

Kingdom

Bible Study



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English Standard Version
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The Story of the Kingdom of God

Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying,
 “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the
 gospel.”

Welcome!

Welcome to this semester’s Bible study!! This semester we are studying the Kingdom of God. It will be a ten week study on the different aspects of God’s Kingdom based on the 24-7 messages. Each week we will have an introduction, a chance to dig into the Bible, summaries, and a section for applying the truths in daily life. As you start, pray this prayer from the Psalms:

Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.
 Psalm 119:18

The Story

Every kingdom has a story. It has a beginning and sometimes an end. It has enemies, and it has allies. There is usually a king or leader of each kingdom who exercises power over a domain where his rule is accomplished. Every kingdom has a time where it is advancing and growing. Most kingdoms have those who disobey the king and a system of justice used to handle the disobedient. Many kingdoms have villains, and most kingdoms have heroes.

Name one of your favorite stories of a kingdom in movies, fiction, or history. Briefly write out the elements of this kingdom (people, places, history, etc). Why do you like this particular kingdom story?

The Bible gives the ultimate kingdom story. The Kingdom of God is a theme that is woven throughout the entire Bible. God reigns as King over the world he created, sustaining it with his power, will, and wisdom. God is the King of the universe and created the world and human beings to be at peace with him. However, Adam and Eve quickly rejected God’s rule over their lives and disobeyed God. This disobedience to God’s rule caused sin and disharmony to spread over all the earth. Because of sin, humans became enemies of God as King and are consequently destined for eternal punishment. Throughout the Old Testament, the pattern emerges about how God’s people continually reject him as King by failing to do what he desires. But when Jesus came, he proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand in a new way.

His death on the cross brought peace with God the King to all who trust in him. The Kingdom of God is here in a sense and in a sense it is yet to be fulfilled completely—it is already, but not yet. It is here already through the saving work of Christ and through the Holy Spirit active in the hearts of Christians. The Kingdom of God is advancing as his people live for him and share his good news with others, making disciples of all nations. The Kingdom of God is still yet to come in that in the end, when Christ comes back, he will usher in the Kingdom of God in its consummation in the new heavens and the new earth.

Summary Points

This story of God's Kingdom can be summarized into four points which we will study briefly this week and dig into more specifically throughout the semester.

- God is King of the world, ruling over his creation.
- Humans have rejected God's kingly rule and are separated from him, yet peace with the King is available to those who trust Christ.
- Christians now are living for God's Kingdom in three ways; inside out, upside down, and advancing across.
- In the end, God's Kingdom will fully come in Christ.



Dig Into The Bible

God is King of the world, ruling over his creation.

Look up the following verses and write out everything you learn about God.

Psalm 47:1-9

Acts 17:24-27

Humans have rejected God’s kingly rule. Peace with the King is available to those who trust Christ.

Read the following passage that illustrates this point:

**Dig Into
The Bible**

Romans 5:1-11

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. ⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person— though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

List out some ways that this passage describes those without Christ. Circle these in the passage above.

Jot down characteristics and benefits of the one who has Christ. Underline these in the passage above.

Write out a summary sentence on how this passage describes obtaining peace with God the King.

Inside Out

Christians now live for God's Kingdom in three ways; inside out, upside down, and advancing across.

Living for God's Kingdom from the inside out means that the experience of the grace of Christ motivates one to live the Christian life out of a heart to honor and love God rather than out of religious duty or desire for the approval of men. Look up Titus 2:11-14. List three truths that you find pertaining to the above definition.

Upside Down

Living for God's Kingdom upside down is to seek first God's kingdom and will rather than living for the priorities of this world.

Look up Romans 12:1-2. Based on the ideas of this verse, write out how one can seek God first and avoid living for the priorities of the world.

Advancing Across

Living for God's Kingdom by advancing across means to *advance* his gospel across the street, across lines of injustice, and across the oceans by sharing the good news of Christ and living it out in daily life. It means giving one's life to making disciples here as well as in all nations.

The verse for this idea is based in is Acts 1:8

Jesus said, "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."

In the end, God's Kingdom will fully come in Christ.

Skim Revelation 21:1-22:5. Jot down some characteristics of Christ's future kingdom.



Put It All Together

Review

Let's review the four points to the story of God's Kingdom. Try to fill in the blanks without looking.

- God is _____ of the world, ruling over his creation.
- Humans have rejected God's kingly rule and are separated from him, yet _____ with the King is available to those who trust Christ.
- Christians now are living for God's Kingdom in three ways; _____, _____, and _____.
- In the end, God's Kingdom will fully come in _____.

The Big Idea

Here is the point of this study on the Story of the Kingdom of God

Humans have rejected God's rule as King and have become his enemies, yet those who trust in Christ can be restored back to peace with the King.



Into Your World

The call of Jesus on your life is to repent of your sins and be restored to your King!!
Mark 1:15

Have you ever taken that initial step of turning from your sins and trusting Christ? If you have, share your story with the group. If you have not, you can today! Consider the following quote by Gene Mims in *The Kingdom Focused Church* about how every person longs to be a peace with the King:

The kingdom of God is the reign of God over all things in the universe. It is God's personal presence in and over all things. It comes to us by revelation, the greatest expression of which is seen in Jesus Christ. He is vitally connected to our lives and wants us to know Him and to be with Him forever. The kingdom of God is the message and reality Jesus brought to earth to give us peace and security forever. It is what every person in the world longs for and every person can have in knowing Christ as Lord.

Looking Back

For Meditation:

Look back at the study. Pick out one or two verses, thoughts, or ideas that are especially meaningful to you. Jot your thoughts down below. Then write out how you can apply these things to your life.



Bonus Questions—For Further Thought

How do the following passages explain the problem of sin and/or Christ's solution to that problem? Romans 1:18-32; Romans 3:21-31; Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-10.

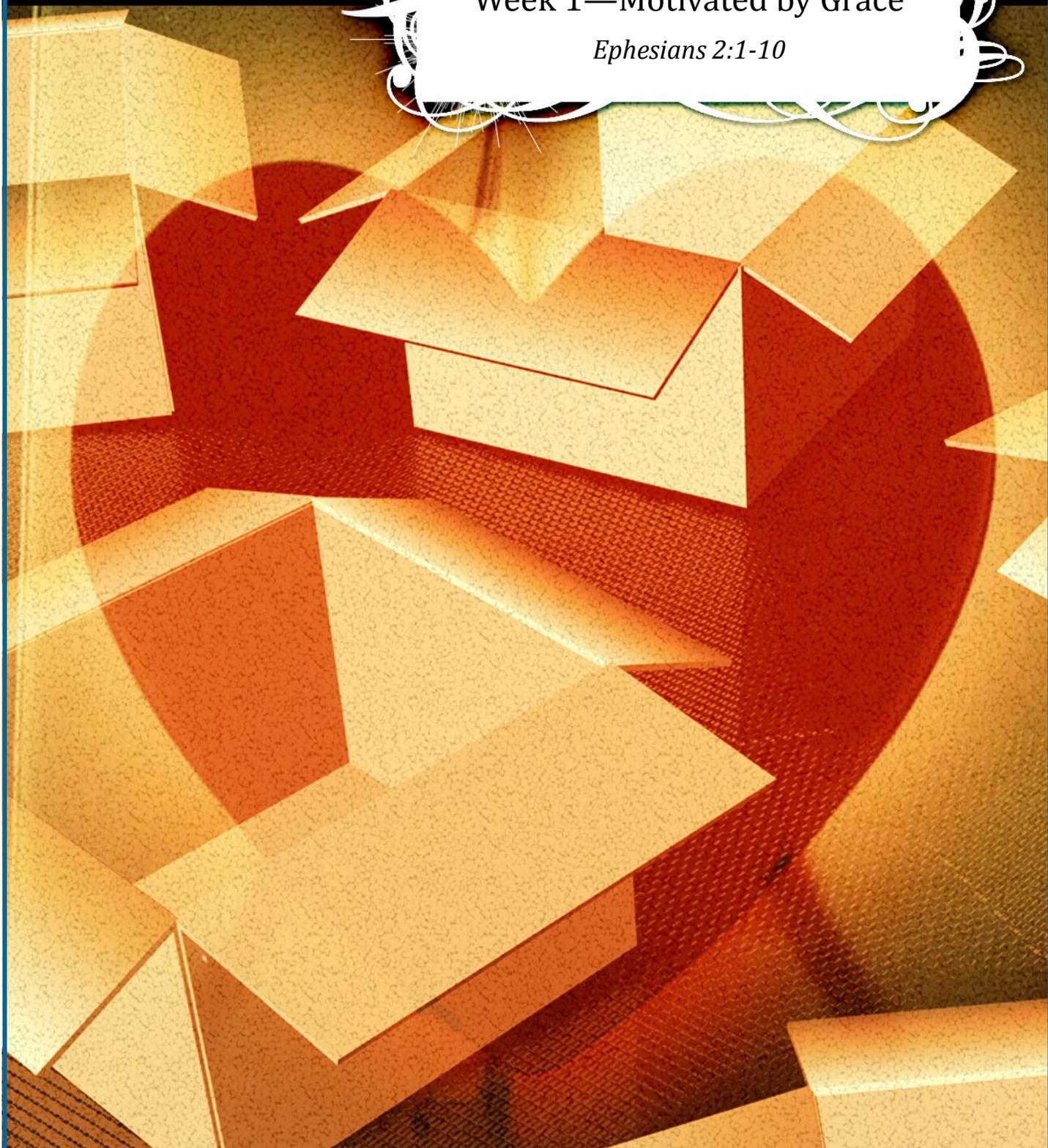
How do the following passages explain obtaining peace with King Jesus? John 1:12; John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10.

