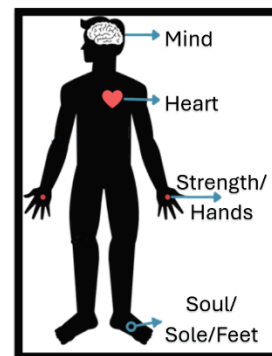


Lesson 9: “**The Kingdom I Seek**”
A Facilitator’s Guide for Mid-Elementary to Adult Bible Classes



I. Welcome & Prayer (5 mins)

II. Ice-Breaker (2-3 mins)

- What is something BIG you hope will happen in your life, family, or world this fall?

III. Activity for Discussion (2-3 mins to explain the instructions, have them complete before discussion)

- Give everyone a sheet of paper and pen. Have them draw a portrait of a human on both sides of the page. Label the person on the left “a world-focused person” and the person on the right “a God-focused person.” Draw a brain, heart, hands, and feet on both images with a line drawn out from each part of the body (see above). Identify what each type of person thinks about (in their brain), loves (in their heart), devotes their strength/energy toward (with their hands), and is ultimately seeking/heading toward (with their soul/“sole”/feet). Add Bible verses or stories that illustrate many of these characteristics or behaviors. Use these drawings in the discussion time below.

IV. Discussion & Application (30 mins) – write comments on the board to build momentum & reflection.

1. **A World-Centered Person (10 mins):** Share the following 4 passages with the class: 1 Jn 2:15-17 says, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” James 4:4 says that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God. 2 Tim. 1:7 says, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Matthew 7:15-20 says that a good or bad tree is known by its fruit. In light of these passages and looking at the diagrams you drew in the class activity, what are some characteristics/fruit of a world-centered person? What are some warning signs that this fruit is starting to grow (someone is starting to love the world, become a friend of the world, is being negatively affected by the world)?
2. **A God-Centered Person (10 mins):** Share the following 4 passages: In John 13:35, Jesus says, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” James 4:8 says, “Come near to God and he will come near to you.” Colossians 1:13 says, “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.” James 3:17-18 says, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” In light of these passages and looking at your diagrams from the class activity, what are some of the fruit/signs of a God-centered person (you can share other Bible passages)? What does “a friend of God”, a “disciple of Jesus”, a person who has “been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son” look like in their thoughts, words, hands, and feet? What are some evidences that someone is growing in these?
3. **A Noticeable Difference in Me (5 mins):** What is 1 thing that you could do more or less of this week to cause someone who knows you best to say, “Wow, you look more joy-filled, peaceful, or patient today.”

“You showed more kindness, goodness, and faithfulness toward me and others.” “What has made you so gentle, selfless, and in control of your life all of a sudden?”

4. **Being a Disciple-Maker (5 mins):** What could you say to someone else that would encourage them to seek these same virtues that are moving you deeper into the kingdom of God? What resources, strategies, or methods have you tried in the past or want to try in the future to become a better disciple of Jesus?

IV. Application (3-5 mins to explain):

Believe: Take a look at the drawing you made in class with the “world-centered person” and the “God-centered” person, and see if you can add details to both sides from scriptures you look up and experiences or conversations you have had since Bible class.

Act: Choose to speak of habits you are trying to overcome as “the person I used to be” and emphasize the habits you are trying to adopt as “the person I am becoming in Christ.” In this way, your language will begin to reinforce the change you see in yourself and the change you want others to notice in you.

Teach: Ask someone else to share their two portraits of “the worldly person” vs. “the God-centered person”. Ask them who they used to be and who they are now. Encourage one another in the transformation of character by encouraging one another in person or by texting, calling, emailing, or using social media. Tell us how it’s going on [College Church Chat](#) or in person next week in Bible class or congregational worship.

Lesson Outline for Bible Class (Birth to Mid-Elementary)

Believe: Share a story, passage, or example from the Bible about someone who had a transformation from being bad to being good or from being righteous to wicked in the Bible. Talk about the differences in these two people in what they thought (mind), felt (heart), did (hands/strength), and where they were headed (feet/sole/soul). Use pictures, songs, videos, or act this out to bring it to life.

Act: Act out the transformation story or have two groups of students build two different kingdoms (the wise man and foolish man?) and then talk about the different outcomes and why it is important to build your life on Jesus in what you think (mind), feel (heart), do (strength), and where you go (soul).

Teach: See if each child can remember 1 bible character/passage discussed and the fruit of that change. Have them talk about the performance and one thing they can do this week to strengthen their mind, heart, strength, or soul in serving God over this world. Bonus points if they can tell their parents what they learned and come back the next week being able to share what they did to carry out the lesson.

Lesson Outline for Small Groups & Families

Believe: Have everyone (all ages) contribute to one picture about the kind of person that the world is trying to make in the mind (your beliefs, values, thoughts, knowledge), heart (what you love, are devoted to, care about, hate), strength (what you do, how much you do it), and soul (what’s of primary importance). Then, do the same thing with the kind of person God is trying to create. Discuss the similarities and differences.

