

**Becoming A Kingdom Person Pt 1**  
**Matt. 6:9-10**

**Intro:** We are moving to the next phase in our development of strong Spiritual Disciplines. We have already looked at the spiritual discipline of consuming the Word of God by having a regular diet of **Hearing, Reading, Studying, Memorizing & Meditating** on God's Word. We just finished looking at the Spiritual Discipline of prayer; not a how to look but a "What happens" look. We found that through prayer we can become **Difference Makers**, people who make a difference in others lives; we found that through prayer we can summon the very power of God by **Praying Until The Fire Falls** from heaven. We also found that through prayer we can be **Transformed** into the image of Jesus and we can **Overcome** all things.

Today we are going to begin to look at the topic of **The Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven**. Today we will look at part 1 of what it takes to become a **Kingdom Person**. Do we really understand what is meant by the **Kingdom of God/Heaven** and what it means in our life? The only place we find the phrase **Kingdom of Heaven** is in Matthews Gospel. That is likely due to his natural fear of taking the Lord's name in vain. Jews did anything and every thing they could to keep from say the name God.

The idea of Kingdom of God/Heaven is the central theme of the entire New Testament. After 400 years of total silence from God all of a sudden John the Baptist appears on the scene and what is his first and only message? **"...Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"** (Matt. 3:2). 37 times in the Gospel of Matthew alone find **The Kingdom of Heaven/God** used. 53 times throughout the other 3 gospels **Kingdom of God** is used. When you take all references to it in the New Testament the number climbs to over 150. The only topics more referred to in all of Scripture appear to be the use of your resources and death. So what is so important about the kingdom that Jesus' entire ministry dealt with it?

**[Read Matthew 6:9-10/pray/dismiss Jr. church]**

Before we get too far along let me clear something up right up front – the Kingdom of God is both a present reality and a future event. This is called a **Now, not yet** concept of the kingdom. In Mark 1:15 Jesus said, **"...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."** So this means that the kingdom is now. But we also know that there will be a future time when the Kingdom of God will be fully realized here on earth. Paul wrote to young Timothy, **"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom"** (2 Tim 4:1).

Ben Gill, chairman and CEO of Resource Services, Inc., of Dallas, writes in his book, *"Stewardship, the Biblical Basis for Living,"* that:

*"Without question the central category of teaching in the ministry of Jesus Christ was the Kingdom of God. All understanding of His life and work must begin with a grasp of that Kingdom. A review of the synoptic Gospels demonstrates this clearly:"*

Another writer who speaks of the importance of the biblical emphasis on the Kingdom of God is Selwyn Hughes of Waverly, England, founder of Crusade for World Revival. In his book, *"Treasure for the Heart,"* he observes that **"any pattern of praying that does not make the Kingdom a priority is not Christian praying"** (p. 154).

**He goes on to write,** *"One of the sad things about church history is that the church has never really been gripped by the vision of the Kingdom of God...The church will never move into the dimension God has planned for it until it puts the Kingdom where Jesus put it in the Lord's Prayer -- in a place of primary consideration and primary allegiance"* (p. 154).

In addition, Hughes writes that, **"No wonder the church has stumbled from problem to problem when its priorities are not on the Kingdom of God as prioritized by God Himself"** (p. 155).

If our lack of understanding of the Kingdom of God has caused us to **"...stumble from problem to problem..."** as Mr. Hughes says then what do we need to know? What does the Bible say about the Kingdom?

