you? If so, write it down as well.
  
2. How would you assess your progress toward the vision you stated above? Where are you today in light of where you would like to be?

3. Commit to at least one SMART goal—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound<sup>1</sup>—that you can accomplish in the short term (anywhere from one to two weeks) and will get you one step closer to achieving the Kingdom Vision that God has given you.



## Relating to the King

Here's our second signpost—relating to the King. We began with an examination of what it is to **abide** with King Jesus. Our union with Christ is foundational to our Christian lives. Only in Christ can we approach the throne of God without fear of His wrath. Only in Christ can we hope to live in a way that pleases God. We live in what theologians call a “mystical union” with Christ. This is a mystery, a truth that we cannot fully explain in this life, but that has vital importance to our walk with God. To live as Kingdom citizens, it's imperative that we abide in Him.

We also looked at what it is to **imitate** the King. Yes, we have an enemy who seeks only to steal, kill, and destroy (see John 10:10), and sometimes we lose ground in the spiritual battle—and so did the apostle Paul. But, like Paul, we have confidence that Jesus always leads us into ultimate victory (2 Corinthians 2:14). The God who chose us is also molding us to be more like His Son. Indeed, God guarantees that we will one day be like Jesus. So as Kingdom citizens, we aim to be more and more like our King, knowing that the Holy Spirit assures us of success. This is the glory of the New Covenant.

Finally, we examined what it is to **glorify** the King. Remember, to glorify means removing the spotlight from ourselves—which is the “default setting” of mankind—and placing it upon God. He is worthy of all praise, adoration, and worship. As followers of Christ and citizens of His Kingdom, this should be our heartbeat—even the cadence of our steps. In addition, not only individually, God has ordained that His people corporately must glorify Him as well. He has given us the church as the institution through which He will receive the glory due His name!

1. With the King being our priority of priorities, develop a personal vision of how you will grow in your relationship with the King. Write it down here. Is there a particular Bible verse, or two, that captures this vision for you? If so, write it down as well.

2. How would you assess your progress toward the vision you stated above? Where are you today in light of where you would like to be?
  
3. Commit to at least one SMART goal that you can accomplish in the short term (anywhere from one to two weeks) and will get you one step closer to achieving the Kingdom Vision that God has given you.



## Representing the King

We've come to our third signpost—representing the King. He has called us as His **ambassadors**, as Paul understood while imprisoned in Rome. In Ephesians 6:18-20, written as a prisoner, he urgently asked the church at Ephesus to pray for him, that he would boldly preach the Gospel, “for which I am an ambassador in chains.” As ambassadors, we are called upon for a variety of tasks in the service of our Lord as we carry out the incredible privilege of representing Him to those around us. We are His children, and, to a watching world, our lives are a reflection of His parenting. We are His people, and our co-workers and friends see Him through us. We are His ambassadors, and we are called to bring His message to those in our sphere of influence.

We also represent the King as **disciplemakers**. It was common in ancient times for itinerant teachers to attract a group of men who followed and learned from them. These followers usually applied to the teacher to be one of his disciples and paid for the privilege, much like we apply for college or grad school today. It was not so with Christ's followers. He chose them and developed them as His disciples—then He commissioned them (and us!) to *make disciples*.

Finally, we represent the King as His **examples**. As Kingdom citizens, the Father is forming us to be more and more like Jesus, who stands as our supreme example. As we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, drink deeply of God's Word, and seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, we will grow in Christlikeness so that we can say with the apostle Paul, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Thus, we become godly examples to those around us.

With our charge to be an ambassador, disciplemaker, and example of the King, let's think about how we can live out these roles to some specific people.

1. Think about the names of the people in your family, where you work, in your church, and in your community. Pray about it and identify at least one person for whom you might represent the King as an ambassador, disciplemaker, and/or example. What is your vision to come alongside him or her?
  
2. How would you assess your progress toward the vision you stated above? Where are you today in light of where you would like to be?
  
3. Commit to at least one SMART goal that you can accomplish in the short term (anywhere from one to two weeks) and will get you one step closer to achieving the Kingdom Vision that God has given you.



