



LIVING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD
Righteousness, Peace, and Joy
Retreat/ Group Companion WORKBOOK

LIVING IN THE KINGDOM

Righteousness, Peace, and Joy

Retreat/ Group Companion

WORKBOOK

RICHARD T. CASE





Dedication / Acknowledgements

I wish to dedicate this course to and thank my wife, Linda, and our ministry leaders who are living in the Kingdom of God. We all live in the kingdom of the world, under the sway, control, authority of the enemy. As believers we are called to live in the Kingdom of God—a spiritual kingdom that is preeminent and superior to the kingdom of the world. In the gospels, Jesus spoke often of the kingdom (more so than most any other thing). We are to live in both places (and is why we cannot be removed from this world and the trouble/difficulties of this world). Rather than just live in the natural and always struggle through life in the kingdom of the world, we are to live in the spiritual kingdom of God that provides the superior power to resolve all struggles and have us enjoy (why the kingdom is joy) all aspects of our lives. In order to be in the kingdom, we must surrender our will, and then follow the King of the Kingdom (and thus it is not us). When we are living in the kingdom of God we have remarkable privileges and benefits that provide hope, excitement and great adventure. Linda and the ministry team demonstrate this life of the kingdom (because they live in His kingdom) and then teach others this critical truth. Once understood, it makes all the difference in life. Their faithfulness continually reminds us all of the beauty of this life available to us as we walk in the kingdom. Thank you, Linda and ministry team for helping us all understand the difference between just living in the kingdom of the world that is trouble, and living in the Kingdom which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

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LESSON 1: WHAT IS THE KINGDOM AND THE PROMISED LIFE OF THE KINGDOM?



**"Those who received
His righteousness
received it because
of the sacrifices they
made."**

Let's start with defining righteousness. How would you define righteousness? Peace? Joy?

Read Luke 2:8–14:

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"^[a]

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From the following three verses about Christ, what do they say about what is He? What is He bringing? What does that mean for us in our personal lives? Why is this important to us in our understanding of the Kingdom?

Read Isaiah 9:1–7:

For to Us a Child Is Born

9 ^[a] But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.^[b]

²^[c] The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

³ You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

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⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon^[d] his shoulder,
and his name shall be called^[e]
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Read Psalm 111:1–10:

Great Are the LORD'S Works

111 ^[a] Praise the LORD!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

² Great are the works of the LORD,
studied by all who delight in them.

³ Full of splendor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and merciful.

⁵ He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.

⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.

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⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy;

⁸ they are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

⁹ He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant forever.
Holy and awesome is his name!

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever!

Read John 10:10:

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

From the following two verses, what statements did Jesus speak about His ministry—his purpose for coming to us? What do these mean in our personal lives? Why is this so significant to us as we learn to live in His Kingdom?

Read Luke 4:16–21:

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Read Isaiah 61:1–4:

The Year of the Lord's Favor

61 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;^[a]
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;^[b]
² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.^[c]
⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

In the following three verses, what does Christ say He desires to give us? What do these mean to us personally? What is important in understanding how we are to receive these?

Read John 14:25–28:

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. ²⁸ You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

Read John 17:9–26:

⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.^[a] ¹⁶ They

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are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them^[b] in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself,^[c] that they also may be sanctified^[d] in truth.

²⁰ "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Read John 15:1–11:

I Am the True Vine

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If

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anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

What does God say about all His paths? Knowing that we will experience difficulty and trouble, why is this important to us? How then shall we expect the experience of our path to be? Why?

Read Psalm 16:7–11:

- ⁷ I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.^[a]
- ⁸ I have set the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
- ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being^[b] rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.
- ¹⁰ For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.^[c]
- ¹¹ You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

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What does John the Baptist say about what is true about Christ? How are we to receive what Christ wishes to give to us? What then is important for us in our relationship with Christ?

