

# KINGDOM VALUES



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A REVISION STUDY FROM  
THE FELLOWSHIP OF AILBE

*Kingdom Values*

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

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## Welcome to *Kingdom Values*

People live toward whatever they value.

When the values we cherish are *Kingdom* values, we'll realize more of the full and abundant life Jesus offers.

God has called us to His Kingdom and glory, so we should seek that to which He has called us. In this brief overview of six primary Kingdom values, we'll see why it's so important to make sure our souls – heart, mind, and conscience – are lined up with God's priorities and promises.

*ReVision* studies are designed as brief introductions to the subject under consideration. We hope they will enlarge your worldview, help you to become more firmly rooted in Scripture, equip you to minister to others, and stimulate you to want to learn more about the Word of God and the Biblical worldview.

We're happy to provide this study at no charge. If you find these studies helpful, we hope you'll consider sending a gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, to help us in making these resources available to others.

May the Lord bless your study of His Word.

T. M. Moore  
Principal

## 1 A Matter of Conscience

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”* Matthew 6.33

### *Our highest priority*

In this concise instruction, Jesus announced the highest priority for His followers. Before everything else in our lives – all our material needs, any obligations or responsibilities, everything that pertains to physical life and health, at every moment in every situation – we are to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God.

We must get our minds and hearts around this priority, so that understanding and desiring the Kingdom will guide all we do. But we must also embed Kingdom-seeking in our conscience, together with the values that accompany this highest priority in life. Seeking the Kingdom and righteousness of God is not simply a matter of affirming something Jesus taught, or of really wanting to live this way. Unless Jesus’ highest priority is the highest and defining priority in all our soul, we will not have much success in fulfilling His commandment.

The human soul consists of three equal and interacting spiritual components. The *mind* processes thoughts and information. The *heart* generates affections. And the *conscience* manages our default priorities and values. What comes to expression in our lives – all our words and deeds – is a result of a continuous process in the soul, where what we think, how we feel, and what we value interact with God’s Word and Spirit to determine what we will be, do, and say.

It’s not quite that simple, of course, but in the most general of terms, this is how human beings function. Secular and naturalistic thinkers deny the spiritual aspect of human life, reducing everything about us to matter and energy; but this does not change the fact that all people are made in the image of God. The world may deny the reality of the soul, but the followers of Christ must accept His Word and work hard to nurture their souls according to its teaching. For apart from a strong soul, rightly oriented to Jesus, we will not be able to fulfill His highest priority for our lives. And a strong soul begins with a healthy conscience.

### *The role of the conscience*

The Scriptures have less to say about the conscience than about the mind and the heart, but what they say is rather important. The conscience arbitrates between the mind and the heart, guiding thoughts and affections into actions in line with the values and priorities of the soul. So it’s important that we have a good or a clean or pure conscience if we are to fulfill our calling to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God (cf. 1 Tim. 1.5, 19; 2 Tim. 1.3).

But what makes for an *un*healthy conscience? To be brief: Wrong values.

The structure of the conscience is comprised, to a large extent, of values. *Values* are simply those settled views, beliefs, opinions, convictions, default choices, and courses of action, which we hold to be most important. They are the soul’s “set of the saw.” Values are foundational to daily life because they play a huge role in determining how we think and what we feel strongly about, and therefore what we are likely to do. We’re not usually conscious of our values. Instead, having become so used to exercising the same preferences over and over, our values simply settle into our conscience without our having to think about them every time they come into play. Within the conscience, values shape our thoughts and affections, which, in turn, determine the course of our daily lives.

So if our values are wrong or weak or unhealthy in any way, it doesn’t matter how nobly we think or how earnestly we feel, we’re going to *live* according to the *values* that prevail in our conscience. This makes structuring our conscience on *Kingdom* values essential to fulfilling Jesus’ highest priority for our discipleship.

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### *Getting our values right*

Let me illustrate this. Suppose you become convicted, let's say, during a sermon or Bible study, that you need to spend more time in prayer. In your *mind* it makes sense, and in your *heart* you really feel like it would be important to do so. So, you tell yourself, starting tomorrow, you're going to pray more.

And perhaps you do for a day or so. But soon your prayers begin to trail off. You don't get up as early as you said you would. You choose not to keep those prayer appointments with God that you wrote down on your schedule. And the time you do spend in prayer is becoming as shallow and unfruitful as it ever was.