## Living with Kingdom-Minded Purpose

In our final signpost, we examined what it looks like to live with Kingdom-minded purpose. First, as Kingdom citizens, we looked at what it is for us to live with such purpose *in our homes*. Even within the church as a whole, we find a growing uneasiness and questioning of traditional conceptions of the family and relationships. In the face of almost universal cultural challenges, many Christians have begun to lose God's vision for the family as one of the foundation stones of His Kingdom purposes. But God has not left us to flounder in the whims of a culture that rejects Him. He has given us His Word and the Holy Spirit and revealed His purpose for our families. Here we delved deeply into His purpose for our families.

We also looked at living with Kingdom-minded purpose *where we work*. Indeed, whether we are just entering the workforce or enjoying our retirement years, each day has its own "work" to accomplish. It is clear from God's Word that what we do is of great importance to Him. The Lord has revealed Kingdom purposes for our work that Kingdom citizens must understand and apply. We are to serve others through our work and not become a burden. We must know and live in light of His will so that those outside the Kingdom will observe and give glory to our King. In whatever we do, we are to work as for the Lord.

Finally, we expanded the scope . . . living as Kingdom citizens not merely in our

homes, where we work, but also in every aspect of our lives—*in our world*. We called this *living for the King 24/7 and walking with a weekly 6/1 Kingdom cadence*. That is, as we “practice the presence of God” (as Brother Lawrence put it), we also live within the cycle or rhythm God has modeled for us and blessed us with when He said: “keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you” (Exodus 31:14). It’s living a balanced life, with King Jesus as Lord over every aspect of life seven days a week, and maintaining this essential perspective moment by moment throughout a cadence in life of “six days of work and one day of rest.”

With our charge to live with Kingdom-mindedness, that means we must live “on purpose,” with intentionality! Let’s take a look at all that’s going on in our world and see if we can’t make some adjustments to be in the best possible position to live with Kingdom-minded purpose.

1. Prayerfully consider your vision for living with Kingdom-minded purpose in your home, where you work, and in your world. State it succinctly.
2. How would you assess your progress toward the vision you stated above? Where are you today in light of where you would like to be?
3. Commit to at least one SMART goal that you can accomplish in the short term (anywhere from one to two weeks) and will get you one step closer to achieving the Kingdom Vision that God has given you.

### Ignite the Kingdom Life!

Remember John the Baptist? He paved the way for the King. As he was carrying out this ministry of preparation, he called out to the throngs of people who came out to be baptized: “**Change your life. God’s Kingdom is here**” (Matthew 3:2, MSG).

This is a charge for us today—a call for you right now. It is what it means to truly live the Kingdom Life of *knowing, trusting, and serving the Sovereign King*. The baptizer continued with words that prove a fitting conclusion for our study—an emphatic commendation to *press on in this Kingdom Life journey*:

I’m baptizing you here in the river, *turning your old life in for a kingdom life*. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama—compared to him I’m a mere stagehand—will *ignite the kingdom life within you*, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the

inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned (Matthew 3:11-12, MSG).

Oh, that we may “turn our old lives in for a Kingdom life”! Oh, that the King will “ignite the Kingdom life within us”! May this be our heart's cry and pursuit, as we see the Kingdom vision, relate to the King, represent the King, and ultimately live with Kingdom-minded purpose in our homes, in our work, and in our world! Amen!

### Resources for the Journey

As you pursue the Kingdom Life, keep in mind these additional resources available from Make a Mark Ministries for your continued growth and blessing:

1. *The Kingdom Life Journey* workbook: Now that you have completed the workbook, we invite you to prayerfully consider **leading a Kingdom Life group**. Find it on Amazon; learn more at [www.makeamark.net/kingdom-life.html](http://www.makeamark.net/kingdom-life.html)
2. Take advantage of our online resources:
  - a. Kingdom Life MP3s and PDFs – [www.makeamark.net/kingdom-life.html](http://www.makeamark.net/kingdom-life.html)
  - b. The “Ignite the Kingdom Life” Series and additional Kingdom-Building Resources – Resources for You at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net)
3. Let us know how Make a Mark Ministries can serve you:
  - a. The leadership team is located in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Here is our mailing address:
 

