



kingdom

culture 101

kingdom culture 101

● Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God. It was the first thing He talked about and the last. Even though He made the Kingdom His primary theme, few, if any, clearly grasped its significance. We can hardly blame them, as His words still seem obscure and often enigmatic.

He described the Kingdom as being present, yet future; revealed, yet a mystery; among us, yet not of this world; like a small seed, yet pervading everything. He compared it to a net full of fish, twenty virgins, a treasure hidden in a field and a pearl merchant.

The apostles betrayed their lack of insight about the Kingdom in their very last conversation with Jesus, just before He ascended. They asked if He wasn't about to fulfill their expectations by restoring Israel's political order. They failed to grasp the true scope of the Kingdom. They failed to realize that Jesus, in His teachings, was introducing a truly radical order. He was introducing a new lifestyle with new values, new attitudes, new relationships—in short, a new culture: the Kingdom culture!

...Not a provincial, flawed, human order, but God's untarnished, universal domain—a whole new way of living. There it was, beautifully laid out by God for His people. When the unique Kingdom culture comes into focus, the incongruities in one's life, the areas that had previously escaped the redemptive process, are called into account. No other biblical truths call our attention to the radical uniqueness of the Christian life as do the teachings on the Kingdom.

(Jim Petersen, Living Proof, page 89,101)



kingdom culture 101



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Names of people in my group:

Weekly meeting time and place:

what is the kingdom?

Open Up

1. Go around your group and have each person share their name. Along with their name each person should share an inside bit of information about their first or last name. (Things like: What language does their name originate from? What does it mean? Do they like their name? Why or why not? Was there a reason they received this name? Was there any Scripture passage they connect with their name and its meaning?)
2. Each study should decide together on a good time and place to meet weekly.

Dig In

1. Have different people in your group look up these passages. How does what is described in these passages correlate with the statement "The kingdom of God is a party." ?
 - Matthew 9:9-13
 - Matthew 11:16-19
 - Matthew 22:1-10
 - Luke 19:1-10
 - John 12:1-8
 - Revelation 19:9
2. Read Isaiah 61:1-2. If what was prophesied in these verses came true for a group of people what would be their response? What was people's response to Jesus when He read these very same words and stated that He had come to fulfill these words? (See Luke 4:14-30) If they believed that what Jesus said was true how should they have reacted?
3. The kingdom of God can be described as a party but it has many other dimensions and descriptions as well. Divide into 3 smaller groups, and each group take one of the following passages and try to answer the question, "What is the kingdom?" Also seek to discover how the passage describes the kingdom and what you think that means to individual believers and to any group of believers seeking to follow Jesus?

Matthew 6:10

Luke 17:20,21

John 18:36

what is the kingdom?

Live It Out

1. Does the concept “The Kingdom of God is a Party” make any difference in your own life?
 - Think back; what was your initial response to Christ- were you overjoyed and wanting to celebrate? What reasons currently do you have for celebration in your own life?

2. At this point in your life how would you answer the question “What is the kingdom of God?” What meaning does the kingdom of God have for you in your own life?

who gets in the kingdom?

Open Up

1. Look at your life as a spiritual journey. In the space on the left draw out your life as a map, a timeline or a graph to illustrate your spiritual life up to this point. Also draw out where you would like your spiritual journey to go and how you will get there. Be prepared to share this with your group.

Dig In

1. Read Matthew 3:2. What message does John the Baptist give to prepare his audience for the kingdom of God? What message does Jesus give as he begins his public ministry? (see Matthew 4:17) Why does Jesus focus on repentance at the beginning of His ministry? (see also Mark 1:15) What is repentance?
2. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words defines repentance (METANOIA in Greek) in this way. It literally means to perceive afterwards. META is "after" and NOEO is "to perceive". It is to change one's mind on purpose after careful reflection. In the New Testament it always involves a change for the better; a changing of one's mind about sin. When Jesus came preaching a new kingdom, why do you think he had to challenge them to think in new and different ways in order to understand His kingdom?
3. In the following passages what are the results of repentance in our lives?

II Chronicles 7:14	Isaiah 55:7	Acts 3:19
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4. From Ephesians 4:22-24, what is the three step process I must follow to go from living a life of selfishness to a life that honors God? Why is step 2 (verse 23) important? How does this relate to repentance?

who gets in the kingdom?