What's happening?

Well, even though you have a *good idea* about praying more – your *mind* is rightly engaged – and you *really feel like* you should pray – your *heart* is revved up for it – there's a problem in your *conscience*. You still value certain things more than prayer – such as, sleep, busyness, being on social media, or just wasting time. Because you didn't consider the role of your *conscience* in the matter and took no steps to embed more prayer as a *value* there, you simply let certain *unexamined values* linger, when you should have served them notice and evicted them forthwith. Then you could get to work building a new values component in the foundation of your soul, one that would allow you to enjoy greater success in realizing the life of prayer you thought and felt like you wanted to have.

If weak, wrong, or other unhealthy values make up the brickwork of your conscience, you'll not have the kind of strong conscience a healthy, Kingdom-seeking soul requires.

But if we can identify, own, embrace, nurture, and embrace certain *Kingdom* values, then we'll find that seeking the Kingdom and righteousness of God will become more firmly embedded in our conscience and all our soul, and we will live more consistently on that highest priority path.

### *For reflection*

1. How do you understand the make-up of the soul? What are the functions of its various components? How do you experience these in your soul?
2. Where do people's values come from? How do values work to affect how we live?
3. Does it make sense to think that there should be certain values characteristic of a Kingdom-seeking way of life? Explain.

*Next steps – Preparation: What do you think would be some really strong, Kingdom values to lodge in your conscience? Share your thoughts with a Christian friend.*

## 2 Calling

... as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. 1 Thessalonians 2.11, 12

### *The calling that integrates*

At times, life can seem like a gaggle of competing callings – obligations, responsibilities, relationships, roles, things to do, and people to respond to, which pulls us in different directions, all at the same time.

We like to think that we're in control of our lives, and that these various callings all come together to fulfill some single purpose. The problem is that, other than trying to enjoy life as much as possible, many of us have never found that one, *overarching* calling that integrates and makes sense of our daily callings. We're like the guy at the circus who spins plates on the end of poles, trying to see how many we can keep going before they start to fall down, and always asking ourselves, "Are we having fun yet?"

One of the great privileges of being a Christian is knowing that God Himself has issued us a high and holy calling, a calling that enables us to make sense of all the details of our lives, and to pursue them not merely for the sake of keeping them going, but for the larger purpose of the calling God issues to us, every day anew.

God calls us to His Kingdom and glory. He invites us to bring all the various callings of our lives – marriage, family, work, church, diversions, cultural and political life – under the cope of His sovereign, wise, good, and loving rule. He promises that He will fill us and all our various callings with abundant life in Jesus Christ, not just as some niche or sector of our lives, but for every moment, all our relationships, roles, and responsibilities, and all our fondest hopes and dreams.

Called to the Kingdom and glory of God, Christians can live every moment in a Presence not of this world, by a power beyond all human strength, in pure spiritual pleasure and joy, and for a purpose that can never fail.

We need to make sure we understand and value this calling, so that it works in our soul to help us realize the promise of gladness and glory God holds out for us.

### *Called to the Kingdom*

God calls us to His Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is that realm of spiritual power, ruled by our Lord Jesus Christ, where righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit flourish and abound (Rom. 14.17, 18). The Kingdom, Jesus said, is *within* us, in our souls and pervading our entire lives. At the same time, we are citizens and ambassadors of the Kingdom, which is an external spiritual reality coming into being on earth in the same way that it exists in heaven.

The Kingdom is within us, and we are called to seek it by *understanding* the nature of the Kingdom, *desiring* it in ways consistent with Jesus' teaching, and *valuing* it for all aspects of our lives, and not merely for a few hours here and there. When we understand and experience the Kingdom as Jesus intends, we realize the meaning of those all-pervading images – salt, light, and leaven – that Jesus used to teach us how to think about our lives.

The many different callings that make up our everyday lives all take on brightness, flavor, and rich transforming power as we bring them daily to the Lord and seek His Kingdom in and through them.

### *Called to glory*

God calls us to His glory. The glory of God is just the presence of God, expressed by holy spiritual power in

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ways that make it clear a force for truth, love, goodness, wisdom, kindness, order, and righteousness is at work here. Even the smallest details of our lives can refract the glory of God, so that others see a hope and a reality in us which they do not typically observe (1 Cor. 10.31; 1 Pet. 3.15). God calls us to seek His presence and to live in His presence, so that the presence of God Himself grows in us, flows through us, transforms us into the very image of Jesus Christ, and makes all things new in every aspect of our lives.