Make a Mark Ministries  
6660 Delmonico Drive, Suite D-140  
Colorado Springs, CO 80919
  - b. Contact Make a Mark Ministries – [www.makeamark.net/contact-us.html](http://www.makeamark.net/contact-us.html)
  - c. Contact Kingdom Life co-authors – [www.makeamark.net/meet-the-team.html](http://www.makeamark.net/meet-the-team.html)



# Notes

## CHAPTER 1: The King

1. The Gospel of Matthew emphasizes that Jesus is the promised Messianic King of Israel. See Matthew 1:23; 2:2, 6; 3:17; 4:15-17; 21:5, 9; 22:44, 45; 26:64; 27:11, 27-37.
2. Tozer, A. W., *The Knowledge of the Holy*, New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1961, 1978; pages 1, 2.
3. Tozer, page 1.
4. Make a Mark Ministries is committed to offering free resources online. Each chapter's "Stand" portion is repurposed as an entry in the "Ignite" series of one-page PDFs for easy download and use. You will find additional resources in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net).

## CHAPTER 2: The Kingdom

1. From Genesis to Revelation, here are a variety of verses that reflect this consistent message: Genesis 17:7-8; Exodus 6:6-7; Leviticus 26:12; 2 Chronicles 23:16; Jeremiah 32:36-41; Ezekiel 37:26-28; Zechariah 8:7-8; Matthew 1:23; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Revelation 21:3.
2. John 14:1-3
3. 2 Peter 3:8-10; Revelation 6-20
4. Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8
5. Revelation 21:5, 22-26; 22:3-5
6. Psalm 110:1-2
7. Exodus 40:34-38; Ezekiel 43:1-5; John 8:12; Hebrews 1:3
8. Revelation 21:3-7; 22:1-2
9. Genesis 2:10-14; Ezekiel 47:1-12
10. Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24; Ezekiel 47:12
11. Revelation 21:4; 22:3
12. Revelation 21:9-21
13. Revelation 5:9-10

## CHAPTER 3: Kingdom Citizens

1. See Matthew 16:13-19.
2. See Romans 8:28-29.
3. Also see 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19.
4. Getz, Gene. *Building Up One Another*. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1978; page 4.
5. See Acts 2:14-42.

## CHAPTER 4: Abide

1. See the Parable of the Banquet, Luke 14:12-24.
2. See 1 Peter 3:15.
3. See Luke 14:25-33.
4. See John 15:5.
5. For ways to grow in your abiding relationship with Jesus, see "Stand" in Chapter 3.
6. The Lord's Prayer is recorded in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. Also, read John 15:10 to see how Jesus abided with the Father and invited His disciples into this intimate relationship.

## CHAPTER 5: Imitate

1. See Acts 3:2-3.
2. See Matthew 24:14.
3. See John 5:19.
4. See Acts 9:2.
5. See Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20.
6. See Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:28-30.
7. See Galatians 5:22-23.
8. For example, see 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1.
9. For example, see Romans 7 and consider “the thorn” from 2 Corinthians 12:7.
10. See Exodus 19:20-23; 20:18-26; 34:29-35.
11. See Hebrews 8-10.
12. It is important to know that we cannot “make it happen” by behavior modification—that is, individual effort. Read Colossians 3:14-17. To further explore how Kingdom citizens “put off/put on,” also see Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:28-30; Titus 2:11-13.
13. Find “Pray on the Full Armor of God” as an “Ignite the Kingdom Life” handout in **Resources for You** at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net).
14. See 1 John 3:1-2.

## CHAPTER 6: Glorify

1. See Exodus 33:18-34:9.
2. See Exodus 3:3-6.
3. See Exodus 34:29-35.
4. See 1 Peter 3:13-17.
5. See Ephesians 3:10.
6. We feel the need to counter a disturbing trend that is obvious among Christians in our time. In a survey of books and articles, blogs and other web content, we’ve found that church bashing has become very popular. For various reasons, some with seeming validity and some not, Christians are opting out of the local church and “just loving Jesus.”