Read John 3:27–36:

²⁷ John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' ²⁹ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease."^[a]

³¹ He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³² He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. ³³ Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. ³⁴ For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

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How does God deliver to us the abundant life? What is critical for us then to receive this? How?

Read 1 Kings 8:53–61; 65–66:

⁵³ For you separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage, as you declared through Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.”

Solomon's Benediction

⁵⁴ Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and plea to the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven. ⁵⁵ And he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying, ⁵⁶ “Blessed be the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant. ⁵⁷ The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, ⁵⁸ that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers. ⁵⁹ Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the Lord, be near to the Lord our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, ⁶⁰ that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other. ⁶¹ Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.”



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"He brings His righteousness to us. He does it by the way He created the world. How did He create the world? He spoke it into existence."

In what way is God righteousness? What does that mean to us? How does He deliver righteousness to us? What then is important for us to receive it? Why?

Read Psalm 33:1–6; 9–20:

The Steadfast Love of the LORD

33 Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!

Praise befits the upright.

² Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;
make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

³ Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

⁴ For the word of the LORD is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.

⁵ He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

¹⁰ The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.

¹¹ The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.

¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

¹³ The LORD looks down from heaven;
he sees all the children of man;

¹⁴ from where he sits enthroned he looks out
on all the inhabitants of the earth,

¹⁵ he who fashions the hearts of them all
and observes all their deeds.

¹⁶ The king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

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¹⁷ The war horse is a false hope for salvation,
and by its great might it cannot rescue.
¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,
¹⁹ that he may deliver their soul from death
and keep them alive in famine.
²⁰ Our soul waits for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.

From the following three sets of verses, what are the benefits to us to living in His Kingdom? What do these mean to us practically? How are we to receive these?

Read Zechariah 8:11–23:

¹¹ But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the LORD of hosts. ¹² For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew. And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. ¹³ And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong.”

¹⁴ For thus says the Lord of hosts: “As I purposed to bring disaster to you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts, ¹⁵ so again have I purposed in these days to bring good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. ¹⁶ These are the things that you shall do: Speak

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the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; ¹⁷ do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the LORD.”

¹⁸ And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, ¹⁹ “Thus says the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore, love truth and peace.

²⁰ “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. ²¹ The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.’ ²² Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. ²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”

Read Psalm 21:1–7:

The King Rejoices in the LORD'S Strength

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

21 O LORD, in your strength the king rejoices,
and in your salvation how greatly he exults!

² You have given him his heart's desire
and have not withheld the request of his lips. *Selah*

³ For you meet him with rich blessings;
you set a crown of fine gold upon his head.

⁴ He asked life of you; you gave it to him,
length of days forever and ever.

⁵ His glory is great through your salvation;

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splendor and majesty you bestow on him.
⁶ For you make him most blessed forever;^[a]
you make him glad with the joy of your presence.
⁷ For the king trusts in the LORD,
and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved.

Read Proverbs 10:28:

²⁸ The hope of the righteous brings joy,
but the expectation of the wicked will perish.

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What are the fruits of righteousness? What do these mean to us? What specifically is the way for us to receive these (what does He do that provides us this opportunity)? Why is this so important to us living in the Kingdom?

Read Isaiah 30:15–20:

¹⁵ For thus said the LORD God, the Holy One of Israel,
“In returning^[a] and rest you shall be saved;
in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.”
But you were unwilling, ¹⁶ and you said,
“No! We will flee upon horses”;
therefore you shall flee away;
and, “We will ride upon swift steeds”;
therefore your pursuers shall be swift.

¹⁷ A thousand shall flee at the threat of one;
at the threat of five you shall flee,
till you are left
like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain,
like a signal on a hill.

The LORD Will Be Gracious

¹⁸ Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you,
and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you.
For the LORD is a God of justice;
blessed are all those who wait for him.

¹⁹ For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you. ²⁰ And though the LORD give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher.