God intends for us to participate in Him (2 Pet. 1.4), to know Him in His glory, and to have that glory transform all the callings of our lives so that we are continually pointing away from ourselves to Him.

God calls us to His Kingdom – where righteousness, peace, and joy are the hallmarks – and His glory – where the radiance of Jesus glows through every aspect of our lives. The more we understand and *value* this high, holy, heavenly, and integrating calling, the more all our lives will realize the power, pleasure, and purpose God intends.

What a glorious privilege and exciting adventure! The God of heaven and earth, Lord of nations, Ruler of all creation, Redeemer, Savior, and King – this God is calling *us*, calling us to enter, seek, and advance His Kingdom and glory, and to be transformed in every aspect of our lives for His service and praise.

When this calling settles in our conscience, it will guide how we think and feel about everything else. All of life and all its many callings become arenas for knowing, enjoying, and serving God, platforms and venues for showing and declaring Him, and opportunities to grow in and refract the God of light and life to the sin-dark world.

#### *For reflection*

1. What is the Kingdom of God? What is the glory of God? Do you think it's important for Christians to understand these? Explain.
2. What does it mean to be called to the Kingdom and glory of God *continuously*?
3. What can keep or hinder you from hearing God's continuous calling on your life? What can you do to remain more open and mindful of His calling?

*Next steps – Preparation: Suggest some ways to stay mindful of God's calling throughout the day. How can Christians help one another in this matter? Talk with some Christian friends about this.*

### 3 Seeking

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”* Matthew 6.33

#### *When God calls*

God is continuously calling us into His Kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2.12). These are His highest values for us. When this calling becomes the overarching calling of our lives, it will shape the way that we approach each day, so that *seeking* the Kingdom and glory of God will become the defining orientation of all we do.

Human beings live for the future. We’re cognizant of our past, and we make our way in life through the present. But humans are future-oriented creatures. We don’t want either to rest on our laurels or be trapped in our past. And we know the present is too fleeting to hold on to for anything other than the present. Consequently, we’re always *seeking* something that lies just ahead. *Seeking* describes our basic orientation to life.

So the question, where the composition of the conscience is concerned, is not *whether* we shall have *seeking* as a value, but, in particular, *what* we will seek as the *defining* value for all our seeking.

Happily, Jesus has sorted that out for us. Jesus came to announce, embody, proclaim, and advance the Kingdom of God. His Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom – of the joyous rule of God over all aspects of life unto our blessing and His glory. God calls us to His Kingdom and glory, and Jesus commands us to seek that Kingdom.

It seems pretty clear that *seeking the Kingdom* should be one of the preeminent values in our souls.

#### *Kingdom, power, righteousness*

Paul explains the Kingdom of God in terms of power (1 Cor. 4.20) – spiritual power which is virtually unbounded in what it can accomplish (Eph. 3.20) – and righteousness – the life of Jesus formed in and expressed through us (2 Cor. 3.12-18). The result of this Kingdom’s outworking in our lives is peace and joy (Rom. 14.17, 18). The ability to realize *this* power for *those* ends depends on the work of God’s Spirit within us, as He makes us *willing* – hear that conscience word? – and able to do what is pleasing to God (Phil. 2.13).

Our duty is to embrace Kingdom-seeking as a defining value. God is calling us into His Kingdom, and we are commanded to seek that Kingdom in response to God’s calling. As we do, we come to know the transforming power of God’s Spirit at work within us, willing and doing and remaking us into the very image of Jesus Christ. This is what it means to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

So, what does this involve?

#### *Seeking the Kingdom*

Obviously, seeking the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Holy Spirit – the Kingdom of God – must begin in our own souls – mind, heart, and conscience. First, we must commit to Kingdom-seeking as a defining value. That might entail reviewing all our life values, setting some aside and putting all the rest of them in order behind seeking the Kingdom. It might be a good idea, once you’ve completed this task, to note the date in your Bible or journal, make a commitment to the Lord, and then share that commitment with a trusted friend. This could be your “memorial stones” of having crossed the Jordan into a new framework of values (Josh. 4.1-24). And it will provide a touchstone to which you can return from time to time.

