

5 Intimacy, Part 2

A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

We tend to think of our world as being composed of several hundred countries made up of thousands of cultures, tribes, and language groups. But from God's perspective there are just two kingdoms: the Kingdom of light and the dominion of darkness.

COL. 1.12-14 *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves...*

As children of our Heavenly Father, we must understand and embrace His Kingdom. Jesus spent much of His time explaining the Kingdom of God, speaking of it in over 100 verses in the Gospels. Yet many believers fail to understand the Kingdom of God and what it means, and this grieves our Father's heart. We can grow in intimacy with God only when we "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matt. 6.33).

Where is the Kingdom of God?

God's Kingdom is not a physical entity, but a spiritual one. In Luke 17.20-21, Jesus made it clear where we can find this kingdom: it is within you!

Based on this reality, Jesus told us how to present the Kingdom: "As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near'" (Matt. 10.7). In this verse the word "near" literally means near in space, not just time. Therefore, when you as a believer are near someone, the Kingdom is near them—because the Kingdom is in you!

A RADICAL COMMITMENT TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

When Jesus taught us to pray using what we call the Lord's Prayer, He reminded us to include a plea for God's Kingdom to be established on earth: "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6.10). Jesus was completely committed to His Father, saying "not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22.42). The ultimate expression of our love for God is our commitment to God's Son and the Kingdom which He represents.

MATT. 10.32-34 *Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.*

You must remember, however, that commitment carries a price tag! If you align yourself with Jesus, you can expect opposition.

Every day, we must ask ourselves if we are willing to obey Jesus at any cost: Am I willing to share in His suffering?

JOHN 15.18-20 *If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world...If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.*

? How do we observe a radical commitment to God's Kingdom in Acts 13-16? What was the cost?

Use your own stories to teach these points.

ASSIGNMENTS

OBEY at least one thing you learned from this lesson or your study of Acts.

SHARE the gospel message with at least one person over the next week.

STUDY Acts 17-20.

WRITE what God is teaching you, using the *Acts Worksheet* (handout).

TRAIN at least one other believer outside this group, just as you were trained.

At this point hand out two copies of this lesson sheet to each participant. Let them practise teaching one another what you just taught them.