

COMMUNITIES OF

HOPE

Christians Starting
New Congregations

Living in the Kingdom



The Kingdom of God

Living in the Kingdom

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind ...
Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments”
(Matthew 22:37, 39-40).*

This study is designed for new believers and others who may not be familiar with Jesus’ commands regarding our responsibilities to others in His kingdom.

The studies are arranged in an easy-to-follow order and are designed to last approximately six weeks. It is impossible in such a short time to cover all the truths necessary to sustain a vital walk with the Lord in the fellowship of His church. However, it is hoped that these studies will form a sort of “spiritual boot camp” from which a disciple can build. We trust that additional follow up will be provided by those in the new church who are more mature and can help these new believers overcome the barriers to love.

The studies can be used in several ways:

1. We recommend that you use the questions in these studies as a guide to discuss the corresponding passages. You should prepare by praying that the Lord would speak to the new believer through His word. Continue in prayer during the discussion time. Using this method, the new believer needs no preparation, although you might ask him or her to read the passage

ahead of time. Remember: The questions in the study are to be used to start discussion rather than be seen as a rigid study to which you should adhere. Flexibility is encouraged.

2. A second way this can be used is for you to give the study to the new believer. He or she is asked to answer the questions in preparation for the time when you will be together to study the relevant portion. Once again, when you get together be flexible and willing to dig. This approach may be preferred with an older believer.
3. The least preferred way is for you to give the new believer the study to work through on his or her own with no help or follow up.

We hope that these studies will be helpful to those desiring to obey our Lord’s command to “make disciples of all nations.”

Permission was given for reprinting of Bible studies by Dick Scoggins with the Fellowship of Church Planters International.

Studies

- 1 Study 1: The Meaning and Cost of Discipleship
- 2 Study 2: Church Life, Ministry, & Prayer
- 3 Study 3: Forgiveness
- 4 Study 4: Giving
- 5 Study 5: Witnessing
- 6 Study 6: Suffering

Study 1: The Meaning & Cost of Discipleship

A. The Meaning of Discipleship

Read Matthew 28:19-20.

1. Jesus' disciples are commanded to make disciples of all the nations. What are they instructed to do with these disciples?
2. Read the following passages and note what Jesus calls His disciples to do.
 - > Matthew 11:28-30
 - > Mark 2:14
 - > Luke 17:7-10
 - > John 17:20-24
3. What is the result of discipleship? (Luke 6:40)

B. The Cost of Discipleship

Read Matthew 16:24-26 and Luke 14:26-30.

1. What is the cost of discipleship?
2. The benefits far outweigh the cost. Describe the treasure in your life. (Matthew 13:44)

Conclusion

1. What might it cost you to answer the call of God to His Kingdom?
2. Share a testimony with someone you are acquainted with—but is not in this group—of what being a disciple of Jesus Christ has meant to you. Come prepared to tell the group about this experience.

Study 2: Church Life, Ministry, & Prayer

The early believers understood that Jesus had called them out to be unique people for His name (1 Peter 2:9-10). This unique people were called His church (Ephesians 1:22-23) and they met regularly in local assemblies (Hebrews 10:24-25). They met each other's needs and prayed fervently for each other.

A. Ministry: Ministering to the needs of others

Read Acts 2:42-47.

1. What are the four key activities in which these early believers engaged? (v. 42)
2. Fellowship was more than "going to church." The root meaning of the word comes from a word meaning "to share." What are some of the ways early Christians shared with (served) each other in the Church? (Those who served are called ministers, what they were doing is called ministries.)
3. Has God called you to be a minister? (Ephesians 4:11-12, 16)
4. What are some ways you can help meet the needs of members of the body? (Romans 12:3-13)

Conclusion

In which of these areas might you have a desire to share?

- > Do you need further equipping in order to be able to serve?
- > How can you get this equipping?

B. Prayer

Read John 14:12-14 and 16:23-27.

Everyone should be involved in the ministry of prayer in serving others.

1. What is prayer?
 - > What are some reasons why we should pray?
 - > Are there any restrictions on God's promise to answer our prayers? What are they? (James 4:1-4)
2. Jesus prayed privately as well as with others (corporately). What are some benefits of corporate prayer? What are some benefits of private prayer?

Conclusion

Some people find it helpful to actually construct a prayer list to remind them of prayer needs. You may find it helpful to write individual needs on index cards or in a notebook and record Scripture promises for each, as well as answers as they happen. If you desire to do this, you can do it one of two ways:

- > Use the above list to pray for yourself and others allowing the Holy Spirit to focus your prayers on those for whom He wishes you to pray.
- > Make a list of people who need your prayers and list specific needs for which you can pray for each one. Keep the list of needs in mind as you pray.