When seeking the Kingdom has become a settled value in our *consciences*, we will devote our *minds* to the task

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of understanding righteousness and the ways of God's Spirit. We will make time to read, study, and meditate on the power and righteousness of the Kingdom, so that we understand these clearly and are learning to process all our thinking through a called-to-the-Kingdom filter.

As we learn more of the beauty and potential of the Kingdom, of the promises available to those who seek it, and of the exceedingly-abundantly-beyond power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3.20), we will find that our *hearts* become more firmly set on *embracing* God's calling to seek His Kingdom and glory. And that, in turn, will shore up the value you place on the Kingdom in your conscience.

As in our souls we become thus devoted to seeking the Kingdom, we'll find this value increasingly reflected in our words and deeds. We'll *talk* about the Kingdom more freely and eagerly. We'll ask others about their experience of seeking the Kingdom. We'll find ourselves *explaining* the Good News of the Kingdom to people who probably never think about such matters, and we'll do so not apologetically but gladly, boldly, and even urgently.

At the same time, we'll see our *actions* coming more into line with the Kingdom. We'll want to *do more* Kingdom kinds of things, like Jesus did when He came to bring the Kingdom to the world. Old thoughts and affections having been transformed in our Kingdom-seeking souls, we'll have *more love* for people, want to be *more helpful and encouraging*, and look for ways to *embody Kingdom verities and values* in every area of our lives. We'll be pleased to *meet new people*, and we'll *initiate more conversations* that might lead to Kingdom outcomes in others.

Those who know themselves called to God's Kingdom and glory, and who cherish that calling as a high privilege and glorious adventure, will set seeking God's Kingdom and glory as a prominent value in their consciences. Once there, this Kingdom value will begin to shape everything else in our lives.

### *For reflection*

1. Do you agree that people tend to live toward the future, always hoping for something different or better? Why does this make it important that we be clear in our focus about what we are seeking?
2. How would you explain the Kingdom of God to a new believer? What does it mean to be a citizen and an ambassador of this Kingdom?
3. What are some life-values that could get in the way of seeking the Kingdom as your preeminent value?

*Next steps – Transformation: How would you describe your approach to seeking the Kingdom and glory of God at this time? Can you think of some ways you might improve this? Talk with a Christian friend about these questions.*

## 4 Renewal

*I thought about my ways,  
And turned my feet to Your testimonies.  
I made haste, and did not delay  
To keep Your commandments.* Psalm 119:59, 60

*New values, new light*

Seeking the Kingdom of God will shed new light on our lives in many ways. We will begin to see things – in our lives and in the world – that are not consistent with the presence and progress of the Kingdom of God, to which we have been called and which we are seeking. Distractions and diversions will obscure God’s calling and deter our Kingdom-seeking, and transgressions and lack of diligence will find us straying from God’s path at times. If we don’t overcome these, we’ll end up frustrated and perhaps even abandoning the Kingdom values we’re trying to embrace.

The Christian life is always a work in progress. What Paul described as a “law of sin” continues to operate in our souls, so that our mind, heart, and conscience still bear some of the marks and tendencies of a more self-centered than God-centered agenda; and our words and deeds, as a result, will at times fall short of glorifying God in Kingdom ways (Rom. 7:15-25).

Thus, we need to put in place yet another Kingdom value, so that, when we recognize these distractions and potential deterrents or failings, we won’t back down before them, but we’ll take them on and overcome them and continue making progress in seeking the Kingdom to which God is calling us (Rom. 12:21).

And that value we may refer to as renewal.

*A work of God*

The work of renewing our souls and lives is God’s work. Our role is to agree that we will always have need of renewal, to be alert to when renewal is called for, and to seek it by the Lord’s prescribed means.

Renewing our souls and lives in the Lord is a process that involves three steps. As we, by faith, take each of these, the Spirit meets us with the Kingdom power we need to keep moving forward (1 Cor. 4:20; Phil. 2:12, 13).

First, we must *be clear about what needs to be renewed*. Whether it’s a thought we continue to indulge, some affection that’s out of whack, or particular words or deeds that are not in line with the righteousness, peace, and joy of God’s Kingdom, we need to face up to our shortcomings and name them for what they are. This is the work of *confession* – agreeing with the Spirit that we have turned away from the Lord in whatever area He is bringing to mind.