What does it mean to seek first God's Kingdom? Matthew 6:33 (and context); 1 John 2:15-17; James 1:27; Matthew 28:18-20.

Inside Out

Week 1—Motivated by Grace

Ephesians 2:1-10



Inside Out—Motivated by God’s Grace

Key Verse

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
 Ephesians 2:8-10

Doing Good

You decide to take a poll on your hall to discover why people do good things. You get three totally different responses.

One friend says, “I am active in many of my classes as a grader and a tutor. I do community service every month. I sometimes volunteer at the local grade school to read to the kids. I want to stay active on campus through clubs and activities. Many of these things I can put on my resume. If I build a good resume and make good grades, then I can get a good job, make money, help society, and be successful.”

One friend says, “I know that all my good deeds added up can never earn God’s favor. I do good things to show gratitude to God. He has saved me from the eternal punishment that my sins deserve by sending Christ to die on the cross. Now I am free to do good things to honor, love, and fulfill his good will for my life.”

Another friend says, “My parents always taught me to do good and to go to church. I try to help out those in need. Sometimes I give a portion of my money to the church or to organizations to help out poverty. I try to be there for people when they need my help. I try to do more good things than bad things. Because of these good deeds and because I stay away from doing really bad things, I believe that God will let me go to heaven.”

Starter Question

What are the motivations behind the good things done by these three friends? Have you ever had a time when your life was characterized by the response of one of these three friends? Think back to your life this past month and about the good things that you did. Why did you do them? Be honest.

Quick Review

One major place where the Kingdom of God is currently present is in the lives of those who have trusted Christ. Living as a person of the Kingdom of God means that one is living life inside out, upside down, and advancing across. The topic for the next two weeks is inside out. Our definition of this is:

Living for God's Kingdom from the inside out means that the experience of the grace of Christ motivates one to live the Christian life out of a heart to honor and love God rather than out of religious duty or desire for the approval of men.



Dig Into The Bible

The following section of the Bible was written by the Apostle Paul to the believers at the church in the city of Ephesus. Paul had helped start the church there and was writing to encourage them to follow God from the inside out.

Key Themes:

Ephesians 2:1-10

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Look back at the passage:

- Circle, underline, and box any key words that you see.
- In the space to the left of the passage, write out a few key themes that you observe.
- Mark any key connective words such as: but, so that, for, etc. Jot down below the function these connectives are playing in the passage. For example you could underline so that in verse 7 and write “this introduces the result or reason that God seated us with Christ—that he might show his grace and kindness.”

Questions to consider

What does it mean to be dead in one's trespasses and sins? What does it mean to be by nature objects of God's wrath? Look up Romans 1:18-32 and Romans 5:12-21 to help you answer this question.

List out some characteristics of God that you see in this passage. What are some reasons why God chose to save us? What motivates him to show us mercy?

Write out what everything you learn about Jesus Christ from this passage.

Look at verses 8-10. Write out as many statements that you can about what this passage says about good works.

Are good works the basis for salvation or are they something else? Explain. What should motivate us to do good deeds?

Purpose of Good Deeds

Verses 8-9 explain that saving faith is a gift from God. If our good works will not earn for us God's love and salvation, what does their purpose seem to be? To answer this question fully, look up Matthew 5:14-16; John 15:8-11; and Titus 3:5-8.



Put It All Together

To put it all together, write out a summary sentence or short paragraph to explain the truths of this passage.

Past Present Future

Another way to look at the passage is to break it into past, present, and future.

Past—what does this passage teach about our status in the past and what God has done?

Present—what does this passage teach about how we are to live in the present?

Future—what does this passage teach us about what will happen in the future?

Review

Here is the point of this study: *Good works are motivated by God's grace.* We live from the inside out—doing good things to honor and love God out of gratitude, not out of guilt or out of the need to earn salvation.

This passage teaches that people are spiritually dead because of their sins. Because of this sin, people are objects of God's wrath and therefore deserve eternal punishment. But God made his love known by sending Jesus to die on the cross to take the punishment people deserved so that those who have faith in Jesus can be saved. Good works do not save a person, only God's grace saves. Good works come in as a way to show gratitude to God and walk in his will.



Into Your World

Write out the most significant truth for you from this study.

How does knowing you are God's workmanship affect the way you feel about yourself? How does this affect how you perceive your purpose in life and your purpose for good works?

What are some of the good works that you believe God has prepared for you to do in your life right now? How will you do them this week? How will you stay motivated by God's grace?



Bonus Questions—For Further Thought (Optional)

List out some ways (at least three) in which you can find out which works God has “prepared in advance” for you to do.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- James 1:5-8
- John 15:5,10

Skim the rest of the book of Ephesians. List out some instances where you see God’s grace in Christ. List out some good works that Paul explains we should do.

Jot down what you learn from the following passages about good works, God’s grace, a new heart, and/or the relationship between good deeds and faith.