Dig In (continued)

5. Look at the following verses. What did Jesus say must characterize those who would enter His kingdom? What is the meaning and implication of each of these statements by Jesus?
 - Matthew 5:20
 - Matthew 7:21
 - Matthew 18:3
 - Matthew 19:23,24
 - Mark 9:47
 - Mark 10:14,15
 - Mark 12:28-34
6. Who has difficulty entering into Christ's kingdom and why?
 - Matthew 5:20
 - Matthew 7:21
 - Matthew 19:23,24
 - Matthew 21:28-32
 - Matthew 23:13
 - John 3:3-5
7. Look at questions 5 & 6; what personal qualities are important for anyone desiring to enter God's kingdom?

Live It Out

1. Remember that repentance is "a changing of one's mind about sin." It is changing from the way the world around us thinks to the way God wants us to think. (see Romans 12:2) Is there anything in your life right now that you need to change your mind about? Look at the following pattern.
 - What do I need to "put off" (Ephesians 4:22) Is there anything I need to stop doing or thinking?
 - How do I need to change my thinking about this area in my life? (Ephesians 4:23) What is God's way of thinking about this area? What does the Word say?
 - What new attitudes, actions or behaviors do you need to "put on"? What will you do to make this a practical reality this week?
2. Examine your life. Have you entered into God's kingdom yet? How did you enter? If you think you haven't entered yet do you know what you need to do to enter? Ask your study leader about this.

looking at parables

Jesus' favorite speech form, the parable, was subversive. Parables sound absolutely ordinary: casual stories about soil and seed, meals and coins and sheep, bandits and victims, farmers and merchants. And they are wholly secular: of his forty or so parables recorded in the Gospels, only one has its setting in church, and only a couple mention the name God. As people heard Jesus tell these stories, they saw at once that they weren't about God, so there was nothing in them threatening their own sovereignty. They relaxed their defenses. They walked away perplexed, wondering what they meant, the stories lodged in their imagination. And then, like a time bomb, they would explode in their unprotected hearts. An abyss opened up at their very feet. He was talking about God; they had been invaded!

Jesus continually threw odd stories down alongside ordinary lives (para, "alongside"; bole, "thrown") and walked away without explanation or altar call. Then listeners started seeing connections: God connections, life connections, eternity connections. The very lack of obviousness, the unlikeness, was the stimulus to perceiving likeness: God likeness, life likeness, eternity likeness. But the parable didn't do the work: it put the listener's imagination to work. Parables aren't illustrations that make things easier; they make things harder by requiring the exercise of our imaginations, which if we aren't careful becomes the exercise of our faith.

Eugene H Peterson

How to interpret parables When interpreting parables it is important to follow certain guidelines in order to understand the true meaning of the parable. The principle parts and figures of a parable represent certain realities. Consider only these principal parts and figures when drawing conclusions. As you interpret parables follow this procedure:

1. Determine the purpose of the parable.
2. Make sure you explain the different parts of the parable in accordance with the main design.
3. Use only the principal parts of the parable in explaining the lesson. It is when people try to interpret the details that error can easily creep in. Do not make the parable say too much.

(Taken from *A Layman's Guide to Interpreting the Bible* by Walter Henry Zondervan)

the kingdom heart Parables of the Kingdom 1

Open Up

1. Consider the five key attributes of a kingdom heart from last week. (A good heart, a pure heart, a compassionate heart, a forgiving heart and a gracious heart.) As you sit down to discuss your study, look at the person on your left and tell the group which one of these 5 best describes this person and why you feel this way.

Dig In

1. **A GOOD HEART** • Read Matthew 13:1-23. Why do you think Jesus uses parables to explain the kingdom? What is the message that is sown? What are the differences in the soils? What makes the soil of some people's hearts different from others? What kind of soil is your heart? Is it possible to change the type of soil you are? If so, how?
2. **A PURE HEART** • Read Matthew 13:44,45. What is similar about the response of the man (v. 44) and the merchant (v. 45)? What should be our response upon discovering the value of the kingdom? What is significant about the fact that both men had to search for the treasure? At this point, what things of great value do you see about the kingdom?
3. **A COMPASSIONATE HEART** • Read Matthew 25:31-46. List the things the King mentions that the people did or did not do. What does verse 34 tell you about the kingdom? Why do both righteous and unrighteous respond to the Lord in the same way? Can you condense the message of this passage into one sentence? Think Big. What would a nation look like that practiced this kind of social value system? If this is kingdom stuff, the heartbeat of our corporate kingdom, how do we shape our present day life to reflect kingdom culture?
4. **A FORGIVING HEART** • Read Matthew 18:21-35. How many times did Jesus say that we need to forgive? What did He mean by this number? In the story, what does the servant do after being forgiven by the master? What is the master's response to the servant's actions? What should be our motivation for genuinely forgiving others? What does this passage say about how God feels when we are bitter to others, after he has forgiven us? What effect does it have on our lives when we can't or won't forgive someone?

