Cell Lesson – Kingdom Principles (1)

“SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM”

***Icebreaker:*** What do you consider to be your most important possession? Why is this particular thing so important to you? Does it have financial value? Sentimental value?

***Scripture:* Matthew 6:33** *…seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

***Lesson:*** How many of us have truly embraced these words as the foundation of our daily lives? For most of us, the important issue is how can I seek my own wellbeing first and then seek God from what is left over. I feel that I have to make a certain mark on the world. I have to earn a certain amount of money. I have to run a successful business. I have to raise a successful family. Then and only then can I somehow qualify to serve God and seek His kingdom. I feel that I can seek God’s kingdom only after I have first established my own.

 Jesus turned this way of thinking upside down. He said put His kingdom first and all these other things that God knows that you need and are important to you will be added to you. To seek His kingdom first means that we order our lives around the things and activities that will draw us closer to Him. Things that are important to God become important to us. Time in prayer is time spent seeking first His kingdom. Time spent in worship is time spent seeking first His kingdom. Money given to the Lord’s work is seeking first His kingdom. Energy spent ministering to the needs of someone else is energy spent seeking His kingdom. Every time we make a minute by minute decision to actively pursue what pleases God, we make a decision to seek His kingdom first.

1. Is seeking God’s kingdom important to you? Is it important enough to you that you will order everything in your life around this pursuit? What are some practical things that you need to change so that seeking God’s kingdom can become first priority and not second, third or tenth?
2. In the past, how have you tried to build your own kingdom? Has building your own kingdom had the results you anticipated? What results did you anticipate? How has establishing your own kingdom been a positive experience? How has it been a negative experience? Has the return on your time been worth the effort?
3. Do you believe that God will take care of you if you seek His kingdom first? Do you trust God to provide for your needs? What internal beliefs do you hold that cause you to trust yourself and your abilities more than you trust God and His abilities? Is it hard for you to believe that all these things that God promises to you if you seek Him first, will be added to you? If so, why?

***Ministry Time:*** Pray into the concerns that have been shared as a result of the lesson. Pray that each person will have the faith to believe that God will do what He says He will do if we seek Him first. Lay hands on those with specific needs and pray according to the Holy Spirit’s leading.

Cell Lesson – Kingdom Principles (2)

“THE KINGDOM IS WITHIN YOU”

***Icebreaker:*** What do you consider to be your greatest internal strength? Your patience? Your calm? Your intensity? Your ability to reason? Perhaps something else.

***Scripture:* Luke 17:20-21** *Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, See here! Or See there! For indeed the kingdom of God is within you.*

***Lesson:*** Jesus said that the kingdom of God does not come with observation. Many times we do things so that others will see what we have done and as a result give us some kind of pat on the back. No so with the kingdom of God. The motivation for seeking God’s kingdom must never be for the praise of people nor for the validation of ourselves. If we are putting on display our kingdom activity, we already have whatever reward we may hope to receive. We are to keep our kingdom seeking to ourselves. It is something that is between God and us. We may share what we believe God is asking of us with another person for accountability but never with an attitude of “look what I am doing.”

 Jesus also said that the kingdom of God is within you. The true mark of finding God’s kingdom is the inner change which finding His kingdom brings. Are you looking for outward signs and wonders? Look first for inward signs that what you are promoting as necessary for everyone else is first of all operating in you. Is God, as king of His kingdom, establishing His reign in your life? Are your attitudes being conformed to His? Are your motives pure and godly? People will be able to tell that the kingdom of God is working in you but not because of anything you do outwardly through self-promotion. It will be because of the inner confidence, peace and strength with which you conduct your daily life.

1. How have you been tempted in the past to promote yourself spiritually? Has it worked? Many times when we promote ourselves, we only display our own insecurities. Do you feel that others need to know how God is using you in order for you to feel good about yourself?
2. Have you fallen into the trap of looking to outward signs and wonders to confirm God’s kingdom work in you rather than allowing the signs and wonders to be a natural outflow of the inner change you are experiencing? Is having God’s approval enough for you or do you feel that you need the approval of others to validate yourself? How do you feel when God does something powerfully through your life but only you know about it?

***Ministry Time:*** Pray into the situations and needs brought out in the lesson. Pray blessing over each person and allow the presence of the Holy Spirit to minister in the group. Allow the gifts of the Holy Spirit to operate in your group.