- Ezekiel 36:26-27

- 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

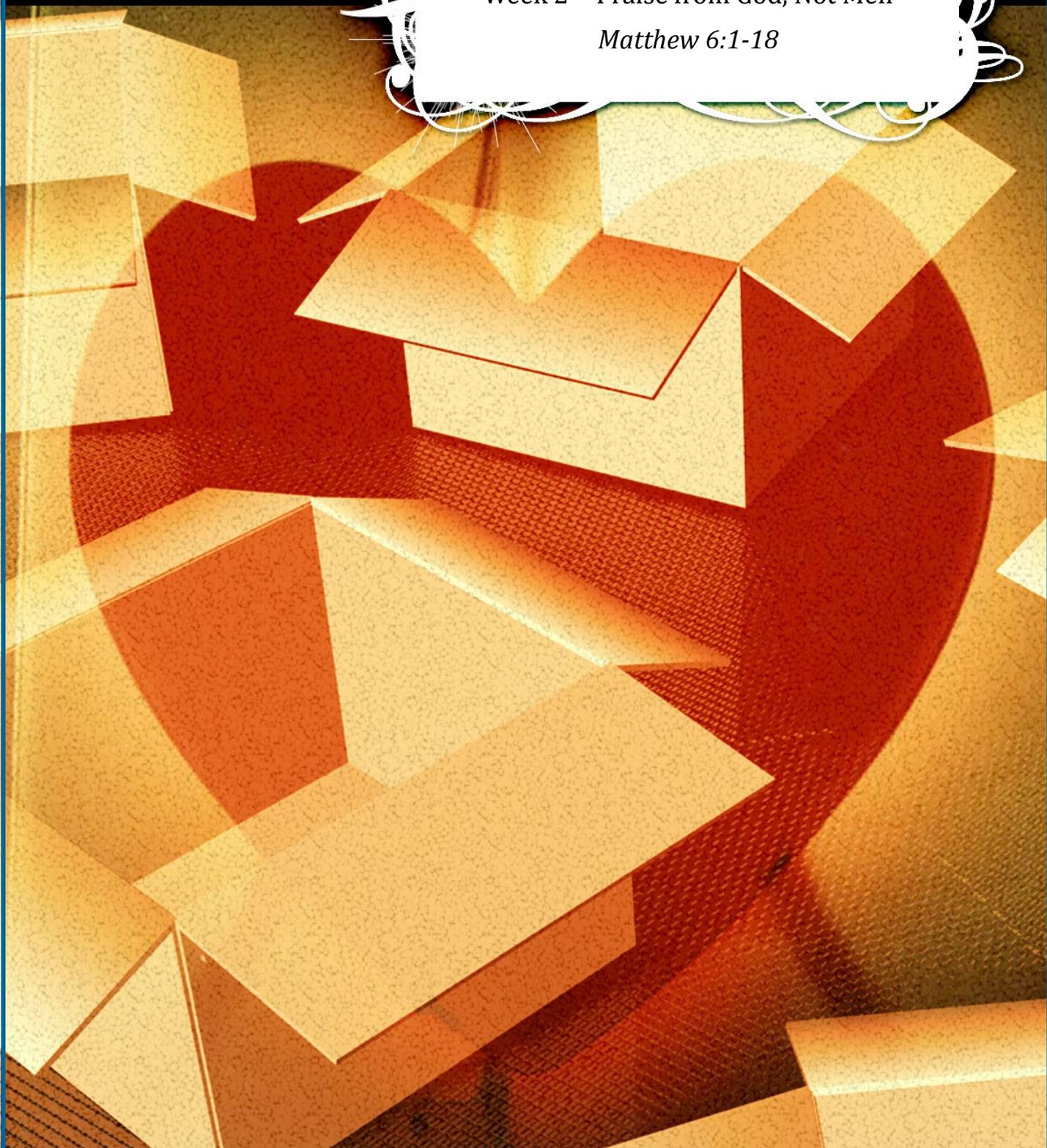
- Colossians 1:9-14

- Titus 3:3-8

Inside Out

Week 2—Praise from God, Not Men

Matthew 6:1-18



Inside Out—Praise from God, Not Men

Key Idea

Personal transformation begins in the inner person through the work of the Spirit of God, which produces change on the outside as we discipline ourselves to be more Christlike.

We must develop an inside-out mentality so that Spirit-produced growth of the inner person is in harmony with outward obedience.

Michael J. Wilkins

The Song Inside Out

A thousand times I've failed
Still your mercy remains
And should I stumble again
Still I'm caught in your grace

Everlasting, Your light will shine when all else fades
Never ending, Your glory goes beyond all fame
In my heart, in my soul, Lord I give you control
Consume me from the inside out Lord
Let justice and praise become my embrace
To love You from the inside out

Your will above all else, my purpose remains
The art of losing myself in bringing you praise

Everlasting, Your light will shine when all else fades
Never ending, Your glory goes beyond all fame
In my heart, in my soul, Lord I give you control
Consume me from the inside out Lord
Let justice and praise become my embrace
To love You from the inside out

- Summarize the message of this song. List some specifics that this song brings up on how to love God from the inside out.

A Quick Review

Remember our definition of living from the inside out: Living for God's Kingdom from the inside out means that the experience of the grace of Christ motivates one to live the Christian life out of a heart to honor and love God rather than out of religious duty or desire for the approval of men.

Dig Into The Bible

Jesus spoke these words to a crowd that had gathered and to his disciples as a part of the Sermon on the Mount. Earlier he had told them that unless their righteousness surpassed the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, they would not be part of the Kingdom of God. In this passage he explains that heart motivation is the difference between the deeds of religious hypocrites and the deeds of true followers.

Section Titles:

Matthew 6:1-18

¹“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

⁵“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. ¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. “

¹⁶“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

From your reading of the passage, do the following things:

- This passage can be broken up into three sections. Give each section a title and write your titles to the left of each paragraph.
- Mark with an underline, circle, or box any phrases or key words that are repeated.
- List out below a few statements of truth that Jesus is getting at:

Questions to Consider

What types of things were these hypocrites doing? What does this show about their hearts?

Write out the instructions Jesus gives about how we should give, pray, and fast. Jot down as many as you can find.

- Instructions on giving:

- Instructions on prayer:

- Instructions on fasting:

What does Jesus mean when he says that they have already received their reward (verses 2,5,16)? What reward were they looking for? What reward will they miss out on?

Matthew 5:16 says, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Yet Matthew 6:1 says, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them." Is there a contradiction here? Why or why not?

Are we to do all our giving, praying, and fasting in secret? What may be some appropriate contexts where practicing these disciplines publically could be done? How do we practically keep these things from becoming a show?



Put It All Together

Try to summarize the main message of this passage in a few sentences:



Into Your World

Giving to the poor, prayer, and fasting were important spiritual activities of Jesus' day. Some today call them spiritual disciplines. What are some other spiritual disciplines that God wants us to practice?

What spiritual disciplines do you need to work on or start? Write out a specific plan below.

What things can you do to make sure you first and foremost devote your spiritual disciplines to God?

Summary

To help bring everything together, ponder this summary quote from the *NIV Application Bible Commentary*:

The transformation that God has begun in the inner life is reflected in our acts of righteousness. Jesus emphasizes three practices that illustrate this principle.

- The transformation that occurs in the heart of a disciple causes him to love with God's love, which will be expressed in giving to the needy (6:2 – 4).
- The intimacy of the relationship with God that has occurred in the inner person of the disciple will be expressed in an intimate form of personalized prayer between her and the Father (6:5 – 15).
- The inner life of the disciple who has experienced true humility and mourning over one's own sin and the sorry sinful state of the world apart from God will urge her or him to undertake the discipline of fasting in order to examine one's personal life and to focus on prayer for the world's repentance (6:16 – 18).

The Big Idea

God's grace has transformed our hearts so that we do our spiritual acts to bring glory to his name, not to impress people—for praise from God, not men.



Bonus Questions—For Further Thought (Optional)

What do the following verses teach about practicing spiritual activities? You may need to look at the context of the verses to help explain the situation.

•Joel 2:12-13

•Isaiah 1:10-17

•Psalm 51:16-17

•1 Timothy 4:7-8

Money

Upside Down *Matthew 6:19-34*



Upside Down— Treasure God, Not Money

Key Verse

You cannot serve both God and money...seek first his kingdom and righteousness
Matthew 6:24b, 33

Quotes

Consider the following quotations about money and possessions:

“He who dies with the most toys wins.” -Popular Bumper Sticker

“A large income is the best recipe for happiness I ever heard of.” -Jane Austen

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”
-Jim Elliot

“The rich are the scum of the earth in every country.” -G.K. Chesterton

“Lack of money is the root of all evil.” -George Bernard Shaw

“Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. The more a man has, the more he wants. Instead of filling a vacuum, it makes one.” -Benjamin Franklin

"It's a kind of spiritual snobbery that makes people think they can be happy without money." -Albert Camus

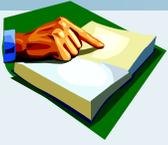
“There are no U-Hauls behind hearses” -John Piper

•Do any of these quotes resonate with you or rub you the wrong way? Why?

Recap

In previous studies, we have been learning that life in God’s Kingdom now means living for God in three ways; inside out, upside down, and advancing across. The last two weeks we learned that living inside out means that our good deeds are motivated by God’s grace and our ultimate desire in life is that we live to please God rather than live for the praise of men.

The next three weeks we will study what it means to live for God’s Kingdom upside down. Living for God’s Kingdom upside down is to seek first God’s kingdom priorities rather than live for the priorities of the world. The priorities of a person seeking God’s Kingdom are upside down from the priorities of the world. Each week we will



Dig Into The Bible

Title:

Jesus said,

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Title:

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Matthew 6:19-34 (NIV)

Observe

From your reading of the passage, do the following things:

- Write out **a title** for each paragraph to the left of the text.
- Underline important words or phrases.
- Put a box around key connective words such as: but, therefore, yet, etc. Jot down why each boxed connective is significant.

There are many contrasts in this passage.

Make a list of them below

• *If eyes are good, body is full of light*

If eyes are bad, body is full of darkness

-
-
-
-

**Interpret:
Questions
to Consider**

What is the connection between the two paragraphs, that is, what does Jesus say about how worry is related to money and the eyes?

Why is it the case that someone cannot serve God and treasure money at the same time?

What is the point of Jesus' examples of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field?