the kingdom heart Parables of the Kingdom 1

Dig In (continued)

5. **A GRACIOUS HEART** • Read Matthew 20:1-16. How did the landowner treat the workers that he hired throughout the day? Why did he pay them all the same? What differences in attitude were evident between the early morning workers, the 11th hour workers and the landowner? How does the attitude of the landowner contrast to the world's viewpoint today of "first come, first served?" How should our lives show forth the same grace that the landowner gave to his workers?

Live It Out

1. Look back through your responses to the last five questions. Which of the five areas stood out to you as an area most needy of change in your own life? What do you need to do to make a change in this area? Write out an application below that correlates with that area. Make sure it is a SMART application.

S-Specific	What specific passage are you seeking to apply?
M-Measurable	How will you know when this application is completed? By today? tomorrow? next week?
A-Attainable	Is it something that you can really accomplish in the amount of time you have set?
R-Relevant	Does the application relate directly to the passage you are studying?
T-Trackable	Who will track you to see if you complete your application?

MY APPLICATION

Open Up

1. Have each person in your group think for a moment to answer this question
As you have gotten to know the person on your left in the study what is one thing you could share that you have really appreciated about and admired in this person?
Go around your group and share your thoughts

Dig In

1. **THINK BROAD** (about the Master's Invitation) Read Matthew 22:1-14
In Matthew 22:1-4, what does the wedding feast represent? In verses 5-6, what are the different motives for declining the invitation? Who did respond to the king's invitation? To whom has Jesus made the offer of the kingdom and who rejected it? To what people is Jesus offering the kingdom? In Matthew 22:11-14, a man came to the party, but found out that he was improperly dressed. This man had offended the king by not putting on the costly dress that the king had provided (the custom). Why then did the king throw the man out? What does this mean to us? What kind of "clothing" should we be trusting in to get us into the "big party in the sky?" (read Galatians 3:27) Are you wearing the attire that God has supplied or are you trusting in you own "ducks" to get you into heaven?
2. **THINK AHEAD** (about the Master's Return) Read Matthew 25:1-14
What was the difference between the two sets of virgins in Matthew 25:1-14?
Who is the bridegroom that is coming and how are we to be prepared for His coming?
Are you ready for the bridegroom to come? Do you have plenty of oil in your lamp?
What does a person live like whose "lamp is full"?
3. **THINK TRUTH** (about the Master) Read Matthew 25:14-30 (Luke 19:11-27)
How did the servants react to the master? Why did the servant who had received the one talent react differently? What was his concept of the master? What did the Master hold each of the servants accountable for? What "talents" has God given you that you need to invest for His kingdom?
4. **THINK JUSTLY** (about the Master's Judgment) Read Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43 & 47-49.
How many kingdoms are represented in these two parables? What are they?
(The "tares" or "weeds" in verses 24-30 refer to a type of weed which looked like wheat as it was growing and the difference could only be seen in the mature crop)
What do these parables say about God separating between the wicked and the righteous?
How can a loving God send anyone to Hell?

the kingdom mind Parables of the Kingdom 2

Dig In (continued)

5. **THINKBIG** (about the Master's kingdom) Read Matthew 13:31-33 (Mark 4:26-32; Luke 13:18-22) What are the similarities about the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the leaven? What are the differences? How does the kingdom of heaven begin? How does it end? If you truly believe that the kingdom of heaven will expand like the leaven and the mustard seed how will it affect your actions?

Live It Out

1. Each of the parables that we have looked at in this lesson have to do with our thinking about the future kingdom i.e. spending eternity with God as our King. Think through the areas listed below and consider how it affects your decisions about these areas of your life when you consider the truth of God's kingdom and when you just focus on the here and now (see Matthew 6:19-34)

Areas of Life	Kingdom Focus	Here and Now Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career • Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family - Dating - Marriage - Children - Friends - Fellowship • Money • Possessions • Talents & Abilities • Time • 		

2. Jim Elliot, a missionary murdered by the South American Indians he was trying to reach with the gospel once said "He is no fool, who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." What do you think Jim meant by this statement?

power in the kingdom

Dig In

1. Look at the following passages. What are the attributes of those who are the greatest and those who are the least in God's kingdom?