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How did Jehoshaphat approach working through a very difficult situation, thinking that the likely outcome was not going to be good? Why were these steps important, and how might we follow these steps in our difficult circumstances?

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1–30:

Jehoshaphat's Prayer

20 After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites,^[a] came against Jehoshaphat for battle. ² Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “A great multitude is coming against you from Edom,^[b] from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar” (that is, Engedi). ³ Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

⁵ And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, ⁶ and said, “O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. ⁷ Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? ⁸ And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, ⁹ ‘If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment,^[c] or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.’ ¹⁰ And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy— ¹¹ behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. ¹² O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”

¹³ Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. ¹⁴ And the Spirit of the Lord came^[d] upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. ¹⁵ And he said, “Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the Lord to you, ‘Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not

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yours but God's. ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with you."

¹⁸ Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. ¹⁹ And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

²⁰ And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed."²¹ And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD,
for his steadfast love endures forever."

²² And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. ²³ For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.

The Lord Delivers Judah

²⁴ When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there^[e] were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped. ²⁵ When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much. ²⁶ On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah,^[f] for there they blessed the LORD. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Beracah to this day. ²⁷ Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat at their head, returning to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸ They came to Jerusalem with harps and lyres and trumpets, to the

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house of the LORD. ²⁹ And the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰ So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

When we are faced with difficult circumstances, what are we to do? What does God promise to deliver? What does that mean for us as we face difficulties?

Read Jeremiah 33:3:

³ Call to me and I will answer you and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

LESSON 2:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM?

In the following three sets of verses—since we are in a world full of troubles, what are we to understand about what Christ promises to us about these troubles? What shall we then expect to experience, and what shall we expect about Him resolving our troubles? Why is this important?

Read John 16:33:

³³ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Read Psalm 32:6–11:

⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.

⁷ You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Selah*

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

⁹ Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,
or it will not stay near you.

¹⁰ Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.

¹¹ Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

LESSON 2:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM?

Read John 16:13–15:

¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)



**"He wants to restore
through the good
news, which means:
How about now?"**

What are the benefits of living in His Kingdom? What do each of these mean for us personally? Why is this so important to how we live?

Read Psalm 103:1–5:

Bless the LORD, O My Soul
Of David.

103 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!

² Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,

³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

⁵ who satisfies you with good
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

For us to enjoy the benefits of the Kingdom, where must we be? What does that mean to us personally? Why is that so important?

Read Isaiah 35:1–10:

The Ransomed Shall Return

35 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;

² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart,
“Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.^[a]

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Since much of our lives have experienced difficulty and things that were lost or ruined—what does God promise to us? What does that mean to how we view our current circumstances? Why is this important?

Read Joel 2:19–32:

¹⁹ The LORD answered and said to his people,
“Behold, I am sending to you
grain, wine, and oil,
and you will be satisfied;
and I will no more make you
a reproach among the nations.

²⁰ “I will remove the northerner far from you,
and drive him into a parched and desolate land,
his vanguard^[a] into the eastern sea,
and his rear guard^[b] into the western sea;
the stench and foul smell of him will rise,

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

for he has done great things.

²¹ "Fear not, O land;
be glad and rejoice,
for the LORD has done great things!

²² Fear not, you beasts of the field,
for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
the tree bears its fruit;
the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

²³ "Be glad, O children of Zion,
and rejoice in the LORD your God,
for he has given the early rain for your vindication;
he has poured down for you abundant rain,
the early and the latter rain, as before.

²⁴ "The threshing floors shall be full of grain;
the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ I will restore^[c] to you the years
that the swarming locust has eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
my great army, which I sent among you.

²⁶ "You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
and praise the name of the LORD your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you.

And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
and that I am the LORD your God and there is none else.

And my people shall never again be put to shame.

The LORD Will Pour Out His Spirit

²⁸ ^[d] "And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

²⁹ Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

³⁰ "And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. ³² And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

From the following three sets of verses—to live in the Kingdom, what are our current responses to the life of God? What then shall we expect, and what will we bear witness to? Why? What then is the significance of that?