Act: Have everyone discuss what you want to do together as a family or small group that will make you less like a world-focused family and more of a God-focused family.

Teach: Ask other families or small groups what they are discussing or start a conversation with a friend, family member, co-worker, or classmate about what they think makes someone “a friend of the world” vs. “a friend of God”. Tell one another what you are actively doing to break up with the world to become a friend of God alone.

Lesson Outline for Individual Study

Believe: Spend some time reflecting on what kind of person you are. Would others consider you a friend of the world? Are you a friend of God? Since you can’t be both, what specifically do you need to do in your heart, soul, mind, and strength to separate yourself from the world and partner fully with God?

Act: Make a plan using the 10 commandments, Sermon on the Mount, Book of James, or other portions of the Bible to measure your growth as you take a few concrete steps this month to try to separate from the world and become more of a friend of God.

Teach: Share your plan with someone else so that they can be inspired to make changes in their own life and be of assistance to you as you both separate from the world and join with Christ.

Additional Scriptures & Discussion Questions for Weeks 2-5 (Bible Class, Small Groups, Families, or Individual Study)

General Prompts

1. What is the world teaching us to believe or not believe about the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of this World? How is the world teaching us this? What difference does it make if we believe or don’t believe the world?
2. What makes the message of kingdom-building in the Bible different from the message of kingdom-building elsewhere—whether in movies, tv, books, social media, or told by other religious groups?
3. What *resources & people* have helped you come to better know, live, & share in the Kingdom of God? What *strategies* have you used to help others come to know, live, and share citizenship in the Kingdom of God?

Week 2: In-Breaking Kingdom — Read Luke 10:1-11 and Colossians 1:9-14

Discuss what Jesus means when he said to his apostles “the kingdom of God has come near” (Lk 10:11). How do the good works of the apostles bring the kingdom of God near? From Colossians 1:13, what does it look like to be in the domain of darkness? What does it look like to be transferred into the kingdom of God’s beloved son? Discuss what it looks like to live in between Jesus’s first coming and second coming; how it looks on earth and in our own personal lives and church when we see evil partially defeated and partially ongoing. Discuss what it looks like to see some Fruit of the Spirit in your life in the present (e.g. joyful, peaceful, self-controlled) and yet still awaiting the fullness of the Fruit of the Spirit to come (e.g. no more sorrow, no more chaos, always in control). Since evil is like grass that keeps growing, how do we keep our lawn mowed (i.e. how do we keep evil at bay while announcing the coming and already-present kingdom of God)? What can we do this week to announce that God is progressively winning the battle against evil?

Week 3: Pain & Suffering and the Problem of Evil - Read Job 1-3

Discuss what it would have been like to be Job before he lost everything. Talk about what it is like to love everything you have—money, livestock, health. Share some examples of losses you have experienced in your life so far—money, animals, family members, jobs, etc. Share how you and others you know have kept their faith through these losses. Talk about what you can do to help other people through loss. How did Job’s friends

try to help him (scan through Job 4-40 for examples of sayings and advice)? What are some things people can say today during a time of loss that are helpful? What are some things people say that are not helpful? We are promised that in the end everything will be made whole again and Job 42 offers us a picture of that. How can we live in the present as though that future has already become a reality, while also realizing that we are still awaiting that full reward to come? What are some good things that you have experienced through/after a loss that have made you stronger and closer to God?

Week 4: Church Worship & 5 Acts —Read Acts 2:42-47 and 1 Cor 16:1-4

Discuss the five acts of worship we participate in each Sunday morning—prayer, scripture reading/preaching/faith stories, praying, giving, and singing. Talk about how each act of worship contributes to our overall worship of God in worship and outside of worship. What does God get from each act? What do we get from each act? What do we have to give up to do these? What do we gain in return? Talk about how each one is valuable and why we would be missing something if we didn't have all 5 types of worship. Now talk about which one is your favorite and why. Discuss how you can evangelize through each of these 5 acts of worship. Commit to doing one of them this week to encourage and be encouraged by someone else.

Week 5: Prayer & Winning the Victory—Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Matthew 6:9-13, and choose a Psalm that reflects the type of prayer you are feeling right now (lament, praise, fear, joy, etc.)

Discuss the importance of prayer and the opportunity to pray anywhere at any time for any reason. Talk about what it means to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). Talk about the model prayer that Jesus gives in Matthew 6:9-13 and what it teaches us to include in many of our public and private prayers as well as why we can pray for additional things besides just these things. Choose and share your favorite Psalm or a Psalm you are needing to hear prayed right now. Take turns reading and even praying this Psalm with the group (divide up into smaller groups if necessary so that everyone can participate). Maybe start a prayer as a group and then finish the prayer the next week when you return. Challenge and encourage one another with a prayer for the week.