By settling the value of renewal in our conscience, we’ll be ready to direct our thoughts and affections so that, whenever the Spirit of God *convicts* us of some sin or shortcoming in our lives, our immediate response is going to be something other than to excuse or defend ourselves. We will *confess* our transgression, and thereby begin the process of turning back to the Lord.

Then, second, we can *seek the Lord’s counsel* for whatever next step will enable us to resume our journey of seeking the Kingdom to which God is calling us. This begins the work of *repentance*. The same Spirit Who convinces us that we are in sin also directs us in the way of righteousness (Jn. 16:8-11) and empowers us for obedience (Phil. 2:12, 13).

Let's say we become aware, under the leading of the Spirit, that we've been harboring a bad attitude toward a co-worker. We resent him for whatever reason. We speak uncharitably about him behind his back, and secretly wish he'd get fired. Whenever we think about this person we scowl and get angry or depressed.

And then in His way and time, the Spirit reveals this sin, thus engaging our soul for renewal.

So what do we do now? We look to the Spirit, waiting on Him in prayer, to lead us back onto the path of righteousness, which He will do one step at a time (Ps. 139.23, 24). Perhaps the next step, after confessing this sin, will be to, whenever you think of this person, rather than scowling and getting angry, to offer a brief word of thanksgiving to the Lord for him. Think about whatever his positive contribution is to the workplace, and then dwell with thanksgiving on that, remembering that he is made in the image of God and susceptible to the law of sin, just as you. Take up just that much of a next step, and when you need the next one, to replace those negative thoughts with ones more like the way you'd like others to think about you, the Spirit will be there to lead you.

Finally, you *have to act*. This is the work of *penance*. Inward transformation must come to expression in outward actions – words and deeds. When renewal is established as a value in your conscience, you'll want to bring renewal to full fruition through active obedience. Look for opportunities to show the love of Christ to this unlovable colleague, and when those opportunities arise, make the most of them (Eph. 5.15-17). If you have said anything unkind or hurtful to him, seek his forgiveness.

#### *A lifestyle of renewal*

What applies to us as individuals also applies to our churches. Churches need renewal whenever the Spirit indicates that they have left the path of the Lord, whether in worship, disciple-making, or mission. The same process of confession, repentance, and penance applies for bringing renewal to a congregation as to an individual.

Having renewal – the need for it and a readiness to enter into it – as a value in your soul will help to ensure continuing growth in the Lord. The more sensitive we become to the Spirit's leading, and the more diligent we are at practicing the steps of renewal, the more renewal will work out in every area of our lives. We will grow in our Kingdom calling and realize more consistency in Kingdom-seeking as we take up the work of renewal every day, in every area of our lives, every time the Spirit leads and guides.

#### *For reflection*

1. What are the signs that renewal is needed in your life?
2. How would you explain confession, repentance, and penance to a new believer? Why is each necessary?
3. How might a local church know when renewal is needed, and what should it do then?

*Next steps – Conversation: How can believers help one another take up the work of renewal more consistently? Talk with a Christian friend about this question.*

## 5 Holiness

*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Corinthians 7.1*

### *The logical corollary*

The work of *renewal* engages that process of confession, repentance, and penance by which, as Paul put it, we “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.”

We will be inclined toward *renewal* once *seeking* the Kingdom, to which God daily *calls* us, is firmly in place in our conscience. We won’t have much incentive to embrace renewal as a value unless we’re actively seeking to follow our calling to the Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit.

Hearing and seeking God’s calling must be the top priorities in our conscience; renewal follows as a logical corollary of seeking the Kingdom to help keep us on the path of our calling to the Kingdom.

But renewal can only function as a Kingdom value against a background that allows us to know when our work of renewal is on target. And that background is what Paul refers to as *holiness*. When renewal is a working value in our souls and lives, and we are being cleansed in spirit and body of all defilements and every Kingdom-detering thought, affection, word, or deed, then we’ll be in position to be “perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

So we need to understand what holiness is and what it should look like in our lives.

### *Understanding holiness*

God is at work in everyone who believes in Him to bring holiness to completion. We won’t achieve complete holiness in this life. That awaits the day when, as we see Jesus face to face, we are actually, fully, and uniquely made holy like He is holy (1 Jn. 3.1-3). If this is what we hope for, then we’ll want to add to the values that define our conscience and direct our lives in the holiness that characterizes the Kingdom of the Holy Spirit.