Read 1 Chronicles 16:7–17:

⁷ Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the Lord by Asaph and his brothers.

David's Song of Thanks

⁸ Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples!

⁹ Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wondrous works!

¹⁰ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!

¹¹ Seek the LORD and his strength;
seek his presence continually!

¹² Remember the wondrous works that he has done,
his miracles and the judgments he uttered,

¹³ O offspring of Israel his servant,

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

children of Jacob, his chosen ones!

¹⁴ He is the LORD our God;

his judgments are in all the earth.

¹⁵ Remember his covenant forever,

the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,

¹⁶ the covenant that he made with Abraham,

his sworn promise to Isaac,

¹⁷ which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,

to Israel as an everlasting covenant,

Read 1 Chronicles 16:27–36:

²⁷ Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and joy are in his place.

²⁸ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

²⁹ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come before him!

Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness;[a]

³⁰ tremble before him, all the earth;
yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved.

³¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice,
and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"

³² Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it!

³³ Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

³⁴ Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

³⁵ Say also:

“Save us, O God of our salvation,
and gather and deliver us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name
and glory in your praise.

³⁶ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!”

Then all the people said, “Amen!” and praised the Lord.

Read Philippians 4:4–9:

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness^[a] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned^[b] and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

To live in the Kingdom and not be obligated to live in the world, in the flesh, what is necessary on our part? How do we fulfill this? What then is the promise given to us if we fulfill our part? Why is this important to us?

Read Romans 8:5; 12–17:

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

Heirs with Christ

¹² So then, brothers,^[a] we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons^[b] of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

Review the following three sets of verses. In life many things do not make sense; and we are experiencing circumstances that are difficult to understand and work through. How are we to approach God regarding these? What does He promise? What then does that mean to us and how we live?

Read 1 Kings 10:1–9:

The Queen of Sheba

10 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. ² She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. ³ And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her. ⁴ And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, ⁵ the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more breath in her.

⁶ And she said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, ⁷ but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard. ⁸ Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁹ Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness."

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

Read Proverbs 8:17–21; 32–35:

¹⁷ I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently find me.

¹⁸ Riches and honor are with me,
enduring wealth and righteousness.

¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.

²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness,
in the paths of justice,

²¹ granting an inheritance to those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.

³² “And now, O sons, listen to me:
blessed are those who keep my ways.

³³ Hear instruction and be wise,
and do not neglect it.

³⁴ Blessed is the one who listens to me,
watching daily at my gates,
waiting beside my doors.

³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life
and obtains favor from the LORD,

LESSON 3:

WHAT ARE THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM? (CONT.)

Read Matthew 6:33–34:

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.



LESSON 4:

HOW DO WE LIVE IN THE KINGDOM ALL THE TIME?



"He wants to restore through the good news, which means: How about now?"

To live in the Kingdom, how are we to pray? What are we to ask for? What shall we expect? What does that mean to how we live? Why?

Read John 16:23–24:

²³ In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

What happened when the disciples were discouraged and afraid? What did that mean to them? Why? What then is important for us to experience the life of the Kingdom?

Read John 20:19–21:

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^[a] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

LESSON 4:

HOW DO WE LIVE IN THE KINGDOM ALL THE TIME?

As we seek God and His life for us, what role does scripture play? Why can we count on the application and power of this? What does that mean then for how we approach life issues? Why?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16–17:

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God^[a] may be complete, equipped for every good work.

LESSON 4:

HOW DO WE LIVE IN THE KINGDOM ALL THE TIME?

As we receive the Word that God speaks to us, what can we understand about that Word to us? Why is that important for us and how we live? What is required then on our part?

Read 2 Corinthians 1:18–20:

¹⁸ As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. ²⁰ For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

Abraham was described as a great man of faith. Was he always living by faith? What was necessary for him to become a great man of faith? How does God move us to being men and women of faith? How do we then receive that? Why?