In verse 33, Jesus says to seek first God's Kingdom and righteousness. Use the themes of the rest of the passage to explain what this means. What are the characteristics of a person who is seeking first God's Kingdom and righteousness?

What does it mean to store up treasures on earth? What does this practically look like in a person's life?

What does it mean to store up treasures in heaven? What does this practically look like in a person's life? Use Luke 12:32-34 and 1 Timothy 6:18-19 to help you answer.



Put It All Together

Write out three to five principles that you see in this passage. (A principle is a short statement of truth that can be applied to life today).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

In one sentence, write out what you think is the main point of this passage in regard to money.



Into Your World

What are the top things that the world values? What are the top things that are the values of someone seeking first God's Kingdom and righteousness?

How can we determine where our treasure is (and thus where our hearts are)? What can you do to make sure you are serving God and not serving money/wealth?

What can you do to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness and store up treasures in heaven this week? Be specific.

List a couple things that you worry about. Write out how you can give these over to God's control.

The Big Idea

The priorities of a person seeking God's Kingdom are upside down from the priorities of the world. Jesus teaches that someone seeking his Kingdom and righteousness first is someone who is treasuring God and not letting money, wealth, and possessions become master.

"The Bible teaches that all the evils in the world come not because our desires for happiness are too strong, but because they are so weak that we settle for fleeting pleasures that do not satisfy our deepest souls, but in the end destroy them. The root of all evil is that we are the kind of people who settle for the love of money instead of the love of God."

John Piper in *Desiring God*



Bonus Questions—For Further Thought (Optional)

What do the following passages teach about money, wealth, and possessions?

- 1 Timothy 6:5-10
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-8
- Hebrews 13:5-6
- Proverbs 3:9-10
- Matthew 19:16-26

Power

Upside Down Week 2
Mark 10:35-45



Upside Down—Greatness is Serving

Key Verse

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served,
but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.
Mark 10:45

Prayer

Before beginning the study, start with prayer. Ask God to help you understand who he is in greater ways and ask him to help you know how to apply his word to your life.

Review

This is the second week of a three-week series of studies about how to live life in God's Kingdom upside down. Living for God's Kingdom upside down is to seek first God's priorities rather than live for the priorities of this world.

Last week we learned that someone seeking God's Kingdom first is someone who treasures God's person, glory, and mission rather than allowing wealth, possessions, and money become master. The goal of this study is to understand how Jesus defines



For Starters

What comes to mind when you think of achieving power and greatness?

How does our society define power and greatness?



Dig Into The Bible

The following is a conversation Jesus had with his disciples from **Mark 10:35-45**.

³⁵ James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You.” ³⁶ And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” ³⁷ They said to Him, “Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on *Your* left, in Your glory.”

³⁸ But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” ³⁹ They said to Him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. ⁴⁰ “But to sit on My right or on *My* left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” ⁴¹ Hearing *this*, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.

⁴² Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. ⁴³ “But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵ “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Background Questions

Though Jesus had repeatedly told them that he was going to Jerusalem to die, James and John were anticipating that Jesus would overthrow the Roman rule over the Jews and set up an earthly kingdom. This anticipation was based on Isaiah 9:6-7. Read this passage and list some things James and John might have been looking for.

Rather than overthrowing the Romans and setting up an earthly rule, Jesus’ plan was to become a ransom for many by going to Jerusalem to die on the cross. This death on the cross was also predicted in the Old Testament. Read Isaiah 53:4-5; 10-12 and list the characteristics of the suffering servant, Jesus.

Questions

What did James and John's request reflect about their character?

What were the "baptism" and "cup" of which Jesus spoke? To answer this, look up how these ideas were used in the Old Testament Ps 69:2; Is 51:17; Jer 25:15-16.

Why were the other ten disciples indignant with James and John? What does this reveal about their character?

What does verse 42 reveal about how the Roman society viewed power and greatness? How is this similar or different than how our society views greatness?

How does Jesus define power and greatness in verse 43? Write out the verse in your own words.

Questions

In the final verse, Jesus explains that he gave his life as a ransom for many, thus showing that he was an example of greatness by becoming a servant. Ransom was a familiar image in the Roman and Greek cultures. It was the price paid to liberate a slave, a prisoner of war, or a condemned person. Look up 1 Cor 6:19-20; Eph 1:7-8; and Romans 3:23-24 and jot down how each of these verses further explain how Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many.

- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

- Ephesians 1:7-8

- Romans 3:23-24

Read the following passages and jot down what you learn about what it means to be great in the Kingdom of God:

- Luke 22:24-30

- Matthew 18:1-6

- Matthew 23:1-12



Put It All Together

Summarize in a sentence or two the message of Mark 10:35-45.

The Big Idea

Jesus explained that greatness in the Kingdom of God is upside down from how the world defines power. Greatness is not in ruling, authority, or fame. Rather greatness is serving. Jesus demonstrated this by going to the cross and dying as a ransom for many. Those that have faith in his sacrifice may be saved!



Into Your World

Consider C. J. Mahaney's comments on this passage in his book *Humility*:

James and John wanted to be famous, pure and simple. James and John have defined greatness as position and power, and they want the title. They want the respect, the acclaim, and the importance. In their pride-dominated hearts, Jesus is just a means to their end of personal exaltation.

Two definitions of greatness:

- As sinfully and culturally defined, pursuing greatness looks like this: individuals motivated by self-interest, self-indulgence, and a false sense of self-sufficiency pursue selfish ambition for the purpose of self-glorification.
- Contrast that with the pursuit of greatness as biblically defined: serving others for the glory of God. This is the genuine expression of humility; this is true greatness as the Savior defined it.

Consider your own life for just a moment. Where would you be today if he had not ransomed you, if he had not liberated you? I tell you where. You would be self-sufficient, seeking to cultivate self-confidence for the purpose of self-glorification... but now you have been forgiven and transformed.

We know the inner call to lay down our lives for one another because he laid down his life for us. Apart from his sacrifice there is no serving. True greatness is attained only by emulating the Savior's example—and made possible only by the Saviors sacrifice.

For Application

Look back on this study. What is the most meaningful idea, verse or thought from this study? Why is it meaningful to you?

How do Jesus' words to James and John change your attitude about power and greatness? Write down one thing you can do to apply what you have learned.



Bonus: Optional Questions for Further Thought

How do you need to change your attitude or actions in light of Jesus' words about serving?

What steps can you take to guard yourself against an attitude of selfishness or greed?

Look up the following passages and jot down what you learn about greatness, power, serving, and humility.

- John 13:1-20

- Romans 12:10

- Ephesians 5:21

- Philippians 2:3-11

- 1 Peter 5:5-6

Upside Down

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8



God's Will Regarding Sex

Key Verse

*"For this is the will of God, your sanctification:
that you abstain from sexual immorality;
that each one of you know how to control
his own body in holiness and honor." 1Thess 4:3-4*

Prayer

Before beginning the study, start with prayer. Ask God to help you understand who he is in greater ways and ask him to help you know how to apply his word to your life.

Review

This is the third week of a three-week series of studies about how to live life in God's Kingdom upside down. Living for God's Kingdom upside down is to seek first God's priorities rather than live for the priorities of this world.

Last week we learned that Jesus explained that greatness in the Kingdom of God is upside down from how the world defines power. Greatness is not in ruling, authority, or fame. Rather greatness is serving. This week we will study sex.



For Starters

How does our society view sex? Write down some general thoughts.

What does our society tell us about when sex is appropriate? How about when it is inappropriate? Who sets these rules? Do you agree?



Dig Into The Bible

The following passage is from a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica. Paul founded the church there and sent this letter to encourage the believers to live a life that honored God. Read the passage through a few times slowly.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 (ESV)

¹ Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Questions

Read the context (the chapter before, 3, and after, 4:9-) and list some themes that are on Paul's mind.

Summarize verses 1 and 2 in your own words below:

For Paul, how is the Christian view of sex upside down than that of the Gentile world? List the contrasting characteristics. Also consult the back of this study for further cultural information and definitions.

Questions

What does it mean to live a life that is holy and sanctified in this area? Look at the text.

In verse 6, in what ways is it possible to "wrong" a brother in regard to the issue of sexual immorality.

To the one who is sexually immoral, what type of warnings does Paul give?

Write out what these other passages say about living a pure life in this area.