Cell Lesson – Kingdom Principles (3)

“YOUR KINGDOM COME”

***Icebreaker:*** Tell about a time in which you made something based on detailed instructions. Built a house. Prepared a recipe. Put together a model airplane. Cut out and sewed together a shirt. Did the end product look anything like the blueprint you used to prepare it? Did it look like the picture on the box?

***Scripture:* Matthew 6:9-10** *In this manner therefore pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your Name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

***Lesson:*** What does it look like when God’s kingdom comes among us? Jesus’ desire is that God’s will be done on earth just as it is in heaven. When God’s kingdom is established, it means that in some way what is happening here on earth has directly aligned itself with something being done in heaven. His kingdom therefore has come. We are experiencing here in our earthly realm the same thing being experienced in the heavenly realm.

 To pray that God’s kingdom come implies that while God’s kingdom may already have come in some ways, in others it has yet to break in among us. There is yet more of God to embrace in submitting our lives to His kingship. The first step in ushering in a greater measure of God’s kingdom is to pray according to God will. We are encouraged in scripture to “know the will of God.” When we specifically discern God’s will and pray accordingly, we are taking the authority that has been given to us to align the earthly realm with the heavenly. We thus create an opening for the kingdom of God which is already operating in heaven to begin operating on the earth in the same way. Prayer, then, opens the door for God’s kingdom to come on earth just as it is in heaven.

1. What are some specific areas in your life or family that needs God’s kingdom to come? As you think of how things could be different, what do you need to do to allow your life to align itself with God’s purposes? What does God need to do in order for His kingdom to come?
2. Do you have a vision of how things are in heaven and are you willing to pray accordingly until it becomes operational here on earth?
3. Is it easy for you to “know” God’s will? Have there been times in your life in which you knew what God’s will was but had to wait for a season for His will to come and be a reality. Have there been times that you have sought God’s will, yet the exact nature of God’s direction has eluded you?

***Ministry Time:*** Pray over the needs expressed in the group. Pray specifically into the area of letting God have His way in any area not submitted to His will. Pray and discern how God’s wants His kingdom to come in your cell and in each individual and family. Lay hands of those in the group with needs and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to them.

Cell Lesson – Kingdom Principles (4)

“KINGDOM HUMILITY”

***Icebreaker:*** Describe an experience in which you we totally at the mercy of someone else. Maybe you locked your keys in your car and you needed someone to come and help you out. How did it feel?

***Scripture:* Matthew 18:2-4** *Then Jesus called a little child to Him and set him in the midst of them and said, “Assuredly I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

***Lesson:*** Do you want to be great? We rarely place being child-like and being great in the same category, but this is exactly what Jesus did. Jesus said that in His kingdom, to be great you must become like a little child. Children are full of wonder. Children are willing to trust completely. Children do not worry about where they will get their next meal or about whether the roof leaks over their head. They know that they have parents who take care of those things. A little child has only to concern themselves with being a child.

Spiritually, this is the kind of faith we are to have. This kind of faith allows God to bear the burdens He has said He would carry. It also frees us to enjoy our relationship with Him. This kind of faith also places us in the position of having to trust in Him. Trust, even trust in God, is something many of us are not very good at. At the core of our relationship with Jesus is the understanding that we bring nothing to the table. We have nothing to offer God except for our life. This is what God wants anyway but many of us try to offer everything but the most important thing, our lives in complete surrender and trust to Him.

 This is how we enter into the kingdom of God. We enter as a little child. We enter only because we have been invited and we have accepted the invitation. It is a gift pure and simple. For many of us to receive something is humbling yet this is exactly the place God want to take us. Kingdom humility says that Jesus did what I could never do for myself and that the only way I can get it is to come as a little child and ask.

1. What is it about asking for something that is hard for us? Are you able to come right out and ask for something directly or do you hint around at things hoping that someone will get the hint and do what you want them to?
2. Is it uncomfortable for you to place yourself at the mercy of others? Why is this kind of trust something we seem to avoid at all cost?
3. What is it about a child that is attractive? What is it about a child that you don’t like? What needs to change in you in order for you to become like a little child? Is there a specific area in which you need to humble yourself before God, admit your inability to change yourself, and totally trust in the grace of God?