Passage

The Greatest

The Least

Matthew 5:19

Matthew 18:1-5

Matthew 20:20-28

Matthew 23:11,12

Mark 9:33-37

John 3:30

John 13:16

2. Read Luke 22:24-30.

What were the disciples arguing about? What was it that the kings of the Gentiles had or possessed that the disciples wanted? How does Jesus define greatness in His kingdom? What will the greatest in the kingdom do?

3. Look at James 2:1-5.

What does this passage say about judging by external appearances to determine the value of people?

Read I Samuel 16:1-7. In this passage, the prophet Samuel has gone to Jesse's house to anoint the new king who is one of Jesse's sons. What kind of man is Samuel looking for? What is God looking for in people? Why did God choose David to be king? (see Acts 13:22) In Acts 13:22 God gives His testimony about David. What do you think is God's testimony about you? Does God see you as a person who is after His heart and who will do all His will? What can you do to become more a person like David?

4. In our society who has the 'power'? In Christ's kingdom how is this different? How should I live as a member of Christ's kingdom in a society that has a different even opposite power structure?

power in the kingdom

Live It Out

1. Read Mark 10:35-45. Look at verse 45. For what reason(s) did Jesus come? For what reason did Jesus not come? Analyze your involvement in Christ's kingdom. In these areas of your life, what are you doing to serve rather than waiting for someone to serve you?

What do you do? (Give examples)

Activity

If I serve 1st:

If I wait to be served

School

Living situation

family

The Navigator fellowship

Those who don't know

Christ yet.

Church

Your job

Friends

What can you do to become 'greater by becoming lesser' in each of these areas?

kingdom laws

Dig In

Every kingdom has laws and Christ's kingdom is no exception. In this study, we'll be looking at what has been called the Sermon on the Mount to discover the laws of Christ's kingdom. "The Sermon on the Mount is nothing but a great and grand and perfect elaboration of what our Lord called His new commandment. His new commandment was that we love one another even as He has loved us" (D. Martyn Lloyd Jones)

1. The Kingdom Within- Read Matthew 5:1-12

From verses 1,2 who was the audience for this teaching and is there any significance to this? To be 'blessed' as used in verse 3-12 is **MAKARIOS** in Greek, which does not denote one who God blesses but rather someone who is to be congratulated, someone whose place in life is an enviable one.

- What does it mean to be 'poor in spirit'?
- What is mourning? Why are those who mourn 'blessed'?
- What does it mean to be meek? What do we gain by being meek?
- How does a person demonstrate a deep hunger and thirst for righteousness?
- What is mercy? In what practical ways can we show mercy to others?
- What is the benefit of having a pure heart? How do you maintain a pure heart?
- What does it mean to be a peacemaker? Share a possible way that a believer could be a peacemaker.
- What is your initial reaction to persecution? What is the blessing in being persecuted? What does it mean to be persecuted 'because of righteousness'?
- How do these characteristics of a 'kingdom person' differ from the type of person exalted in our society?

2. The Kingdom Coming Out- Read Matthew 5:13-16

In these verses Jesus uses two metaphors to depict the Christian's influence on society.

- What are the functions of salt and light?
- What does it mean in the spiritual sense for Christ's followers to be salt and light?
- What happens if we don't fulfill our role as salt and light?

3. Old Law and the New Law- Read Matthew 5:17-20

How does Jesus' law (the law of the kingdom) relate to the Old Testament law?

In verse 20 how does the true Christian's righteousness surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees?

kingdom laws

Dig In (continued)

4. **The Surpassing Righteousness**- Read Matthew 5:21-48. Contrast Jesus' righteousness (kingdom law) with the Pharisees' righteousness from this passage.

<u>Passage</u>	<u>Pharisee's Righteousness</u>	<u>Jesus' Righteousness</u>
EXAMPLE: Matthew 5:21-26	• Do not murder	• Do not be angry • Do not curse
Matthew 5:27-30		
Matthew 5:31-32		
Matthew 5:33-37		
Matthew 5:38-42		
Matthew 5:43-48		

What is the difference between Jesus' righteousness and the Pharisees' righteousness?

5. Read Matthew 6. Look at these verses in particular to answer the following questions (verses 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32)
- What do these verses say about our relationship to God as our Father?
 - How does living with God as our Father differ from living as the hypocrites do? (see verses 2, 5, 16)

Live It Out

1. Read Matthew 7:24-27. What is similar between the wise and foolish builders? What things are different between them? What happens to each of them under pressure? What kind of person does Jesus equate the wise builder with? How about the foolish builder? Look back at one of the passages you studied in Matthew 5 or 6. Write out what the foolish person would do in response to the passage and what a wise person would do. What will you do in response to what God has spoken to you about from these passages?