- Matthew 5:27-30

- 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

- Romans 12:1-2



Put It All Together

Summarize in a sentence or two the message of 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8.



Into Your World

How does the media influence our attitudes about sex?

How would you respond to someone who says it is possible to be a good Christian while also being sexually immoral?

What motivates you to live a life that is pure and holy in this area?

Getting Specific

In view of the fact that God desires you to live a life of sexual control, consider these questions prayerfully.

- Do you need to make any decisions regarding the movies, video tapes, magazines, television shows, etc., that are part of your life?
- Do you need to deal with any improper relationships in view of what God's will is for your life in 1 Thes. 4:3-4?
- Are there any activities you need to stop that are prompting lust in your life?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, write out specifically how you will go about taking action in this area below:

Share this application with a trusted friend and share how you can help each other out in this area.

Grace

In studying this topic, many people feel great remorse because of things in their past or current sin pattern. Know that God is full of grace, that Christ has died for all of your sins, and that he will give you power to live in a manner that pleases him. You may want to meditate on these passages if these things apply to you.

- Romans 7:14-8:17
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- Romans 6:11-14

Quotes

Quotes to Consider:

“Sex is good because the God who created sex is good. And God is glorified greatly when we receive his gift with thanksgiving and enjoy it the way he meant for it to be enjoyed.”
-Ben Patterson

“Sexual sin is but one expression of a deeper war for the heart's loyalty and primary love.”
-Justin Taylor

The Greek Culture of The Time

Sexual immorality (4:3)

In its narrow sense, the word *porneia* originally referred to sexual acts connected with the worship of sexuality in pagan rites—sex with a temple prostitute. Jews (of whom Paul was one) used the word for all the sexual activities practiced by Gentiles that were forbidden in Jewish law, including premarital and extramarital intercourse, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality. We might add to the list pornography and any activities of sexual addiction, which reflect a kind of idolatry.

The Thessalonians lived in a society where sexual promiscuity was openly permitted and encouraged for men. Greek religion often included sacred prostitution as a form of worship to gods and goddesses who embodied the forces of nature. Many pagan temples housed priestesses whose task was to have intercourse with male worshippers and thereby give them contact with the divine. The keeping of mistresses and/or young male lovers was a common practice among the upper classes, while common men frequented the temples. Sex was regarded as a man's need, as indifferent as food and drink. In view of this, it is understandable that Christians recently converted, like the Thessalonians, were assaulted on a daily basis by sexual temptations. To be faithful to one's wife was almost unheard-of. (Women who were not prostitutes were considered property of their husbands, and their infidelities could be punished, although drunken revelry during festivals did relax the rules.)



Bonus: Optional Questions for Further Thought

Study these passages on sex, purity, and temptation.

- Psalm 119:9-11

- 1 Corinthians 10:13

- Genesis 2:18, 23-24

- Proverbs 4:23

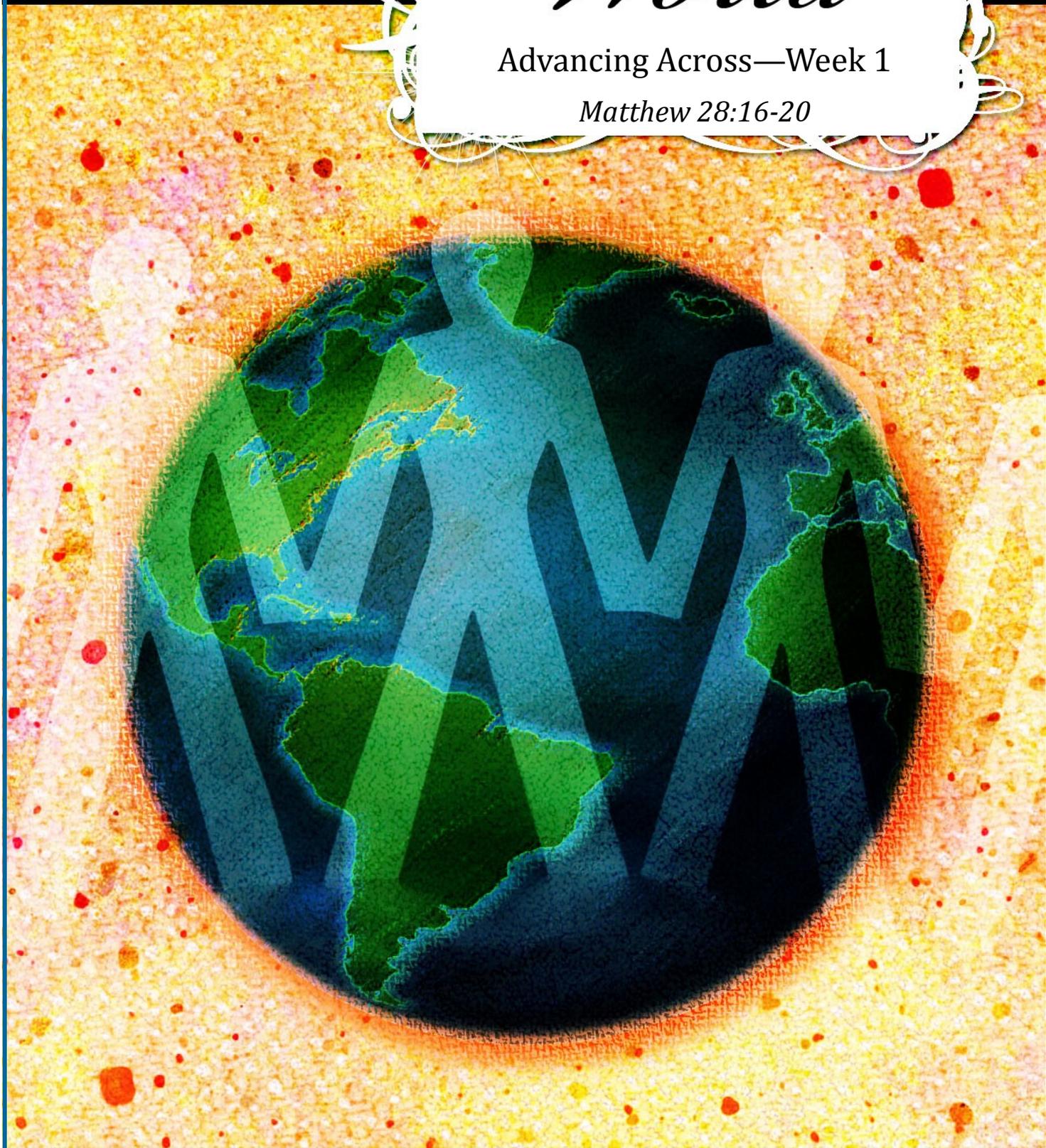
- Job 31:1

- Study Joseph's example in Genesis 39

World

Advancing Across—Week 1

Matthew 28:16-20



Advancing Across the Oceans

Key Verse

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.”
Matthew 28:19

Prayer

Before starting this study, take time to pray. Ask God to impact your life through this study and teach you his will.

Review

In previous studies, we have been learning that life in God’s Kingdom now means living for God in three ways:

- Inside out
- Upside down
- And Advancing across.

Living for God’s Kingdom *inside out* means that our good deeds are motivated by God’s grace. It means that our ultimate desire in life is that we live to please God rather than live for the praise of men.

Living for God’s Kingdom *upside down* is to seek first God’s Kingdom priorities rather than live for the priorities of the world. The priorities of a person seeking God’s Kingdom are upside down from the priorities of the world.

Advancing Across

Now for the next four weeks, we will focus on what it means to live in God’s Kingdom as it is *advancing across*.

Living for God’s Kingdom by advancing across means to *advance* his gospel *across* the street, across lines of injustice, and across the oceans by sharing the good news of Christ and living it out in daily life. It means giving one’s life to making disciples here as well as in all nations.

- This week we will focus on advancing across the oceans: Missions.
- Week 2 we will focus on advancing across the hall: Outreach to those around us.
- Week 3 we will focus on advancing across the lines of injustice: Justice.
- And week 4 we will focus on advancing across street: Work.



Dig Into The Bible

At the end of the gospel of Matthew, Jesus spoke these words to his followers. Jesus spoke these words after he rose from the dead and before he went up to heaven. This was the main task that he gave his followers.

Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV)

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Read through this passage several times and write out 5 observations that you have after reading it.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What does it mean to make disciples of all nations? How can this be done? What does this passage reveal about God’s heart for advancing across the oceans?

