



The Kingdom Questions for Reflection

Part 3: "Inside the Kingdom" by Dave Terpstra
Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Resources for further reading:

Irresistible Revolution, by Shane Claiborne

UnChristian, by Dave Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons

What is the Kingdom that Jesus is talking about? How is your understanding of the Kingdom expanding this week? (These questions will appear every week in the reflection questions for this series...keep re-answering them)

From the informal show of hands, roughly half of the room at TNL has had negative enough experiences in the Church that it caused them to either question their faith significantly or move from one church on to another.

- For you or people whose stories you have heard, what are kinds of experiences that are creating this sentiment? Why do they appear to be happening so often?
- There are two sides to almost every issue. What can you/people be doing differently so that leaving the church over a negative experience would be absolutely the last resort?

Last week in focusing on our reputation with those outside the Kingdom, we talked about descriptions that church outsiders had of Christians which emerged from the UnChristian research project. Since tonight's talk revolved around issues of how we can bring equally unhealthy patterns into our Kingdom relationships, rethink through these descriptions at a personal level. Be honest in your self-examination...how are these true of your interaction with other Christians at times? antihomosexual, judgmental, hypocritical, insensitive to others, boring, not accepting of other faiths, confusing

The talk centered around three themes that emerge out of Matthew 18 on living Kingdom values inside the Kingdom: humility, keeping others from sin, seeking out those who walk away.

Humility (18:1-5)

Jesus uses a child as a model for those who follow him to emulate

- v. 3 – what elements of childlikeness interact with how we enter the Kingdom?
- v. 4 – how does the example of a child work as a picture of humility?

We use the phrase "depending on God" in Christianity. What does that really look like? Where are you dependent on God and how is that evident?

Relationships aren't always easy. Think about your circles of relationship with family, friends, work, neighbors, etc.

- Are there places where you need to pursue deeper or different forms of humility with any of these people?
- What makes that concept so hard?

(continued...)



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Keeping Others from Sin (18:6-9)

Don't allow the idea of "causing others to sin" to remain an abstract idea or one that we easily dismiss ourselves from.

- How have you seen this idea at work, where one person causes or makes it easier for another to sin?
- This pattern is probably in all of us if we look carefully. Do you see it in yourself in any ways?
- What are the ways that you draw negative patterns out of other people in communication specifically?

What sins, for you or for others, might you be desensitized to?

God often uses the things we see and intuit in the lives of others as a means to help correct those patterns in them. How should this work? With whom should you point out patterns of unhealthiness you see? Who are the people who you depend on, invite even, to do this in your life?

Seeking out those who walk away (18:10-14)

What are the liabilities for the 99 in Jesus' parable?

At TNLC, we are committed to "introducing and re-introducing people to God and his church." That means you will run into people who have felt marginalized or disenfranchised by past church experiences. Begin to think how you can respond when you encounter those conversations on a Tuesday.