Dig In

In the Bible the conflict between good and evil is seen as the conflict between two kingdoms.. the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world.

- 1. THE KINGDOM CONFLICT** • Read Matthew 4:1-11. What is occurring between Jesus and the devil in this passage? What is the devil's goal in this conflict? What does he do to accomplish this goal? What is Jesus' goal in this conflict? What does he do to combat the enemy's arguments? Temptation has been defined as 'a solicitation to do evil.' Satan tempted Jesus in what three areas? How can we follow Christ's example to be victorious over temptation?
- 2. THE KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT FROM THE BEGINNING** • Read Genesis 3:1-19. The serpent is Satan who took this form to tempt Eve (see Revelations 12:9). How did the serpent tempt Eve? What did he say? Was it true? Why did Eve believe the serpent? (see II Corinthians 11:3) What had God commanded Adam? (see Genesis 2:15-17) Why did Adam disobey God? What were the results of Adam and Eve's sin for them? What were the results for us? (see Romans 5:12) What was the judgement for the serpent?
- 3. THE KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The continuing warfare between God's people, the children of Israel, and their enemies was not only a physical struggle but ultimately a spiritual one. There are many examples of this spiritual struggle throughout the Old Testament. Let's look at one of them

 - Read I Kings 18:16-40. God's people had gone astray and were following other gods, particularly Baal (the Canaanite god of rain and fertility). They were led in this apostasy by the wicked king Ahab and his even more wicked wife Jezebel. Elijah issues a challenge to 850 prophets of Baal. They pray to their gods, and Elijah prays to the Lord. What is the result of the conflict? What is Elijah's challenge to God's people? (verse 21) How do God's people respond when they see who is God? (verse 39-40) When the prophets of Baal pray to their gods, who are they praying to ultimately? (see I Corinthians 10:19-21)

Dig In (continued)

4. **THE KINGDOMS IN THE GOSPELS** • Read Mark 3:22-27. What were the teachers of the law saying about Jesus because he had power over the kingdom of evil? What is Jesus' response to this accusation? Who is the strong man in Jesus' illustration (verse 27)? What are the possessions that the robber is taking away? Who is the robber? For help in answering this question see Colossians 1:13-14.
5. **THE KINGDOMS IN THE EPISTLES** • Read Ephesians 2:1-3. What kingdom were we a part of before coming to know Christ? (see also John 8:42-47) What kingdom have we been transferred to as a result of coming to know Christ? (Ephesians 2:4-7 and Colossians 1:13)
6. **THE KINGDOMS AT THE END** • Read Revelation 12:7-11. What is the ultimate end of Satan's kingdom?

Live It Out

1. Look at Ephesians 6:10-20. Look at the weapons below that God has supplied for the believer for our battle against the enemy. Consider each piece of the armor and how we can practically put on the armor to prepare ourselves for spiritual battle.

Armor

- Belt of Truth
- Breastplate of Righteousness
- Gospel shoes
- Shield of Faith
- Helmet of Faith
- Sword of the Spirit
- Prayer (verse 18)

How do you put it on?

2. As you looked at the pieces of spiritual armor, which one or two do you need to be more effective with? What can you do to become a better spiritual warrior in Christ's kingdom?

Dig In

In all the world, there are many types of people with a variety of belief systems. The beliefs that each person carries flow out of their basic view of ultimate reality. This is what has been called our worldview. There are two basic components of your worldview: 1) your way of thinking about life and the world, and 2) the resulting value system that forms the basis for your lifestyle choices.

As you grapple with your place in the world you must confront three major features of your existence: 1) God—the concept of ultimate reality, 2) humanity—the reality of human existence and your own self-consciousness (as well as that of other persons), and 3) nature—the existence and purpose of the world around you, both physical and spiritual. These upward, inward and outward viewpoints form the basis of your worldview.

Looking up...**Why am I here?****THE WORLDLY VIEW**

- Read Job 21:7-15. What is the attitude of those who do not acknowledge God?
- Read Romans 1:18-32. What are the results in our lives when we refuse to acknowledge the existence of God and our responsibility to Him? Look especially at verses 18, 21, 28 and 32.
- Read Ecclesiastes 2:17-26. What will be the end result of a life that is not given to God?