Summarize the message of this passage—write it in your own words or write one sentence to describe what this passage is saying.

Missions In the Old Testament

The entire Bible has verse after verse about God's heart for the nations! Read the following passages from the Old Testament about missions.

For each passage, read through and jot down your observations about God's heart for all people to know him.

- Genesis 12:1-4

- Deuteronomy 4:5-9

- Psalm 22:27-28

- Psalm 67:1-7

- Isaiah 49:6

- Isaiah 61:10-11



Summarize what these passages are saying about God's heart for the nations.

Missions in the New Testament

The New Testament also has many passages that reveal God's heart for the people of the world. For each passage, read through and jot down your observations about God's heart for people from all nations to know him.

- Mark 11:15-17

- Acts 10:34-35

- Galatians 3:13-14

- Romans 15:7-13

- Revelation 5:9-10

- Revelation 7:9-10



Summarize what these passages are saying about God's heart for the nations.



Into Your World

Glance back at the passages you looked up in this study. Which one was your favorite or which one stuck out to you? Why?

Put It Into Practice

Consider some ideas on how you can get involved in missions. God desires all of us to adopt his heart for the world. This does not mean that he is calling all of us to be missionaries across the oceans (though some of us will do this), but it does mean that each of us can have a part in seeing the task of Matthew 28:18-20 accomplished.

There are five major ways you can get involved—going, sending, mobilizing, welcoming, and praying.

- Going—you can go on a short term mission trip or become a missionary.
- Sending—you can support those who go.
- Mobilizing—you can teach others about missions and plug them in.
- Welcoming—you can befriend and share the gospel with international students.
- Praying—you can pray for the missionaries and for the unreached peoples.

Which of these five areas would you like to get involved in?

In the space below, write down some ideas on how you can practically get involved in one (or more) of these areas. Have your group share with you ideas they may have. Brainstorm and pray together about how God may use you in advancing his kingdom across the oceans!

Specific ideas:

Groups

Advancing Across Week 2



Advancing Across—Reaching Out

Key Verse

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God
for the salvation of everyone who believes.

Romans 1:16

Reaching Out

It was a few minutes until the Pizza and God night was to start. Lenny had done all the work necessary to get ready. He had made posters, done personal invitations, and made phone calls. He had been developing good relationships with the guys on his floor and he was looking for a non-threatening way to bring up spiritual issues. He had come up with the idea of the Pizza and God night. This was where anyone on the hall could come for free pizza and talk about spiritual issues.

But now Lenny was having second thoughts. “Will these guys think I am a spiritual fanatic? What if there is a question I can’t answer? What if I look foolish? Is this worth it?” Despite his reservations, Jim decided to have a quick prayer and go for it. Now was the time.

Well, it turns out that there were a few questions that Lenny couldn’t answer so he looked them up afterwards, but overall the Pizza and God night went well. There were even a few guys that seemed especially interested in spiritual things, so Lenny decided to ask them if they would like to study the Bible together. Later, some of these same guys became Christians. One of them even started a Bible study group on his floor, reaching out to those who were curious about God. As Lenny looked back, he was amazed how God worked through him when he displayed a little courage and willingness to reach out that evening at the Pizza and God night.

This is one example of someone who decided to become intentional to reach out to those with whom he regularly interacted. Have you ever shared spiritual truths to those around you who do not follow Christ? How did it go? Share some stories with your group.

Begin to think about the people who are not followers of Christ with whom you regularly interact with in class, at your dorm or apartment, or at work. Make a list of some of these people below:

Review

We are in our four week mini-series about the Kingdom of God *Advancing Across*. Our definition of *advancing across* is:

- Living for God's Kingdom by advancing across means to *advance* his gospel *across* the hall and the street, across lines of injustice, and across the oceans by sharing the good news of Christ and living it out in daily life.

Last week we looked at *advancing across* the oceans and we learned that God's desire is that we enter into his work of advancing his kingdom to all the people groups of the world. We can do this by going, sending, mobilizing, welcoming, and/or praying.

This week we will focus on *advancing* the Kingdom of God *across* the hall and across the street. We not only have the privilege to be involved in world missions, but to also be involved in sharing the good news of Christ to those right around us!



Dig Into The Bible

What do the following passages say about reaching out to others with the gospel:

- Acts 1:8
- Romans 1:16-17
- Romans 10:13-15
- Colossians 4:5-6

Dig Into The Bible

Read the following passage about how Jesus sent out the disciples to share the good news.

Luke 10:1-16

¹ Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. ² And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. ³ "Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴ "Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. ⁵ "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace *be* to this house.' ⁶ "If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ "Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. ⁸ "Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰ "But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off *in protest* against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'

Write out four observations about this passage (try answering questions about who, what, when, where, why, and how they were to reach out).

1.

2.

3.

4.



Summarize what you think are some universal principles about reaching out that you see taught in this passage:

Dig Into The Bible

There are many examples in the Bible of those who have a life changing encounter with Christ who then turn and share his message with others. Read the following passages about some of these people and write down how the message of Christ changed them, how they shared the message, and any other observations you have about the text.

- Luke 6:27-31 Matthew (Levi)

- John 4:1-43 (esp. 30 and 39) Samaritan woman

- 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 Paul



Into Your World

What has been your favorite verse from this study? Why? Share this with your group.

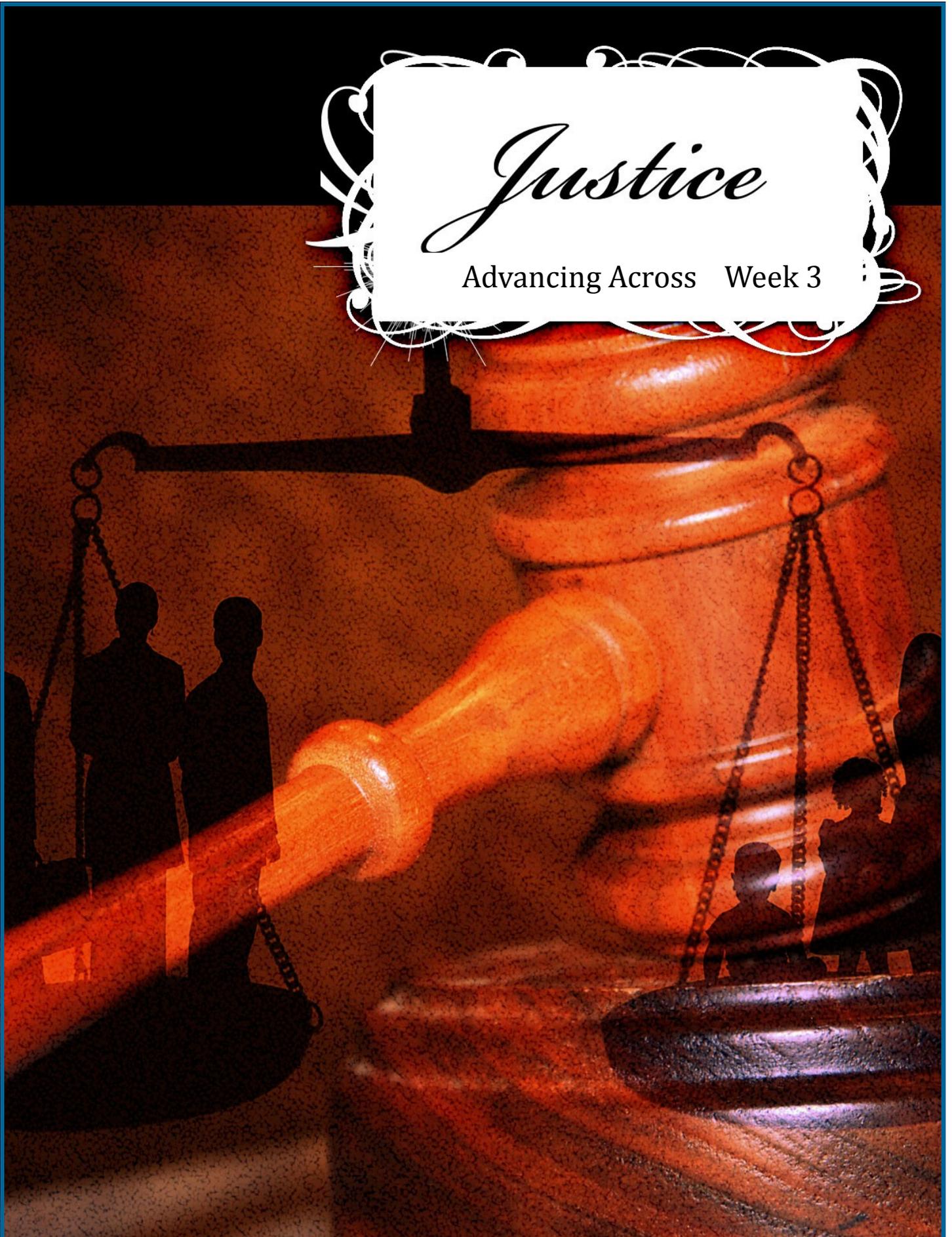
How can you make sharing Christ more a part of your daily life?

