

TEXT: Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:23-24

The foundational premise for all “sacred living” is that we are to live our lives for the Kingdom of God.

Mother Theresa:

- “I try to give to the poor people for love what the rich could get for money. No, I wouldn't touch a leper for a thousand pounds; yet I willingly cure him for the love of God.”
- “Whatever I do, I do for Jesus. Otherwise it is worthless, and useless.”

You can not call Christ “Lord” and then not serve Him. You can not say that you serve Christ, and then not live for the Kingdom.

QUESTION: What does it really mean to live our lives for the Kingdom of God?

It does not mean that we change **what** we do, unless what we do is sinful, but that we change **why** we do what we do and **how** we do it.

- **What?** 1 Corinthians 7:20-22,24; Luke 19:26
- **Why?** To serve Christ
- **How?** 1) We always give it our very best for we are doing it for Christ, and 2) we do it in such a way that we exhibit the character of Christ and cause others around us to be thankful that we did it in that way.

Because we are changing our motive and character, yet not the action itself, it is difficult to continue to do what we do and yet do it differently.

QUESTION: What can we do to help ourselves remember that we are living for the Kingdom and allow it to affect the way we do what we do? What do you do?

Suggested Reading:

Romans 12; Colossians 3; Ephesians 4-6
“The Divine Conspiracy” by Dallas Willard
“The Life You’ve Always Wanted” by John Ortberg

Suggested Small Group Topics:

- Go through the study “An Ordinary Day With Jesus” by John Ortberg
- What actions in our lives do we find the hardest to do “for Jesus”?
- Do those in my small group “thank God” for the way I am living with them? Why? Why not? How can I do better?
- How do we recognize the leadings of the Spirit? What causes difficulty? How can we improve our “listening”? What is the Spirit saying now to us?
- What are we going to do this week to improve our “living for the Kingdom”? Are we willing to be accountable?

The following are ideas that came from a study called "*An Ordinary Day with Jesus*" by John Ortberg along with a few practices that I've found to work.

- **Start your day with Christ.**
 - The beginning of your day, based on Jewish custom, starts at night. Begin by reviewing your day with God, then ask Him to prepare you for tomorrow. Talk to Him about what you perceive will need to be done, and ask Him to set His agenda for your day. Then start your day with rest and allowing Him to begin the work ahead of you.
 - When you wake up, renew your invitation to Christ to come into your day and live through your life (Christ comes where he is invited). Acknowledge your dependence on His Spirit, and confirm your commitment to live for the Kingdom.
- **Approach all your relationships as Christ would, in a loving, accepting way.**
 - As often as you remember (and ask the Holy Spirit to remind you) say a silent prayer asking Christ to help you to treat them as He would.
 - Treat interruptions as possible divine appointments from God. This may be His agenda.
 - One of the greatest tools to loving people as Christ would is to ask them "tell me more."
- **In work (or study), do it with all your heart and with the right attitude.**
 - Practice "a hundred thought prayers".
 - Look for "acts of kindness".
 - Use physical symbols to remind you of spiritual commitments.
 - Take mini-breaks to refocus your "why" and "how". Use them to relax and restore Christ's peace in your heart.
- **Listen for and obey spiritual leadings.**
 - Takes practice.
 - Check the "leading" against the "Fruit of the Spirit." (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)
 - Ask for His leading, and then listen to His "inner" voice.
- **Find time to be alone with God. You can't serve Him if you don't know Him and what He wants.**
 - Practice moments throughout the day.
 - Set aside portions of the day for Him. Practice your spiritual pathway.
 - Periodically, set aside larger portions of time.
- **Practice slowing your pace of life. Try to avoid "Hurried Sickness".**
 - This supports living by God's agenda and not your own or others.
 - Too fast a pace causes us to lose focus. Too slow a pace causes us to lose energy.
 - God's agenda will usually be different from our own, and will demand more than we believe we can do. But He will do His will through us and not by us.