

Kingdom Living Today

Illustrating the WAY of God's Kingdom for a Modern World

34. Our Lord Calls Each Of Us To An Earnest Heart

“MY FATHER HAS HIDDEN THE WAYS OF THE KINGDOM FROM THE WISE AND LEARNED, AND REVEALED THEM TO THOSE WITH THE TRUSTING HEART OF A LITTLE CHILD.”

“I’m not sure God can ever use me for anything,” blurted Nate as the fellowship family sat gathered in Harry and Jan’s living room. “I sure don’t want to let Him down, but don’t I need seminary training or Bible college in order to serve Him?”

Jack gave a warm smile to the young man who was sitting near him with his wife, Jessica, and baby, Riley. “Let’s discuss together what you’ve just asked, Nate. First, though, I’d like to pray for wisdom so that the Holy Spirit would reveal to all of us our Lord’s mind on this matter.”(Ephesians 1:17)

When Jack finished praying, Jerome was the first to speak. “It seems to me that our Lord didn’t choose any of the wise and learned of His day to be His ambassadors.(Luke 10:21) I think He chose people just like each of us sitting in this room.”(1Samuel 16:7)

His wife Keisha jumped in with a note of resolve, “Look at what Jesus did with people the world considered commonplace!(1Corinthians 1:27) In just three and a half years average men and women were transformed in fearless disciples, filled with His Spirit.” Her voice intensified as she pictured her predecessors in the faith. “They didn’t retreat at suffering; they didn’t flee from sacrifice—they turned the world upside down by standing firm in Jesus.”(Acts 17:6)

Jan joined in eagerly. “You’re so right, Keisha! These ordinary people were equipped with spiritual authority over demons and exercised His power over sickness and disease.(Mark 6:13) They were living proof that Christ transforms people!”

Lacie added quickly, “Three and a half years of undiluted Jesus will produce in us what it did in them: intense love for Him and a deep hunger for the Kingdom of God!(Matthew 6:33) Those were everyday people just as human as we are. And just like them, it’s our trust in the Spirit of our Lord Jesus at work in and through us that makes all the difference.”(Romans 8:9)

Lita had just found the verse she was looking for. “Hebrews 4:2 affirms what you just said, Lacie, about how important it is that we keep on living in obedient trust through the Spirit: *‘For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with trust.’*”

Dee was excited to hear the passion in these younger gals. “I think in any generation what our Lord yearns for in each of us is undiluted, uninhibited trust in the Spirit of Christ within us! So what we need are hearts that will not be satisfied with anything or anyone less than Him.”(Romans 5:1-5)

“Over the years since Dee and I first embraced the Hebraic foundations,” Jack interjected kindly, “we’ve come to recognize that God is not in the business of raising up

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ministries. He's recruiting *bondslaves* (Mark 10:44)—men and women who have no will of their own except to do *His* will. (1Corinthians 9:19) Whether we've been conscious of this or not, we've realized that *slavery to His will* is what each of us here has been called to embrace in our sanctification into the character of our Lord Jesus." (Romans 6:16-22)

Jerome grinned broadly at Jack and said, "That description of us as slaves might bother some folks, but I can tell you *I know* I have only one Master, and for sure that's Jesus Christ my Lord!"

The others all nodded vigorously with their brother as Brett rejoined, "I think that mutual hunger to serve Jesus and do His will is why we've all experienced the power of Christ and seen wonderful answers to our prayers." Brett then turned gratefully to Jack. "Through your leadership you've helped each of us by role modeling a burning passion to conform to the nature of our Lord Jesus. (Mark 10:45) Both you and Dee are examples of what it is to earnestly want to be like Him." (Philippians 2:1-5)

Lita's lilting voice softly filtered in, "Sometimes when we're gathered together I feel like I'm one of the 120 people in the upper room on Pentecost who were earnestly seeking God and waiting on Him." Encouraging smiles urged her to continue. "Far more than any kind of formal religious education, I see that our Lord will use us when we first seek Him out of hearts that truly love Him and wholly desire to be like Him." (1John 4:17)

By this time Nate was elated that he'd spoken up about his own personal misgivings. He could sense that the Spirit of Jesus was inspiring everyone as they built one another up in their Kingdom purpose and determination. (Matthew 18:20) He turned again to the older man. "Jack, what other guidance could you give me to help me use each day according to our Father's will?"

Jack replied with such deep conviction that everyone in the room knew they needed to pay attention. "When you seek wholeheartedly to love and obey our Lord in His will for you, you'll most likely find that the Spirit will grace you first with *emptiness*. The things that are important to this world and its values and goals will recede dramatically, and your heart will become desperate to know Him more." (Philippians 3:10)

His eyes took in every earnest face in the room as he pressed on, "Know that the fullness of your desire to serve our Lord Jesus is always preceded by emptying yourself of your own desires. You need to be a person whose heart's passion is to seek God until Christ Himself is formed within you." (Galatians 4:19)

Nate's eyes brimmed with tears of joy and deep conviction, mirroring everyone else in the room. Harry put his hand on his son Josh's shoulder as he heard the teen sobbing softly.