Study 3: Forgiveness

The church is populated with people who sin. Normally, when someone sins against us they hurt us. We often react in one of two ways: We either “blow up” or “clam up.” Neither of these responses is biblically appropriate. If we are going to live in harmony with others in God’s kingdom we need to learn how to forgive.

Read Ephesians 4:26-32.

1. Is rage sinful? In Ephesians 4:31, which sinful responses listed could be considered “blowing up”?
2. Which of these responses would be “clamming up”?
3. What is the proper response to being hurt?
4. How long do we have to get rid of our anger?

Sometimes when we are sinned against we find it very difficult to forgive.

Also read Matthew 7:1-5 and 18:15-34.

1. When we see someone sin, what should we do about it? Why?
2. Suppose they don’t listen? What should we do then?
3. Who should the confrontation benefit?
4. What should our attitude be?
5. What does it mean to forgive? (Matthew 18:27, 30)
6. Why should we forgive?
7. Should we forgive even if the offender refuses to repent?
8. What are the consequences of not forgiving? (Matthew 6:12-15)

Conclusion

Write in a journal the Scriptures about forgiveness and ask God to help you forgive just as He has forgiven you. If there is a person that you need to forgive or ask forgiveness, ask God to help you.

Note: Be careful to apply what has been taught in this Bible study.

Study 4: Giving

In Acts 2:42-47 we see that the early church was a giving church. Notice that giving is a form of worship to God. All should be involved in giving.

A. The Widow's Gift

Read Luke 21:1-4.

1. Why was this widow commended by Jesus?
2. How did the widow give to God?
3. How can you give to God?
4. Do you see giving as an act of worship? Is God pleased with this aspect of your worship to Him? If not, what can you do about it?
5. What does your giving show about your heart? (Matthew 6:19-21)

B. Principles for Giving

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

1. What should our attitude be in giving? If we don't have this attitude, what is the problem? (Matthew 6:19-24, 33)
2. What are some of the principles we learn about giving here? Also read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.
3. What are some of the promises given?

C. Rewards of Giving

Read Philippians 4:15-19.

1. How does giving affect our account in heaven?
2. What is the promise that Paul gives to those who give generously?
3. Notice in Philippians 4:18, that giving is an act of worship. What are some of the problems if we don't give?

Conclusion

What have been your views on giving to the Lord?

Study 5: Witnessing

Our ministry to the world is largely living out the life of Christ in such a way that they can be drawn to Him. This is called a witness.

Read Luke 24:44-48.

1. What are the disciples witnesses of?
2. How important is it to know *who* Jesus is? Read also John 14:6.
3. Look at Peter's presentation of the gospel in Acts 4:8-12.
Notice how he emphasizes the person of Christ. What does he say about who Christ is?

He also speaks of Christ's passion (death and resurrection) and His pardon (forgiveness of sins). What does he say about each?

- > His death:
- > His resurrection:
- > His forgiveness of sin:

Read Acts 1:8; 4:29-31; 8:4.

1. Who are to be the witnesses?
2. How was their witness received?
3. How did they prepare themselves for witnessing?

Conclusion

1. How is your witness? Is there anything preventing you from telling others about the person of Jesus Christ?
2. List some names of people God would have you witness to. You can share your testimony of how you came to know Jesus and who He is! Begin praying that God would grant you boldness to tell others. (Acts 4:29)

Study 6: Suffering

From the last five studies it should be obvious that living in the kingdom of God will involve some suffering. Paul and Barnabas strengthened the early churches by “encouraging them to continue in the faith, and by telling them, ‘It is necessary to pass through many troubles on our way into the kingdom of God’” (Acts 14:22).

A. Dealing with Persecution

Read Acts 12:1-5 and John 15:18-16:4.

1. What did Jesus say would be the consequence of standing for Him?
2. Have you experienced any persecution for your stand for Christ? Where and when might you expect it?
3. It is important to recognize that persecution and suffering are a consequence of spiritual warfare in high places (Ephesians 6:10-12). What might the devil try to accomplish against you through trials and persecution?

B. God's Purpose in Trials

Read Romans 5:1-5 and 1 Peter 1:6-9.

1. What are some of God's purposes in suffering?
2. How should we respond to persecution and suffering?

Conclusion

1. What are the areas in your life where you are experiencing trials? (marriage, children, job, relationships, finances, etc.)
2. What has your response been thus far? Is God pleased? (Romans 12:16-21)

