

Seek First the Kingdom



For Further Study January 29 – February 4

1. Are you a worrier? What things most quickly pull you into worry? What spiritual disciplines have you found help you to overcome it?
2. Read Psalm 73:1-14. When do you find it especially difficult to believe that God is in control of all that occurs in our world?
3. Read Matthew 13:24-30,36-43 – The parable of the wheat and the tares, as well as verses 47-50 – the parable of the drag-net. Do you find these parables troubling or comforting?

In a world where we still live among the weeds and the thorns, what comfort can you find in these parables?

4. What images and associations come to mind when you think about the kingdom of God? Do you tend to think of the present reality of the kingdom in the world, or of the future kingdom when God has fully redeemed creation? How does this affect the way you “seek the kingdom” in your daily life?

5. Read Matthew 13:1-9,18-23 – the parable of the four soils. Jesus is talking about how the Kingdom is planted and how it spreads. What do you observe about the one spreading the seeds?

Read Matthew 13:31-33 – the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven. Throughout history, what are the primary ways earthly kingdoms have expanded in the world?

How does that differ from God's kingdom as imagined in these parables? What does that say about this kingdom and about this King?

6. God has blessed us with an imagination to see beyond what our eyes can see.

Name a few instances in scripture that can you recall in which someone demonstrates a "kingdom imagination" – the ability to envision the world of possibilities that come into play under God's rule and power.

7. Read Matthew 28:18-20 – the great commission. When you hear this charge – when you are called to "seek God's kingdom" – where do you feel led to go?

This charge does not mean one has to leave their neighborhood. Using your own "kingdom imagination," where do you see places in your daily life that the kingdom of God needs to manifest? What power has God given you that you may be called to pour out in that place?