After a pause Jan observed quietly, "The kind of emptying ourselves you're talking about reminds me of what Much Afraid experienced in *Hinds' Feet on High Places* as she went to the high places and was transformed into 'Grace and Glory.'"

"That's a wonderful connection, Jan," noted Jack, pleased with her insight. "And that's exactly my point. That's the depth of determination about wanting HIM to be transforming us that He's calling us to."

Several reached out to take one another's hands as family in Jesus as he went on, "Just like us, the first-century saints had the words of Jesus and were filled with the indwelling Spirit of Jesus. In that simplicity of obedient trust they enjoyed unsur-

passed greatness and power. That's why our Lord could say to them and to us, *'I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.'*(John 14:12) When we're steadfast bondslaves who are fully committed to do our beloved God's will, we'll indeed have Father's endorsement and His Son's authority."(Philippians 2:5-8)

No one spoke for a bit. Each looked inward to the Spirit of their Lord as a burning resolve filled each one.(Luke 24:32) Brett broke the silence as he pulled a sheet of paper out of his Bible. "Someone gave me this several years ago. It may seem a little humorous after all we've been talking about, but I think it captures the nature of the kind of people our Lord Jesus recruits—and how different His choices are from the world's."

Sensing in his spirit that what Brett wanted to share was appropriate, Jack urged him to read it aloud.

"Memorandum:

TO: Jesus, Son of Joseph, Woodcrafter Carpenter Shop, Nazareth.

FROM: Jordan Management Consultants, Jerusalem

Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for management positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests; we have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale.

We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thad- daeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely yours, Jordan Management Consultants."

Amused chuckles accompanied Brett's recitation. Yet, everyone understood the point of what the whole evening's discussion and the reading had reiterated: God's ways are not our ways, and His criteria for recruitment are not ours either.(Isaiah 55:9)

Jerome leaned forward to ask, “Jack, earlier you quoted from John 14:12 that our Lord Jesus promises that we’d do greater things than He did. What do you think these *greater things* might be?”

“I believe the ‘greater things’ are intertwined with our responsibility to complete the work our Lord began,” Jack responded. “Let’s all open our Bibles and turn to Isaiah chapter 61, verse 1.” Turning to young Kirk, he asked, “Would you please read this for us, young man?”

Kirk was delighted to be called on. His youthful voice read firmly and steadily, “*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.*” (Isaiah 61:1)

Jack nodded his thanks to Kirk, then addressed the whole gathering. “So let’s see from this verse the ministry which Jesus fulfilled: to preach to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness. These are all Spirit-empowered actions His followers are called to do.” (James 2:14-17)

“I see that,” Jerome agreed. “You’ve encouraged us to be on the lookout for people in need. (Proverbs 3:27) And, Dee and Lita and the little girls have been going to the Nursing Home to bind up the brokenhearted.” He stopped for a moment as everyone made the connections, then continued, “In the same vein you’ve encouraged all of us to write letters through *Voice of the Martyrs* (www.prisoneralert.com) to our persecuted brothers and sisters held in captivity around the world.”

Josh, thinking of his weekly get-togethers with Jack and the teenage boys, piped up, “You’ve also had all of us demolish our strongholds and fill in the old ruts of attitude and behavior to free us from captivity and darkness. (2Corinthians 10:3-5) And, after we’ve become free ourselves, we’ve been able to help our relatives and friends get free too!”

“Not only that,” Keisha added, beaming. “You’ve insisted that each of us get to know not only our own anointings but each others’, so we’d use our spiritual gifts to bless others.” (1Corinthians 12:4-7; also see our book, *God’s Instruments For War*)

“I’m sure our Father is pleased with our mutual desire to carry on the ministry given to our Lord Jesus,” (1John 3:16) Jack concluded as he looked at each joy-filled face. He then turned to Nate. “If I could give you a suggestion, I’d recommend that you and Jessica together focus on going through the various materials on the Restoration Ministries website. Discuss them with each other with the intent of making them a way of life. Dee and I sure wish we’d known these truths earlier in our marriage—we still regret all those years we squandered spinning our wheels in the religious establishment.”

Nate turned to his young wife and took her hand. “We’ve been using some of the materials on the website, but now we’re going to dig into them with greater determination so we can be prepared to serve our Lord the way He wants us to!”

The joy that filled the hearts of everyone that evening stirred exuberant songs of praise to overflow the room. What they couldn’t see were delighted angels all around them enjoying the moment along with those they serve. (Hebrews 1:14)