But what is holiness? Holiness is both the *reflection* of God and His character and the *refraction* of that glorious image into the world through our lives. As we are becoming holy, the character of God becomes visible in us, and the work of God is expressed through us in uniquely personal ways.

God *is* holy; but God *shows* His holiness to the world through those who are being cleansed of all filthiness of spirit and body, and who are working to bring holiness to completion in the fear of God. God is holy. Christ is holy. The Law of God is holy. The standards of holiness, in other words, are readily available. The question is whether we will *so value holiness* as to embrace those standards, focus on them earnestly, and work toward achieving them in every aspect of our lives.

### *Begin here*

Paul’s counsel is that the pursuit of holiness must take place within the proper framework, and that framework is the fear of God. If holiness is to be a working value in our consciences, then the fear of God must be a settled affection in our hearts.

Why should we fear God? Well, because He’s God – holy, good, true, righteous, loving, merciful, all-powerful, and hating evil – and we are not. We need to remember that, in a very real sense, we have no business seeking to be in the presence of God, or to know Him in His glory. Apart from Jesus Christ, that way is the way to complete annihilation.

Yet because of Jesus we can seek the Kingdom and glory of God, Who is calling us to these. Even so, along the way we may find ourselves in need of renewal, of being cleansed from sin and filthiness. God loves us more than we love ourselves, and in order to help us along the way toward His Kingdom and glory, He will from time to time lead us through some difficult places, and subject us to some unpleasant conditions which we'd just as soon avoid (Heb. 12.3-11).

So we should fear the Lord simply because of what He's capable of when it comes to sinners like you and me. We do not want to come under His discipline and displeasure, and so, in fear of being subjected to that, we work hard at perfecting holiness. The fear of God is the backdrop against which holiness flourishes.

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But that means we must have a clear vision of what holiness looks like in a human life, and here we can do no better than to study Jesus and follow Him in the path of obedience to God's commandments (1 Jn. 2.1-6).

The more we read, meditate, and understand the Law of God, and all His holy Word, the more He will form us into the holiness or righteousness He desires for us (Ps. 1). And the more we study and meditate on Jesus, as we see Him in the gospels and contemplate Him risen and exalted in glory (Col. 3.1-3), the clearer will be our understanding of the standard of holiness which must inform our thoughts, shape our affections, and come to expression in our words and deeds.

Value holiness! Take seriously the apostle's command to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Let every work of renewal which God accomplishes in your soul and life be but one more brick in the temple of holiness God is building you to be. Every increase in holiness – God's work in us toward which we earnestly strive and constantly labor – will bring us that much close to realizing God's calling for our lives.

*For reflection*

1. How would you define *holiness*? How does one grow in holiness?
2. What is the fear of God, and why should we fear Him? How does fearing God relate to increasing in holiness?
3. How can setting holiness as a default value in your conscience help when you are confronted by temptation?

*Next steps: Do you agree that Christians should cultivate fear of the Lord? Why or why not? How would you counsel a new believer to "bring holiness to completion in the fear of God"? Talk with a fellow believer about this.*

## 6 Mission

*Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household." 2 Kings 7.9*

### *Swallowed up in grace*

By the grace of God, those four Samaritan lepers had stumbled upon an incredible boon and blessing. Figuring they had nothing to lose, they had ventured out to the camp of the besieging Syrian army in the hope they might find something to eat. What they found so astounded and delighted them, that they knew they had to tell everyone.

As we increase in the *holiness* of God – the result of being daily *renewed* in our *calling* from God – we enter into the new reality of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God, Paul tells us, is righteousness. Righteousness, or holiness, is the character of the Kingdom, the identifying attribute of that realm of eternal life that has broken into human experience and is being advanced on earth as it is in heaven under the watchful eye of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the power of His Spirit, according to His Word.

When, by God's grace, we are drawn more deeply into the righteousness of His Kingdom, we know we have arrived at a place of incredible boon and blessing. For with the righteousness of God – the character of the Kingdom – come the peace of God that passes understanding and the joy of the Spirit which nothing can quench. Peace is the *condition* of the Kingdom, and joy is the *consequence* of the righteousness and peace we come to know there.

And when you know such peace and joy, don't you just want to tell someone else?