THE KINGDOM VIEW

- Read Acts 17:16-34. That was Paul's message to these people who believed in the existence of God? Was belief in God's existence sufficient to please God? (see verses 30, 31)
- Read I Cor 1:18-31. From this passage, what assurance do we have about the significance of our lives as members of Christ's kingdom?

kingdoms in conflict

World values vs.
Kingdom values

Looking in... Who am I? Who are you?

THE WORDLY VIEW

- Read Ephesians 2:1-3, 12. What is our spiritual state when we love the world and its ways rather than God and His ways?
- Read Luke 12:13-21. What is the end result of a life that is given to personal pleasure and possessions?

THE KINGDOM VIEW

- Read John 17. Look at the following verses (6, 9, 11, 13-16, 18, 21, 23-25). What was Jesus' view of the world? Look at verses 6-19. Highlight or underline every time the words 'they', 'them' or 'those' are used in the passage. Who are 'they'? What is the commitment to them? If you want to influence people like Jesus did, what should you do?

Looking out... What is real?

THE WORDLY VIEW

- Read Luke 12:22-32. From verse 30, what is the pagan world? What is the pagan world running after? What does God promise those who will run after things of the kingdom? (verse 31) What attitudes does the kingdom person have about what he or she owns?

THE KINGDOM VIEW

- Read Matthew 16:24-27. What is the result of giving your life to material things? What happens if we give our lives to eternal things? What are the eternal things that we should be giving our lives to? See Deut. 33:27, Psalm 145:13, 1 Peter 1:23-24, Ecclesiastes 3:11.

Live It Out

Read Romans 12:1-2. Verse 2 is paraphrased by J.B. Phillips this way: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed..."

Look back over this study and your answers to consider these thoughts from Romans 12:

- Where has the world been squeezing me into its mold?
- In what ways is God remaking my mind and attitudes in these areas?
- What do I believe is God's will for me in these areas?
- How will I practically prove to God, myself and others that I am choosing to live by kingdom values rather than the world's values?

people of the kingdom

Dig In

One of the best ways to understand the kingdom of God is to look at real people who lived a kingdom lifestyle. When we observe their example we discover what it means to be a kingdom person in everyday life.

1. Study the following verses. What are the character qualities of a person who reveals through their life that they belong in the kingdom?

- Matthew 5:3
- Matthew 5:10
- Matthew 19:14
- Luke 22:25-29

2. Look at these verses [I Corinthians 6:9,10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:5]

What kind of persons reveal through their behavior that they are not part of God's kingdom? If people with these sins in their background cannot enter the kingdom then who can? What does I Corinthians 6:11 (following I Corinthians 6:9,10) have to say about the acceptability of people into the kingdom who have deep brokenness in their lives because of sin? What is the balance between the exclusiveness of I Corinthians 6:9,10 and the openness of I Corinthians 10:11? Do kingdom citizens (followers of Jesus) have the freedom to live any way they please?

3. Read about the following kingdom messengers. Who were they and what was their message?

- | | Person? | Message? |
|--|---------|----------|
| • Acts 14:20-22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23; 28:31 | | |
| • Acts 1:3; Luke 8:1 | | |
| • Acts 8:12 | | |

Look back over your whole study on the kingdom of God and write out 5-10 things that you believe that these kingdom messengers spoke about when they preached on the kingdom of God.

people of the kingdom

Dig In (continued)

4. Look at these kingdom people in the book of Acts. Observe the character of their lives. How did they model kingdom values? Study each individual or group and write out what principle(s) of the kingdom they were living out.

- The church in Jerusalem- Acts 4:32-36
- Barnabas- Acts 4:36,37; 9:26,27; 11:22-30; 13:2
- Stephen- Acts 6:5-15; 7:55-60
- Philip- Acts 8:5-34
- Dorcas- Acts 9:36-42
- Peter- Acts 10
- Lydia- Acts 16:13-15
- The church in Berea- Acts 17:10-12
- Priscilla & Aquila- Acts 18:1-4,18-26
- Apollos- Acts 18:24-28

Live It Out

1. Think about the followers of Jesus that you know. Write down the name of a brother or sister in Christ and how they model the kingdom of God to you. What do you see in their lives that you would like to imitate? Consider telling them directly or writing them a note to encourage them for being a great example to you.
2. Look back over this study and consider these two questions. What value of the kingdom do you consistently live out in such a way that others can be encouraged by your example? Thank God for this and ask Him to help you to continue to be faithful in this area. Secondly, what value of the kingdom stands out to you as one that you need to grow in order to be a more mature follower of Jesus? How can you grow in this area? Is there a believer that has a strength in this area that you could consider talking to in order to learn from them?

the eternal kingdom

Dig In

Jesus spoke of the kingdom as both a present reality and a future hope. In this study we want to look at the coming kingdom. God's kingdom is the only kingdom on earth that will last forever.