Go back to your list of people from the start of this study. Pick one or two and write out some ideas you have about how you can reach out to that person. Brainstorm, write out ideas that come to mind.

Pick something that you can do in the near future as a next step.

Justice

Advancing Across Week 3



Advancing Across: Justice

Key Verse

Jesus proclaimed that he fulfilled this Old Testament prophecy from Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to proclaim the gospel news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and recovering of sight of the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Luke 4:18-19

For Starters



What or who do you think of when you hear the word justice? Why?

Write out a definition of justice.

List some injustices that you see around you and around the world. Why do these come to your mind?



Dig Into The Bible

Look up the following passages and write out what you learn about God's justice.

- Deuteronomy 32:3-4

- Psalm 99:3-4

- Zephaniah 3:5

- Acts 17:30-31

- Romans 3:21-26

- 1 John 1:9

Summarize what these verses teach about God's justice.



Our Call to be Just

As God is a just God, he desires that we live with a heart for justice. God has justified us in his sight through the sacrifice of Christ for our sins—as we have put our faith in Christ. Because of this, God desires us to live lives of justice and righteousness. Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about God’s calling for us.

- Isaiah 1:17

- Micah 6:6-8

- Jeremiah 7:5-7

- James 1:27-2:1



Summarize what these verses are saying about someone who is just.

What keeps someone from pursuing justice?

The Life of Jesus

Part of living a life of with a heart for justice is to have one's eyes open to the needs of those who are overlooked. Jesus demonstrated this quality time and time again. Read the following verses and write out your observations on how he did this. Luke 4:18-19, 40-41; Luke 5:27-31; Luke 13:10-17; Luke 18:15-17, 35-43.

Is there anyone you can reach out to who is usually overlooked by others?



Into Your World

Look back at the passages you have read for this study. Pick out one that has impacted you. Why is this verse meaningful?

What actions can you take to bring justice to the needy?

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer about the injustice you see around you and around the world that you listed at the start of this study. Ask God to continue to teach you how he views justice..



Bonus Questions—For Further Study—Optional Dig In

Study these people who showed justice. Note the circumstances that surround the verses listed.

- Moses—Numbers 16:15

- Samuel—1 Samuel 12:4

- David—2 Samuel 8:15

- Solomon—1 Kings 3:16-27

- Josiah—Jeremiah 22:15

- Joseph—Luke 23:50-51

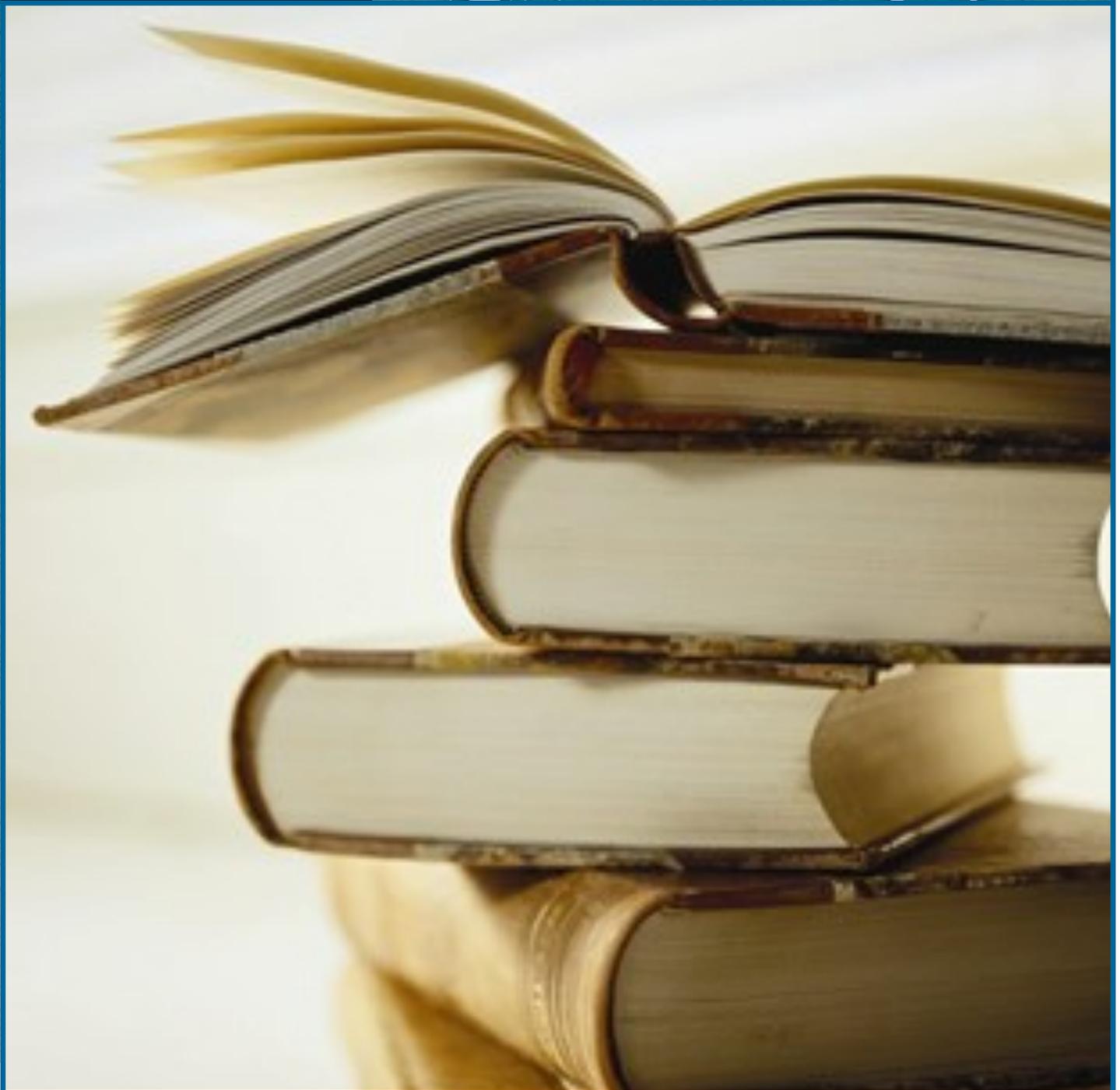
- Apostles—1Thessalonians 2:10

What are some promises to those who exercise justice?
Isaiah 33:15,16; Jeremiah 7:5,7

How do these Old Testament verses point toward Christ's justice?
Psalm 98:9; Isaiah 11:4; Jeremiah 23:5

Kingdom

Advancing Across—Work and School



Advancing Across—Work and School

Key Verse

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



For Starters

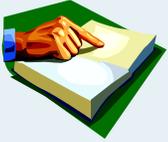
For what reasons are people around you motivated to work hard at their jobs and do well in school?

How do you think your coworkers or schoolmates would describe your attitudes about work and school?

Review

This is the final week in our study about how the Kingdom of God is *advancing across*. Living for God's kingdom means to advance his gospel across the hall and the street, across the lines of injustice, and across the oceans by sharing the good news of Christ and living it out in daily life.

In the previous three weeks, we have studied how to advance across the oceans, across the hall, and across the lines of injustice. This week we will study how to advance the Kingdom of God across the streets by living for God at work and in our



Dig Into The Bible

Study the following passages and write out a summary sentence on what these verses say about what is the purpose of life (Isaiah 43:6-7; Romans 14:7-8; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

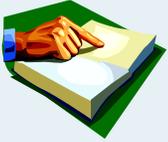
What does it mean in Isaiah 43:7 that you are created for God's glory? How do you live this out in everyday life? Jot down ideas.

