

What makes a person powerful? Our culture believes it is making your own path, doing it your way, having the ability to bend others to your will. The bible sees it differently, showing us that real power is found in submission, in being a part of the kingdom, the body, the hierarchy, the team. Let's spend some time this week honing our ability to be a part of the kingdom!

## Day 1

### Be a Joiner

Verses: Luke 9:57-62

There are joiners and there are those who do not join. For most of my life, I fell into the latter category. Joining was stupid. There were times when I had to join, so I would join as little as possible. I had to go to school, so I did as little as possible at school. I was not the pep rally kind of guy and I certainly didn't have school spirit. If I would have shown up at our class reunion, I'm sure nobody would have known who I was because the only people I knew there were those on the periphery like me, and they would never go to the reunion. I would always sit at the back of the class because it was the closest to not being in the class. I have concluded that I was wrong, and that joining (the right things) is good, and that doing so wholeheartedly is the only way to do it at all. Our identities are nested in a hierarchy of groups, and all these fit under the umbrella of the Kingdom of God. We are part of families, nations, churches, corporations, and clubs. In all these things, our strength and power come from our submission to the whole, and it needs to be wholehearted or it will be weak and ineffective. Power comes through submission. Have you joined the kingdom of God? Is there any part of you that you are holding back? What other groups or organizations do you need to join wholeheartedly to function in God's kingdom at maximum effectiveness?

## Day 2

### Goal and Role

Verses: Psalm 84

It is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked. The idea is that the lowest position in the kingdom of God is better than the highest position outside of it. Satan found this out the hard way, when he would not settle for his place below God and rebelled, being cast out of heaven as a result. In the same way, Adam and Eve bristled at the restriction placed on them in the garden and were cast out never to return. The idea in both examples is the same, if we fail to be joyful over the position God has given us in any group, eventually we will no longer be members of the group. As Christians we must be so sold out for the kingdom of God that we do not care at all what place we have in it, only that the kingdom advances. The goal must be far more important than the role. When we can get our priorities in alignment and the goal becomes more important than anything else, we can find the role that brings the most benefit to the kingdom. I am often asked as a pastor to tell people what course or direction their lives should take. People want me to tell them what God's will for their life is, what job they should have and whether they should pursue a particular course of education. My advice is always rooted in the idea of finding the place of maximum contribution to the kingdom, and filling it joyfully to the best of their abilities. Our role over the course of our lives may change, as our abilities change and the need changes, but the goal of growing God's kingdom will always remain.

## Day 3

### Accountability

Verses: 2 Samuel 12:1-15

Part of living in the kingdom and being a member of the body of Christ is being able to face our failures. This is never easy, but any kind of teamwork that exists in any group of people is dependent on it if the group is to function as it should. Each part of my body needs to function if I am to perform any task successfully. If I am trying to hit a golf ball, for example, I must look closely at and evaluate every part of my swing. If I am unwilling to do this it is very unlikely that any progress can be made. When we exist as a part of a whole, it is important that sparing our ego does not become more important than the functioning of the group. To fail to evaluate my performance in the group is to live a lie at the expense of the group's goals and objectives and to hurt myself in the process. The bible counsels us to examine our hearts, to let the spirit do its job of instructing and even convicting us at times, and to confess our sins to God and repent when we have allowed sin to enter our lives. If the goal of the kingdom of God is truly our highest priority, if we really are seeking the kingdom above everything else, then it is necessary that we be open to seeing our flaws and allowing God's Spirit to work in our lives to sanctify us. What areas of your life are you resistant to seeing your flaws? What effect does that have on the groups you are a part of and how does that affect the kingdom? What can you repent of today and what changes can you make to be more effective in the kingdom?

Day 4

Communicate

Verses: Ephesians 5:15-21

How we communicate and what we communicate is very important to how we function in the kingdom of God. Throughout the Old Testament, the laws on uncleanness communicated the idea that death spreads throughout any group of people. Our attitudes toward things, whether positive or negative, are communicated through the things we do or say and are picked up by other people. This can be illustrated by thinking back to any time in history and thinking about what was taken for granted as right and wrong, and considering what someone from that era would think if they were transported to modern times. What we think of as normal comes from the attitudes of those around us communicated to us in uncountable ways. Because of this, it is important to have the right attitude toward submission in the kingdom and to be intentional about communicating that attitude toward those around us. If you think you are communicating nothing, you are wrong and are just unaware of what you are communicating. How can you work on your communication with others in God's kingdom? How can you speak to people in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in the modern era? Who do you know that needs encouragement and love communicated to them? How can you do that this week?

Day 5

Invest in Team

Verses: Acts 2:42-47

If our power comes from our membership in groups, communities, and most powerfully in the kingdom of God, then it makes sense to invest in the team. In whatever scenario you find yourself in, whether in your place of work or in your family, investing in the team is an investment in yourself. At the same time, an investment in yourself that is not beneficial to any of the teams you are part of is usually wasted. In what areas of your life can you invest in the team? Which members of the teams that you are a part of could benefit from your investment? What would the payoff be to the teams if you made

these investments? What effect would that have on you? Pray that God would open your eyes to the investments that you could make this week.