1. Look at the following verses. What does God promise about His coming kingdom? Is the kingdom as it is described in these verses a reality today?
 - Isaiah 9:7
 - Daniel 2:44
 - Philippians 2:9-11
2. What do these verses have to say about the endurance of His kingdom?
 - Daniel 2:44
 - Daniel 4:3
 - Daniel 6:26
 - II Peter 1:11
 - Revelation 11:15
3. From Matthew 6:10, what did Jesus teach His disciples to pray about the kingdom? Do you pray this way about the kingdom? Why or why not? Do you think Jesus wants you to pray this way? When you make this request of God in prayer what are you asking for? In what way is this whole prayer (Matthew 6:9-15) a kingdom prayer?
4. Upon what basis is it decided who gets to be a part of God's eternal kingdom?
5. Read Matthew 25:31-46. What does this passage tell us about who will and who will not be a part of God's eternal kingdom? Who are the sheep? Who are the goats? What distinguishes them from one another? Look back at your answer on question 4 (above). How does your answer compare with what Jesus says will be the basis upon which it is decided who is a true member of the kingdom? Is there a difference between your answer and Jesus' answer? How do you reconcile the answers?

the eternal kingdom

Dig In (continued)

6. In the book of Revelation John reveals to us the coming of Christ's eternal kingdom in its fullness. In Revelation 1:9, how does John describe himself as he anticipates the eternal kingdom? From Revelation 5:9,10, who will be in the eternal kingdom and what will they do? (Is this all we will do? see Luke 19:11-27) Read Revelation 11:15 and 12:10. What will be the full realization of Christ as King? What comfort and hope does it give you to know that Christ will fully reign as King one day?

Live It Out

1. Read Acts 1:6,7. After the resurrection, what do the disciples want to know from Jesus about the coming of the kingdom? What is Jesus' answer to their request? What is our focus supposed to be when we consider the imminent coming of the future kingdom? (To answer this read II Peter 3, particularly II Peter 3:11-14) Examine your own life in light of these verses, are you ready for the coming of His kingdom? What needs to change? (see also I John 2:28)

the gospel of the kingdom

Dig In

The first words of Jesus's public ministry included a quote from Isaiah the prophet that He was anointed "to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:18-19). In Matthew 4:23, one of the tasks mentioned that Jesus accomplishes is "preaching the 'gospel' of the kingdom." What does this word "gospel" mean? In the New International Version of the Bible, it is translated "good news". The Vines Greek Dictionary of New Testament Words indicates that it denotes "the 'good tidings' of the kingdom of God and of salvation through Christ, to be received by faith on the basis of His expiatory death, His burial, resurrection, and ascension".

1. Who proclaims the 'gospel' of the Kingdom in the Old Testament?
 - Read Genesis 12:3, Psalm 96:1-10, 145:8-13, Isaiah 12:4-5, 42:5-7, and 49:6. From these passages who or what is on God's heart? Who is God interested in hearing the Gospel of the Kingdom? Were the Gentile nations (including you and I) an afterthought of Jesus's ministry (see Matthew 28:19-20)?
 - Read Isaiah 43:1-13. How were the other nations to see God? How were they to hear about God? Who is beautiful or lovely in God's sight? What does God promise to those who are His witnesses?
2. Who proclaims the 'gospel' of the Kingdom in the Gospels?
 - Read Mark 3:14. Why did Jesus choose the twelve? What was the purpose for twelve being with Jesus? What would they see, hear, and feel as they walked with Him on the roads, ate with Him in homes, and listened to His teaching? (see 1 John 1:1-2)
 - Read Luke 10:1-24. Why did Jesus send the seventy out? What were the seventy to do? What did they witness as they went? What did they learn after returning to Jesus? Why were they to consider themselves blessed?
 - Read Mark 1:40-45, 5:1-20. What had Jesus done for these people? What motivated them to proclaim the news? Why was the man who had been possessed by a demon told to proclaim Christ and the leper was told not to?
 - Read Matthew 24:14. What is prophesied about the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom?

the gospel of the kingdom

Dig In (continued)

3. Who proclaims the 'gospel' of the Kingdom in the New Testament?
 - Read Acts 4:13. What stood out about Peter and John? What did the rulers, elders, and teachers of the Law attribute this to? From your study of the kingdom of God do you believe the good news of the kingdom was something that Jesus spoke of consistently? Do you believe the apostles also spoke of it often?
 - Read Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; & 28:23. What was the message of the apostles in Acts? What do you think they preached about the kingdom of God?
 - Read 1 Peter 2:9-11. How do these verses describe God's kingdom people? Why did Peter expect the Christians of the day to proclaim and declare the good news of the kingdom? Is it the role of every believer to proclaim the gospel or is that only for full-time Christian workers?