**THE FIRST THING WE NEED TO KNOW IS...**

**1. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ABOUT HAVING KINGDOM IDENTITY – MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.**

- A. The relationship with God requires new birth
- 1) When we trusted Christ, we entered into the kingdom of God, **"...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"** (John 3:3)
  - 2) Jesus then explains to Nicodemus what this new birth is, **"...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"** (John 3:5-6).
  - 3) When we are born again we are then identified with the King, in fact we become a child of the King and heir of the Kingdom
    - (a) **"having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"** (Eph 1:5).
    - (b) This brings us to the next important thing about having a Kingdom Identity
- B. This relationship comes through Jesus Christ
- 1) Acts 4:12 tells us that, **"...there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."**
  - 2) But this new birth and relationship is more than just being a child of the King it says that we must be born of the spirit because the present reality is that Kingdom of God is a Spiritual Kingdom so everything about this kingdom is through the Spirit.
- C. This Identity will noticeable.
- 1) Most of you have seen my dad, it is almost impossible for someone to have seen my dad and not know that we are related.
    - (a) We look a lot alike
    - (b) We sound a lot alike
    - (c) We act and behave a lot alike
  - 2) The same is said to be true of our identity with the King
  - 3) Listen to what Paul says in Rom 8:10-16, **"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"**
    - (a) Our lives...not just on Sunday's but everyday, our lives should reflect the Spirit that leaves in us.
    - (b) The Spirit that lives in us is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead
    - (c) We are not longer debtors to the flesh (sin) nor do we live after the flesh (sin)
      - (1) Not talking about sinless perfection
      - (2) Talking about that which governs our thoughts, words, deeds: is it the flesh (sin) or is it the Spirit (holiness).
    - (d) Those who have a kingdom identity live after the Spirit
      - (1) They are led by the Spirit
      - (2) They are free from the bondage of sin and fear
      - (3) And they have the freedom to call out to their heavenly Father as adopted sons or daughters
- D. This identity is strengthened by Spiritual Disciplines
- 1) Reading His Word
  - 2) Listening to His Word
  - 3) Studying, memorizing and meditation upon His Word
  - 4) Talking with Him daily.

**THE SECOND THING WE NEED TO KNOW IS...**

**2. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ABOUT HAVING KINGDOM CHARACTER**

- A. **What Kingdom Character isn't** - Paul makes it clear in Gal 5:21 that people who deliberately and persistently live in sin will not share in God's kingdom.

- 1) He says at the end of a list of sinful behaviors, “...**they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God**” (Gal. 5:21b).
- 2) What are the “**such things**” Paul was referring to? We find them in the verses prior to verse 21, Gal 5:19-21a:
  - (a) **Sensual Sins:**
    - (1) Adultery & fornication - these are sensual sins; both deal with sin outside the bounds of marriage
    - (2) Uncleaness - filthiness of heart and mind that makes the person defiled. The unclean person sees dirt in everything
    - (3) Lasciviousness - speaks of a wanton appetite that knows no shame.
    - (4) Drunkenness & revellings – (orgies) need no explanation.
  - (b) **Superstitious Sins:**
    - (1) Idolatry - simply putting things ahead of God and people. We are to worship God, love people, and use things, but too often we use people, love self, and worship things, leaving God out of the picture completely. Jesus tells us that whatever we worship, we serve (Matt. 4:10).
    - (2) Witchcraft - from the Greek word *pharmakeia*, which means “the use of drugs.”
  - (c) **Social Sins:**
    - (1) Hatred - enmity,” the attitude of mind that defies and challenges others. This attitude leads to...
    - (2) Variance - which is strife, the outworking of enmity
    - (3) Emulations - jealousies or rivalries. How tragic when Christians compete with one another and try to make one another look bad in the eyes of others.
    - (4) Wrath – outbursts of anger,
    - (5) Strife – self-seeking, selfish ambition,” that creates divisions in the church.
    - (6) Seditions & heresies – these are similar terms, the first suggests division, and the second cliques caused by a party spirit. *Divisions and factions* would be a fair translation or people promoting themselves and insisting that the people follow them, not the Lord.
  - (d) Envyings & murders – really need no explanation
- 3) People whose life is defined by any of these Paul says, “...**shall not inherit the kingdom of God**”
  - (a) Among the lost this means certain hell
  - (b) Among the saved this means truly lack of power, peace and provision