***Ministry Time:*** Pray for the needs brought out during the lesson. Pray for any specific concerns that have been shared. Pray blessing into each person’s life.

Cell Lesson – Kingdom Principles (5)

“THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM”

***Icebreaker:*** What is the best news you have ever received concerning a crisis you or someone close to you has gone through. How did you feel when you first heard that something had changed for the better?

***Scripture:* Matthew 4:23** *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.*

***Lesson:*** Jesus makes a difference. Sometimes we may be tempted to think that Jesus is only concerned with matters of heaven or hell and eternal life kinds of things, but Jesus is also concerned with the here and now. Jesus went around proclaiming the good news of a new kingdom. He spent His life pointing people to a living God which He called Father. This God is concerned with your everyday needs and is powerful enough to do something about them. Jesus healed all kinds of sicknesses and disease. He had authority over them. This was a testimony without words as to the power of this new kingdom.

 Jesus is still concerned with your needs and physical wellbeing. He still heals and has authority over all kinds of sickness and disease. The Word of God still proclaims good news, that a new kingdom is at hand and that we can be part of it. How about you?

1. Do you have the confidence to pray for someone to be physically healed? If so, relate how you came to have this confidence. If not, what keeps you from praying in this manner? Do you not have a model to follow? Do you not believe God will act? Are you concerned about your reputation? Something else?
2. Are you willing to pray for someone’s emotional healing? Many times physical dis-ease has emotional and spiritual roots. The full physical healing is dependent upon discovering the deeper, internal problem. If you are confident in this, describe how you came to this place. If not, why not? Do you not have a model to follow? Do you not want to take the time to get that involved in another person’s life? Something else?
3. How does healing pave the way for the gospel of Jesus’ saving power. Jesus went and taught, and he preached, and He healed. How do you think they are connected, and do we connect them today?

***Ministry Time:*** Are there sick among you? Gather around this person and spend some time releasing God’s healing power into their life. Pray into any other needs which have been expressed. Allow the Holy Spirit to minister in your group.

Cell Lesson – Kingdom Principles (6)

“THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE KINGDOM”

***Icebreaker:*** Tell about a time in which you learned something by seeing it demonstrated to you. How does having something demonstrated differ from reading instructions and then doing it? Which did you find more helpful?

***Scripture:* Matthew 7:21** *Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.*

***Lesson:*** The Bible challenges us to be doers of the word and not just hearers of the word. It is not enough to know about salvation, we must enter into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ ourselves. We may know about God’s healing power or His desire to bless but until we ask to receive these things or even minister these things to others, we are only hearing the word and not doing it. God wants us to demonstrate the kingdom of God. This means putting what we believe into action.

 1 Corinthians 14:23-26 tells us that when you come together as a group, if you are all involved and you prophesy, the secret needs of the person being ministered to are revealed. They experience the presence of God and they fall down in worship saying, God is truly among you. In this way, this person as well as the whole group are built up and encouraged. This is an example of the kingdom of God being demonstrated.

 Demonstrating the kingdom of God does not have to involve miracles and signs and wonders. Simply taking time to help someone, encouraging another person, giving money to someone unexpectedly to meet a need, or listening to another person are all ways of demonstrating the kingdom of God. Sometimes is does involve praying for someone’s healing or receiving a prophetic word or word of knowledge that helps a person realize that God wees them and care about what they are facing. These “hands on” kinds of actions go beyond telling someone about God to allowing them to experience the ministry of God in their lives. In demonstrating the kingdom, your actions speak louder in witness than your words ever could.

1. When was the last time you demonstrated the kingdom of God? It may have been something simple that you now realize God used to witness to that person of His care and love.
2. Do you believe that demonstrating the things of God are more effective that just speaking of the things of God? If so, why? Have you had experiences in your live where the demonstration of God’s power and care confirmed for you in a real way what you already believed but had never seen in action?
3. Do you know unbelievers that you could reach out to with the intention of demonstrating the kingdom of God to them? You do not need to tell them what you are doing, just do it. Meet a need, listen to them, encourage them, pray for them.

***Ministry Time:*** Demonstrate the kingdom one to another. Pray for each other. Make plans to serve one another. Pray for God to give you someone to demonstrate the kingdom of God to.