### *Mission as a value*

This is why the fifth value we need to establish in our conscience is *mission*. We are a people who have stumbled upon an incredible boon, and it is our mission in life to make that Good News known to others.

Jesus came to earth on a mission from God, to open the way to eternal life and to bring near the Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. And He told His followers that, in the same way He had been sent to earth, He is sending us to the world as well (Jn. 20.21). Jesus' mission was to embody and proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit. This must be the mission of every follower of Jesus as well.

Christians are a people with a mission. Like those Samaritan lepers we have hit upon some really "good news," and our mission is to invite and call and summon others to join us in this blessed adventure.

But because we naturally fear what others might think of us, we need to settle the value of mission in our conscience, so that, whenever the fear of man arises, we will deal with it effectively. If we value being bearers of Good News more than we value what others might think of us, we will have no difficulty overcoming every fear of man, to press upon them the Good News of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

### *Setting mission as a value*

But how do we do that? How do we establish mission as a value in our souls so that, as often as the opportunity arises, we will talk about the Good News with others? Let me suggest some practical steps you can take.

First, identify the [Personal Mission Field](#) to which God has sent you. Each of us has a sphere of influence –

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relationships, roles, and responsibilities – in which we pass the time of our lives. This is our Personal Mission Field. By mapping out your Personal Mission Field, you will set before your *mind* and *heart* the people God is sending you to, day by day, week after week, as an ambassador of His Kingdom (2 Cor. 5.20).

Once you've mapped out your Personal Mission Field, then begin praying for the people you see there every day. Pray that God's Spirit would strive with them (Gen. 6.3), to show them the many-faceted goodness of God, to create in them an unsettledness about their lifestyle, and to implant in them a desire for something more lasting and meaningful. Pray that God will open doors of opportunity for you to show His love to the people in your Personal Mission Field, to get to know them and take an interest in them, and to share with them the Good News of what you have found by the grace of God.

Start looking for ways to show the love of Jesus to these people. Learn their names and use them. Offer to pray for them and seek specific prayer requests. Look for opportunities to listen, encourage, or help the people God sends you to each day. Let them see the hope that is in you and experience the touch of Jesus' love (1 Pet. 3.15).

Make it your goal to tell the Good News to every person in your Personal Mission Field, and do it in a way that is sensitive to their interests, time, inclinations, and receptivity.

We're all simply starving, leprous beggars who, by the grace of our sovereign God, have been called into a new experience of life, a life of righteousness, peace, and joy with which nothing in this world compares. And we just want others to know about it as well.

As you grow in the Kingdom and glory to which God is calling you, let the peace and joy you discover there overflow like a river of living water to share the Good News of God's grace with everyone in your life (Jn. 7.37-39). You are a person with a mission, and that mission offers the portent of righteousness, peace, and joy to everyone you meet.

### *For reflection*

1. What do we mean by *mission*? Does every Christian have a *mission*? Explain.
2. Meditate on Acts 1.8. How many different aspects of our lives are involved in *being* witnesses for Jesus?
3. How would you describe the state of your mission at this time? What are the greatest obstacles you need to overcome in advancing your mission?

*Next steps – Preparation: If you have not already, map out your Personal Mission Field (watch [this brief video](#) and download the worksheet that comes with it). Share your Personal Mission Field with a prayer partner.*

## 7 Legacy

*Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons,  
Whom You shall make princes in all the earth.  
I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations;  
Therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever.* Psalm 45:16, 17

*Good today, good tomorrow*

We're considering the kind of values that should lodge in our consciences, to strengthen them for guarding and directing our minds and hearts to follow Jesus. We've examined five values that are conducive to directing our thoughts and shaping our affections in ways most likely to promote a Kingdom lifestyle: First, our *calling* from God to His Kingdom and glory. It then follows that we should *seek* God's Kingdom over all else. This will lead us to *renewal* in all aspects of our lives, and *holiness*, without which no one can see the Lord. All this we pursue as part of our *mission* to bring and proclaim the Kingdom to which we have been called.

To these I'd like to add one more: *legacy*. It should be important to us, a matter of the highest priority, to leave something behind for others, to help them on their journey into the Kingdom and glory of God.

As the Kingdom of God comes to fruition in and through us, we can expect to touch the lives of others with many good things. We will help people learn, encourage them in the use of their own gifts, show them how to work their Personal Mission Fields, inspire them by our example of service and love, impart vision and skills to assist them in their own callings and ministries, and many things besides. If doing such things now is a good thing, wouldn't finding some way for this to continue after we're gone be a good thing as well?