Read Romans 4:17–21:

¹⁷ as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness^[a] of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

LESSON 4:

HOW DO WE LIVE IN THE KINGDOM ALL THE TIME?

To live in the Kingdom, we are called to go to unity. What exactly is that? Who is unity with? What is required for us to get to unity? What happens when we get to unity? Why? What then can we count on for all our life decisions and issues? Why?

Read Ephesians 4:1–6:

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

LESSON 4:

HOW DO WE LIVE IN THE KINGDOM ALL THE TIME?

When we are agitated and troubled, especially when we are in disagreement with others who are partners or in our inner circle, what are we called to do? Why? What can we expect then in the process of going to unity?

Read Psalm 4:3–8:

³ But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself;
the Lord hears when I call to him.

⁴ Be angry,^[a] and do not sin;
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*

⁵ Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the LORD.

⁶ There are many who say, "Who will show us some good?
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!"

⁷ You have put more joy in my heart
than they have when their grain and wine abound.

⁸ In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

LESSON 4:

HOW DO WE LIVE IN THE KINGDOM ALL THE TIME?

As we cannot quite figure things out on our own, or are in disagreement with others regarding the solutions, what are we called to do? What then does God promise? Why is that important to us? What is the condition for us to receive this? Why?

Read James 1:2–8:

Testing of Your Faith

² Count it all joy, my brothers,^[a] when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

LESSON 4:

HOW DO WE LIVE IN THE KINGDOM ALL THE TIME?

From the following two sets of verses—since we are called to live in the Kingdom, who is working to draw us out? What is his strategy for this? What is the outcome of this? How are we to avoid this and counteract this? Why is this so important?

Read James 1:12–18:

¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.^[a] ¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Read 1 Peter: 5:6–11:

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little

LESSON 4:

HOW DO WE LIVE IN THE KINGDOM ALL THE TIME?

while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Having disagreements is normal. When we do, what is important as we move toward unity? How do we respond in the middle of the disagreement? Why is that so important to our life in the Kingdom?

Read Acts 15:1–3:

The Jerusalem Council

15 But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” ² And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. ³ So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers.^[a]

LESSON 4:

HOW DO WE LIVE IN THE KINGDOM ALL THE TIME?

From the following two sets of verses: What is important for us to enjoy the Kingdom? How do we practically do this? Why is this so important?

Read Philemon 1:4–7:

Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴ I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶ and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.^[a] ⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

Read Deuteronomy 16:13–17:

The Feast of Booths

¹³ "You shall keep the Feast of Booths seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your winepress. ¹⁴ You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns. ¹⁵ For seven days you shall keep the feast to the LORD your God at the place that the LORD will choose, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.

LESSON 4:

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¹⁶“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. ¹⁷ Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.

LESSON 5:

WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL WAYS OF ENJOYING THE KINGDOM AND OUR ASSIGNMENT OF GIVING IT AWAY TO OTHERS?



From the following five sets of verses—how does God describe the elements of the Kingdom that are to bring us joy and excitement? How do we experience these practically in our lives? Why are these so important to our life in the Kingdom?

Read Ecclesiastes 2:24–26:

²⁴ There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment^[a] in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, ²⁵ for apart from him^[b] who can eat or who can have enjoyment? ²⁶ For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

"He's calling us to join Him in the abundant, rather, the super-abundant life that He's giving to us, and He's going to fulfill His good plan for us in the Kingdom of God."

Read Ecclesiastes 3:9–12:

The God-Given Task

⁹ What gain has the worker from his toil? ¹⁰ I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. ¹² I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live.

LESSON 5:

WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL WAYS OF ENJOYING THE KINGDOM AND OUR ASSIGNMENT OF GIVING IT AWAY TO OTHERS?

Read Ecclesiastes 5:18–20:

¹⁸ Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment^[a] in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. ¹⁹ Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. ²⁰ For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

Read Ecclesiastes 8:15:

¹⁵ And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.