**B. What Kingdom Character Looks like** - is seen in the next two verses, Gal 5:22-23:

- 1) It is called the fruit of the Spirit – these **first three Characteristics express the Godward aspects**
  - (a) Love – you want to know what kind of love spoke of here look at 1 Cor 13, it is *agape* love is first in the list because the fruit of the Spirit grows out of this love – the greatest commandment, Love for God; Love for others
  - (b) Joy – when a person lives in the sphere of love, then he experiences *joy*—that inward peace and sufficiency that is not affected by outward circumstances.
  - (c) Peace – love and joy together produce *peace*, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7).
- 2) The next **three Characteristics express the manward aspects:**
  - (a) Longsuffering – ourageous endurance without quitting)
  - (b) Gentleness – love in action
  - (c) Goodness – The Christian who is long-suffering will not avenge himself or wish difficulties on those who oppose him. He will be kind and gentle, even with the most offensive, and will sow goodness where others sow evil. Human nature can never do this on its own; only the Holy Spirit can.
- 3) The **final three Characteristics express are selfward:**
  - (a) Faith – faithfulness, dependability)
  - (b) Meekness – the right use of power and authority, power under control, meekness is not weakness. Jesus said, “*I am meek and lowly in heart*” (Matt. 11:29). The meek Christian does not throw his weight around or assert himself. Just as wisdom is the right use of knowledge, so meekness is the right use of authority and power.

(c) Temperance - self-control

C. To many Christians have lost their effectiveness and power because they allow the characteristics of the flesh control them rather than building **Kingdom Character**

**THE THIRD THING WE NEED TO KNOW IS...**

**3. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ABOUT HAVING KINGDOM PRIORITIES**

**A. The First Priority of the Kingdom is Putting Him First**

- 1) **"...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"**  
(Matt. 16:24).
- 2) Jesus tells us what happens when this is no longer our number one priority
  - (a) In Revelation Jesus has John write letters to the 7 churches and in two of those churches Jesus tells us the result of not making following Him a priority –
  - (b) He tells the church at Ephesus that they had **"...left thy first love"** and that they needed to repent and go back to the first works.
    - (1) What were these first works?
    - (2) That original sweet fellowship they had for God
    - (3) They had gotten careless with their relationship: Bible reading and meditation, obedient service, and worship
  - (c) To the Church at Laodicea he warns them about becoming "lukewarm"
    - (1) **"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."** (Rev 3:15-16).
    - (2) They had lost that vigor for the Lord
    - (3) The lukewarm Christian is comfortable, complacent, and does not realize his need
    - (4) Paul tells us that Christians should be **"...fervent in spirit; serving the Lord"** (Rom 12:11).
      - (i) This fervent is in serving
      - (ii) It also is seen in prayer when he tells the church at Colossae that Epaphras was, **"...always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"** (Col 4:12).

**B. The Second Priority of the Kingdom is the Lost.**

- 1) Jesus told us what the Priority should be when He told us why He came, **"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."** (Lk. 19:10)
  - (a) Jesus spent the vast majority of His earthly ministry, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom..." (Matt. 9:35).
  - (b) But over time the sheer numbers of lost souls moved Him to compassion (Matt. 9:36), **"because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."**
  - (c) Then he turned to His disciples and said, **"...The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."**
- 2) He then told us what the priority of our prayers should be,
  - (a) **"...Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest"** (Matt 9:37b).
- 3) He also told us the urgency of the need to carry out this Priority
  - (a) **"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."** (Jn. 4:35).

**C. The Priority of the Kingdom is Putting Christ First and reaching Lost Souls**

**Conclusion:** If we are missing power in our Christian walk then we need to get back to the thing Jesus found most important, **Becoming A Kingdom Person**. What does it take to become a kingdom person? We need to make sure we **HAVE A KINGDOM IDENTITY**, begin to develop **KINGDOM CHARACTER**, and make **KINGDOM PRIORITIES** our priorities; make Jesus number one in our life and winning the lost.