But how do we do that?

*Faithful, teachable, able*

Paul explains how in 2 Timothy 2.2, elaborating on an idea expressed in our text.

The sons of Korah, who wrote Psalm 45, envisioned a day when the current leaders of Israel would be replaced by their sons, to extend the Kingdom of God beyond where their fathers had ever been able to take it (NB: I follow NASB in thinking that the NKJV is wrong in capitalizing *you* and *your* in verse 16). Paul instructed Timothy for a similar kind of vision, and through Timothy he instructs us as well. If we can invest in a few people, so that they embrace the Kingdom values we've been discussing in this series – embrace them so soundly and fruitfully that they pass them on to others – then those folks may be the ones to keep our Kingdom contribution going long after we have finally entered the eternal Kingdom and glory of the Lord.

Paul encouraged Timothy to embrace a legacy vision reaching to the second generation beyond himself. Timothy should teach faithful men who would be able to teach others also. So, in teaching men about the Kingdom of God, Timothy would also have to give them, not only the values and skills for Kingdom living, but also a vision and the incentives and skills necessary to impart that lifestyle to others. If we value leaving a legacy of Kingdom calling, seeking, renewal, holiness, and mission, then we, too, will make it a priority in our lives to search out others to whom we can impart these values and the way of life that goes with them.

In his instructions to Timothy, Paul counsels us to look for a particular type of people: *faithful* people – people who have demonstrated a real desire to know the Lord, follow Him, and serve Him with their lives. Look for people who are hungry for God's Word, eager to pray, committed to Christ and His Church, and willing to embrace the Kingdom values that can bring such peace, joy, and fruitfulness to their lives.

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Conversely, people who make excuses, are habitually “too busy,” or don’t follow through on things they’ve promised or agreed to do – such people may be sincere Christians, but they’re not the kind of *faithful* people who will allow you to leave a legacy of Kingdom living to the second generation beyond yourself.

Teach these faithful people. Spend time with them. Study the Word, read good books, take up projects and activities together, become prayer partners and soul friends, work hard to stir up one another to love and good works (Heb. 10.24). Gaining a Kingdom vision and embracing Kingdom values and a Kingdom way of life don’t just happen. Don’t wait for your church to do something, take charge yourself. Look for resources that emphasize the priority and values of the Kingdom of God, and work through them together with the faithful people you’re equipping as part of your legacy.

If you will be diligent in teaching *faithful* people, they will then be able to teach others also.

#### *Put them to work*

Then, finally, give the faithful people you are teaching opportunities to train others as well. Bring them into your disciple-making efforts and let them share in teaching and leadership roles. Encourage them to take the things they’ve learned and begin looking for faithful people of their own. Give them a vision for instilling Kingdom values, and be available to encourage and assist them.

As we journey toward the Kingdom to which God is calling us, seeking Him and His glory, working for renewal, bringing holiness to completion, and striving to bring others into the Good News of the Kingdom, let’s leave some markers along the way, to guide and encourage those who will come after us. Take as a value, firm set in your conscience, to make disciples of faithful people who will teach others also, and you’ll be able to say truly and confidently with the sons of Korah, “I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever.”

#### *For reflection*

1. Meditate on Matthew 28.18-20. With what has Jesus charged us? What is the state of disciple-making in your life at this time?
2. What do you need in order to begin making disciples more consistently? To whom can you look to help get you ready for this work?
3. What are the biggest obstacles you need to overcome before making disciples will be a more consistent part of your walk with and work for the Lord?

*Next steps: Where should you start to begin fulfilling the challenge of 2 Timothy 2.2? Who are the people closest to you, and how can you encourage and equip them as faithful people who will be able to teach others also?*

*Kingdom Values*

*For reflection or discussion*

1. The soul consists of heart, mind, and conscience. What is the function of each of these? How do these work together in your soul?
2. Review the six Kingdom values explored in this series. What is the state of each of these in your conscience at this time? Where do you most need to improve?
3. What obstacles can keep us from embracing and pursuing these Kingdom values? How can Christians help one another overcome these obstacles?
4. Jesus has charged all His followers with the work of making disciples. How do you carry out that charge in your walk with the Lord?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this study? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the contribute button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.