Live It Out

1. It has been said that the fruit of a tree is simply the "overflow, the surplus, the excess life of the nourishment taken into the tree over and beyond that needed for life and growth (Meditation, Jim Downing Pg 15) Read Ephesians 1:1-14, 2:1-22; and Colossians 1:13-14, 2:13-14. List ten reasons you have for "declaring the praises of God" to others as mentioned in 1 Peter 2:9.
2. Dawson Trotman once asked a student who had asked for training in evangelism "What is your prayer life like? In the light of Mark 3:14 and Acts 4:13, what does your own personal walk with God have to do with evangelism? What needs to occur in your life to ensure that God will honor you with being a messenger of the 'Gospel of His Kingdom? Record 2 people that you can pray for daily and ask God to provide the opportunity for you share the 'good news of the Kingdom with them
3. Another possible application for those who are proficient in sharing the gospel. Think through how you would share the gospel using what you have learned about the kingdom. Are there any different verses you would share? Could you modify an illustration that you use to share the gospel or make up a new one? Put this down on paper and ask a nonbelieving friend if you could share it with them and get their feedback.

worship the king!

Open Up

“I believe that if we are to be and do for others what God means us to be and do, we must not let adoration and worship slip into second place, ‘for it is the central thing asked by God of human souls, and its neglect is responsible for much lack of spiritual depth and power.’

Perhaps we find here the reason why we so often run dry. We do not give time enough for what makes for depth and so we are shallow; a wind, quite a little wind, can ruffle our surface; a little hot sun and all the moisture in us evaporates. It should not be so.” —Amy Carmichael

Kings and kingdoms are alien concepts to the independent, democratic American mind. In a kingdom there are no checks and balances over the power and control of the government. The king has all authority over the kingdom. All through the Old Testament and throughout world history we see that the character of the king is the number one indication of the moral and spiritual climate of the people. This study will examine the identity of the king, how people responded to the king while he was on earth and how we should respond to the king.

This is the last study in this series. Take some time to reflect over the semester and to summarize what you have learned from these studies.

- What is the kingdom?
- Who gets into the kingdom?
- How would you describe the kingdom to a fellow believer?

- How would you describe the kingdom to a non-believer?

- What other thoughts do you have about the kingdom?

Share with your study the answer to one of the following statements.

1. The kingdom of God is..

2. Because of this study I experienced life change in this area..

worship the king!

Dig In

1. What do these verses tell you about our King?
 - Isaiah 9:6; Daniel 7:13,14; Matthew 11:29; Colossians 1:13-18
Revelation 5:6-14; 11:15-17; 15:3,4; 19:11-16
2. How did the people in the following verses respond to the king?
 - Isaiah 6:1-5; Matthew 2:1,2; Luke 5:1-11; 7:36-38; Revelation 1:9-19

Worship is literally translated “to kiss towards.” The Greek is *pros-kuneo*— ‘pros’ means ‘towards’ and ‘kuneo’ is ‘to kiss.’ It is used of an act of homage or reverence.

3. What are the different forms of worship found in the following verses?
 - Psalm 46:10; 33:8; 5:7; 51:17; 42:1,2; 147:1; 30:11

Worship is a way of gladly reflecting back to God the radiance of his worth
—John Piper

Live It Out

1. Look at Revelation 4:11 & 5:9,10. Another way of defining worship is ‘worth-ship’ i.e. praising God for His worthiness. Why is Jesus ‘worthy’ to be your king?
2. As a way of expressing your praise to Christ as the King of the kingdom do something this week to honor Him for His worthiness. Consider writing a song, a poem, a story, a play, draw or paint a picture, make a collage etc. to express your worship to Him. Think about it this way, if you had two minutes to present something to Jesus as a present that was uniquely from you what would you do? Our year end Christmas party (A Birthday Party for the King) will give many the opportunity to present to Jesus these gifts of worship to Him. Many would be blessed if you would share with them your gift for the king by coming prepared to share it at the Christmas party.