This is not a biblical option. Those who refuse to participate in church set themselves at odds with how God has ordained His work to be carried out. After Jesus’ disciple Peter declared that Jesus was indeed “the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” remember what Jesus said next? “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (see Matthew 16:13-18).

We see the beginning of this in the book of Acts, after Jesus’ ascension and when the Holy Spirit first came upon His followers. We see numerous “one another/each other” verses, which illustrate how essential it is “to meet together” (see Hebrews 10:24-25).

Indeed, as we see unfolding in the New Testament, the church is the bride of Christ, for whom He died and with whom He will spend eternity. How do you think He likes it when she is maligned by those who should be her supporters?

Also, God has given each of His people spiritual gifts with which to serve the body of Christ. When someone separates himself or herself from the church, he or she robs it of that service and rejects the calling that God has given to him or her. That person also denies God the glory of his or her participation in His ministry.

Sadly, many people have been hurt by others in the church, but that highlights what God is doing with His people. The body of Christ was designed to be a place of forgiveness and reconciliation, a place where the power of God’s grace overcomes personal hurts. That is the glory of God in the church. Let’s never forget we’re all in the same boat—sinners in need of a Savior, Christ-followers desperately in need of His grace and mercy, and none of us is so holy as to be above the church. The New Testament knows nothing of a solitary Christian living apart from fellowship with other believers.

God will glorify Himself through the church. As Kingdom citizens who seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, it behooves us to follow His plan for this age. What does this look like? Later in this chapter we look at the first three chapters of the book of Ephesians. We also encourage you to

- reflect upon Ephesians 4:1-16 to see how the church grows together toward maturity.
- 7. For this exercise, we recommend using the ESV. Also, you may come up with different answers than others in your group, which is okay because the goal is to examine the text for yourself.
- 8. Source: <http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-gods-glory>.
- 9. See Genesis 1:27.
- 10. See 1 Corinthians 10:31.

## CHAPTER 7: Ambassador

- 1. See Isaiah 6:3b.
- 2. See Isaiah 6:1-7. Also see Chapter 6: Glorify.
- 3. See the book of Jonah.
- 4. See Acts 14:19.
- 5. See Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20.
- 6. See Luke 9:23.
- 7. Also see Romans 5:10-11; Colossians 1:21-22.
- 8. See 2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Peter 3:15.

## CHAPTER 8: Disciplemaker

- 1. See John 17.
- 2. You might consider Jesus' High Priestly Prayer a report to the Father about His discipling ministry.
- 3. See Matthew 22:34-40.
- 4. See Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Acts 1:8.
- 5. See Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-13.
- 6. Side-by-Side is developed by Dean Ridings and used with permission.
- 7. See Luke 24:13-35.
- 8. See Acts 1:8; John 14:12.
- 9. See Romans 8:28,29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 3:18.
- 10. Read about the life and ministry of Gideon, a judge of the Hebrew people, in Judges 6-8.

## CHAPTER 9: Example

- 1. See John 13:1-20.
- 2. See Luke 5:1-11; John 1:40-42.
- 3. For the larger context, see John 6:60-71; Matthew 16:13-16.
- 4. See Matthew 16:21-23; 26:69-75.
- 5. See John 21:15-22; 1 John 1:9.
- 6. See Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36.
- 7. See 2 Peter 1:13-15.
- 8. See Matthew 23.

## CHAPTER 10: In My Home

- 1. See *The Blessing: Giving the Gift of Unconditional Love and Acceptance*, Thomas Nelson; revised, updated edition (May 2, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

- 1. Here is the description of a SMART goal, from George T. Doran, *Management Review*, November 1981.



# About Make a Mark Ministries

Authors of *The Kingdom Life Journey* serve with Make a Mark Ministries, based in Colorado Springs, Colorado. All under the banner of “For the Gospel and Generations,” Make a Mark Ministries is all about the following:

## Our Mission

We seek to develop generations of Jesus’ disciples—in partnership with the local church and others in the body of Christ—through a variety of life-to-life based initiatives individually and in group settings.

