

“SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM” Matthew 6.33,34

These words of Christ are almost universally recognized. Among believers, they are so easy to say and sing, aren't they? But, based on my own experience, so much harder to put into practice! And yet this is exactly what Jesus wants, even demands, from his people 'chosen by grace'. Looking at the context of these words, Jesus encourages us not be distracted by the world, even by our *legitimate* and most *basic* needs, because God has promised to take care of us! When Jesus says 'first', he does not mean 'and then there will be room for seconds'. To seek first the kingdom is to seek the kingdom always and only. Apart from love, can there be a truer test of discipleship and the Lordship of Christ? This is what it means to be a son and daughter of God, to be 'worthy of his calling and his kingdom'

In other words, as we live out our daily lives, God wants us to prioritise them around kingdom things, kingdom values, and kingdom morals. Here are some questions we might ask ourselves:

Am I using my home to honour Christ? Is it a place of kindness, generosity and hospitality? Am I eager to have others over, to share with them and to serve them?

Do I honour my parents in all things? Do I obey them, humbly and with joy and thankfulness, or do I drag my feet and talk back? Do I go the second mile in trying to serve my mother and father? Am I a noble son or daughter *in the eyes of the Lord*?

Am I reflecting the love and patience and forgiveness of Christ in my marriage? Have I promised to do everything I can to be the kind of spouse Christ wants me to be? Doing everything I can to help my partner get to heaven? Is my marriage attractive to 'outsiders' and an upward call to my children?

Am I eager to worship the Lord on 'the Lord's Day'? Am I also coming to give and encourage my brothers and sisters and not simply to be encouraged myself? Is there someone I can befriend? Do I sing with a glad and sincere heart? Is there a place or ministry that needs my service?

Are my finances truly placed at the feet of Christ? Am I giving like a true son or daughter of God - thoughtfully, joyfully, sacrificially? Am I honouring God with my possessions and career? Or am I letting my job and anxieties get in the way of kingdom matters?

Am I so tired or divided from distractions and 'lesser things' that I rarely have the time or energy to reach out to others and meet the needs of those in God's family?

Am I among those who 'forcefully advance the kingdom'? Am I making the greatest impact for Christ that I can with this brief life he has given me? Abounding in life as Christ wants me to be, bearing 'fruit', 'more fruit', 'much fruit'? 'This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples' John 15.7-8

The summer holidays are over. Hopefully, we are refreshed. And once again, we are safely gathered back together, praise God. As we enter another fall together, I hope we will also resolve to love Christ more deeply than ever. I hope our events calendar will be helpful and that our sermons and classes will call us all higher in the Lord. I hope our worship services will be richer and more meaningful to God than

ever before. I hope that many, many souls will find Christ for the first time and that the weak among us will become strong. With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible! Let's resolve, once again and each day, to 'seek first his kingdom and his righteousness'. And to God be the glory! -Henry