One area of life where there are many opportunities to live for God's glory is at work and in our classes. Read the following verses and write out what they are saying about living for God by working hard.

- Ecclesiastes 2:24, 3:13, 5:12

- Proverbs 6:6-11

- Colossians 3:23-24



Dig Into The Bible

Jot down your thoughts about what the following verses say about work.

- Ephesians 4:28

- Ephesians 6:5-9

- 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

One person in the Bible who demonstrated hard work for the glory of God is the Apostle Paul. Read the following verses and write down what they show about work.

- 1 Thessalonians 2:8-10

- 2 Thessalonians 3:7-11

- Acts 20:35



Into Your World

Look back at the study, pick one verse that is your favorite. Write out your thoughts about this verse.

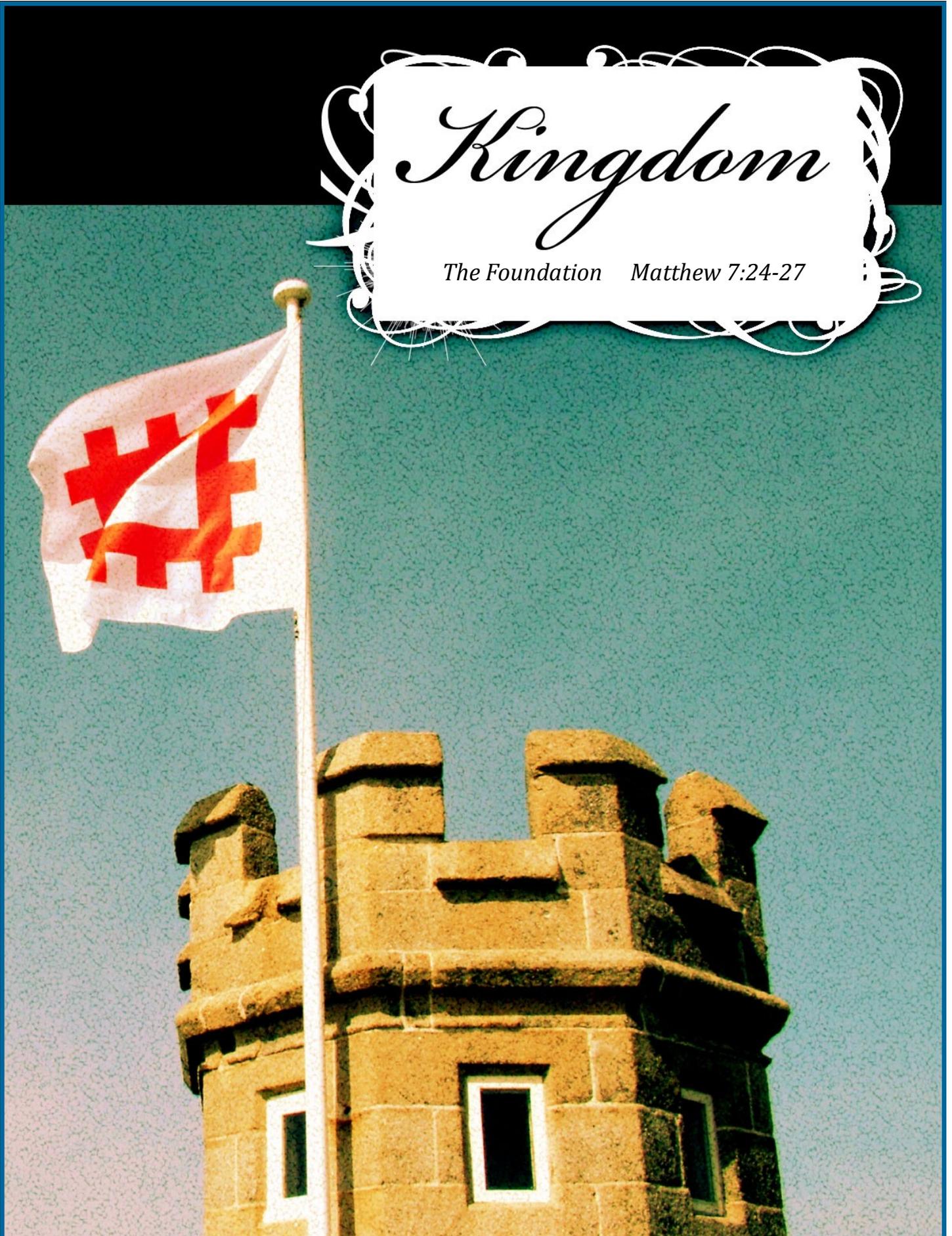
What should motivate Christians to be diligent and responsible at work and in their classes?

Write out some ways where you can adjust your attitudes and priorities toward your schooling and work?

How do you find satisfaction and fulfillment in your classes and at work? What can you do to specifically honor God in these places? In other words, describe some ways where you can live out your Christian faith at school and at work .

Kingdom

The Foundation *Matthew 7:24-27*



Kingdom Foundation

Key Verse

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine
and puts them into practice
is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
Matthew 7:24

Where We Have Been

We have come to our final study in this series on the Kingdom of God. The point of this study is to review what we have learned in these studies, to remind ourselves of the foundation of the Kingdom, and to apply what we have learned to our lives.

Since this is the final lesson of this Bible study series on the Kingdom of God, let's review where we have been.

The Story

Here are the four main points of the story of the Kingdom of God.

1. God is king of the world, ruling over his creation.
2. Humans have rejected God's kingly rule and have been separated from him, yet peace with the King is available to those who trust Christ.
3. Christians are now practically living out their faith in three ways; inside out, upside down, and advancing across.
4. In the end, God's kingdom will fully come in Christ.

In our Bible studies, we focused mainly on the implications from point three in the above list about how we are to live in the God's Kingdom now:

- *Inside out*
- *Upside down*
- *Advancing across*

Inside Out

First, we studied that living from the *inside out* means that the experience of the wonderful grace of Christ motivates us to live the Christian life out of a heart to honor and love God rather than out of an obligation of religious duty or out of a desire for the approval of men. It is the experience of grace on the inside motivating the outward actions for the glory of God

Upside Down

Second, we learned that life in the Kingdom of God is *upside down*. This means that we live to seek first God's priorities in life rather than live for the priorities of the world. In other words, the priorities of a person living for God are upside down from the priorities of this world. We studied three practical areas where we can reflect this shift in priorities; money, power, and sex.

Dig Into The Bible

Write a summary sentence on what is the main point of Matthew 7:24-27.

Read these verses on knowing and doing God's word. Jot down what you in the space by each Bible reference:

•James 1:22-25

•Psalm 19:7-11

•John 14:23



Into Your World

Write out one practical idea that you can do this week that will help you become someone who not only learns and hears God's word, but someone who also puts it into practice.



Put It All Together

Scan through some of the previous studies you have done in this series. Take some time to review the key verses and passages. Write out a list of the verses that you found particularly meaningful and why they have been meaningful.

Take a look at the previous “Into Your World” sections in our Kingdom of God studies. Write out one application idea that you wrote out from these sections and how you put it into practice. What has God done in your life through this?

Again, from previous studies in this Kingdom of God series, is there any application idea or statement that you still need to work on? What will you do to work on this?



Bonus Questions—For Further Thought (Optional)

The topic of the Kingdom of God is everywhere in the Bible. We have only studied some of this topic. The following is a list of verses about the Kingdom of God. Jot down what each is about beside the references and summarize your findings.

- Matthew 13:24-30
- Matthew 13:31-33
- Matthew 13:34-35
- Matthew 18:1-9
- Matthew 18:21-35
- Matthew 20:1-16

Summarize what these verses teach about the Kingdom of God.

- Matthew 4:17
- Matthew 12:28
- Mark 9:1
- Mark 12:34
- Luke 4:43
- Luke 9:62
- Luke 12:31-32
- Luke 16:16
- Luke 17:20-21
- John 3:3

Summarize the various ways Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God.

- Acts 1:3-8
- Acts 14:22
- Acts 28:23
- Romans 14:17
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
- Colossians 4:11
- 1 Thessalonians 2:12
- Hebrews 12:28-29
- 2 Peter 1:10-11
- Revelation 5:10
- Revelation 12:10

Summarize what these verses say about the Kingdom of God.

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