## Our Vision

We see generations of fully mature Christ-followers living out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) in light of the Greatest Commandment and “second like it” (Matthew 22:34-40) in everyday life—making disciples who make disciples (2 Timothy 2:2)!

## Our Values

- We believe the Gospel is of first importance.
- The bottom line of everything we do is to glorify God.
- Reflected in everything we say and do is a high view of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and the absolute authority of God’s Word, the Bible.
- We commit to “know and grow in Jesus Christ” in our personal lives and to help others do the same.
- We believe Jesus gave us one Great Commission to “go and make disciples.” We, therefore, commit to being disciples and to making disciples.
- We believe living in God’s grace and by His priorities leads to the best, most blessed life.

## Our Initiatives

- Developing biblically based materials
- Coming alongside church, parachurch, and ministry leaders
- Establishing one-to-one and small group “life-to-life” ministries
- Developing and offering such programs as conferences, workshops, seminars
- Traveling locally, nationally, and internationally to serve where the Lord leads

For more information about Make a Mark Ministries or to contact the authors, visit us online at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net). To access all of the “Ignite the Kingdom Life” Series (including versions of the “Stand” portions of each lesson in this workbook) and additional resources, go to Resources for You at [www.makeamark.net](http://www.makeamark.net).

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**Men need Courage** to stand strong in increasingly challenging times, because we live in a world that’s not what God created—evil exists, and as someone has said, “All it takes for evil to flourish is good men to stand by and do nothing”!



**Men need Passion** to live in light of the fact that the God of the universe chose us to be His children, called us to be kingdom men, and enables us to passionately live like Jesus and advance His Gospel where we live, work, and play through the generations!

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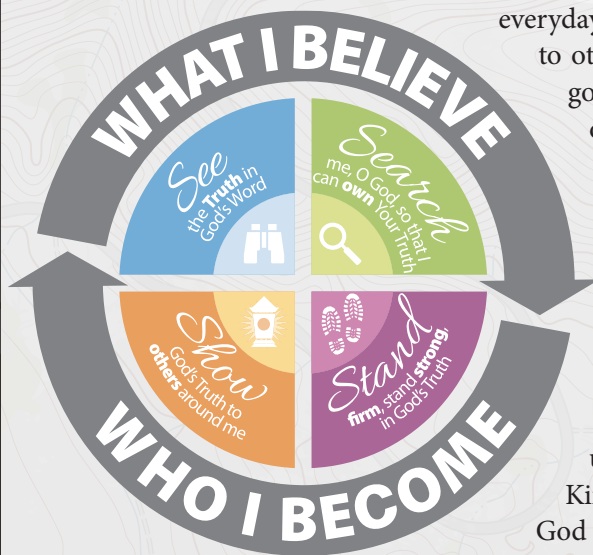
"And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." —Jesus (Matthew 24:14)

"If we have a limited time with someone, we would want him or her to fully grasp the gospel of the Kingdom and its implications." That's what each of us working on this project said from the outset. We would want him or her to take what we call the Kingdom Life journey, passing the following signposts along the way: "Seeing the Kingdom Vision," "Relating to the King," "Representing the King," and "Living with Kingdom-Minded Purpose."

Early on God gave us the image below to illustrate this journey. It reminds us that what we believe grounded in the Holy Scriptures leads to who we become guided by the Holy Spirit. As the Bible puts it, "Become what you believe" (Matthew 9:29, MSG).

The image also highlights four distinct stages of this process, each of which you will find in the 12 chapters of this workbook. First, it is essential that we SEE in Scripture the Kingdom principle. Next, we SEARCH the Scriptures more deeply to better "own" the Kingdom principle. Then,

we see how we might STAND in this truth in the midst of everyday life. Finally, we SHOW what we have learned to others in our spheres of influence—seeing the gospel of the Kingdom advance deeper in our own hearts and affect those around us.



One day we will see this beautiful picture: "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" (see Revelation 7:9). At that time we will experience the Kingdom of God in all its fullness! May God use this resource to better enable you to live a Kingdom life in light of that day—and be used of God to help others do the same!

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