LESSON 5:

WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL WAYS OF ENJOYING THE KINGDOM AND OUR ASSIGNMENT OF GIVING IT AWAY TO OTHERS?

Read Ecclesiastes 9:7–10:

Enjoy Life with the One You Love

⁷ Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.

⁸ Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head.

⁹ Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain^[a] life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. ¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might,^[b] for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

What did the disciples experience when Jesus appeared in the upper room with them after the resurrection? Why was that so important to them? What did Jesus say regarding how He was sending them? What does that look like practically for us? Why is this so important to life in the Kingdom?

Read John 20:19–23:

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^[a] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

LESSON 5:

WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL WAYS OF ENJOYING THE KINGDOM AND OUR ASSIGNMENT OF GIVING IT AWAY TO OTHERS?

From the following two sets of verses—describe all the elements and steps that God provided for Esther to be in the position to serve God’s purposes? What was her initial response to the assignment? Why? What then did she understand, and why is this so important to fulfilling God’s assignment? What then is unique about our assignments? Why is that important for us?

Read Esther 4:1–14:

Esther Agrees to Help the Jews

4 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. ² He went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. ³ And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ When Esther's young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. ⁵ Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was. ⁶ Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, ⁷ and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction,^[a] that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him^[b] on behalf of her people. ⁹ And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to

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go to Mordecai and say, ¹¹ “All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days.”

¹² And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. ¹³ Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Read Esther 8:7–17:

⁷ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, “Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows,^[a] because he intended to lay hands on the Jews. ⁸ But you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked.”

⁹ The king's scribes were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day. And an edict was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews, to the satraps and the governors and the officials of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language. ¹⁰ And he

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wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed it with the king's signet ring. Then he sent the letters by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king's service, bred from the royal stud, ¹¹ saying that the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, children and women included, and to plunder their goods, ¹² on one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. ¹³ A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree in every province, being publicly displayed to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to take vengeance on their enemies. ¹⁴ So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out hurriedly, urged by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Susa the citadel.

¹⁵ Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown^[b] and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. ¹⁶ The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. ¹⁷ And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and his edict reached, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews had fallen on them.

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What ultimately is the purpose of us living in the Kingdom? Why? On what basis can we fulfill this? Why?

Read Isaiah 40:5-9:

⁵ And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

The Word of God Stands Forever

⁶ A voice says, "Cry!"

And I said,^[a] "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass,

and all its beauty^[b] is like the flower of the field.

⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades

when the breath of the Lord blows on it;

surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades,

but the word of our God will stand forever.

The Greatness of God

⁹ Go on up to a high mountain,

O Zion, herald of good news;^[c]

lift up your voice with strength,

O Jerusalem, herald of good news;^[d]

lift it up, fear not;

say to the cities of Judah,

"Behold your God!"

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Since we are called to give it away, how is that to work? What does this mean regarding our approach to this? How do we vary our steps based upon how others respond? Why is that important, and what does that mean for how we live in the Kingdom?

Read Luke 10:1–13:

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two[a] others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ² And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ ⁶ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷ And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Woe to Unrepentant Cities

¹³ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

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**What is important for us to understand as we fulfill God's assignments for us?
What does He care about and why? Why is this important to us?**

Read Matthew 25:14–30:

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants^[a] and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents,^[b] to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.^[c] You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

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From the following two sets of verses—as we live out the life of the Kingdom and give it away, what does God want us to enjoy, receive, and experience? How and why?

Read 3 John 1:1–4:

Greeting

¹ The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

² Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. ³ For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers^[a] came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

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Read Jude 1:24–25:

Doxology

²⁴ Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time^[a] and now and forever. Amen.

Read Numbers 6:22–27:

Aaron's Blessing

²² The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

²⁴ The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵ the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the LORD lift up his countenance^[a] upon you and give you peace.

²⁷ "So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."
