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LEADER'S GUIDE

## KINGDOM VALUES • FORGIVENESS



Photograph by Greg Schneider/Worldwide Challenge

### WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

In chapters 12 and 13, Jesus disclosed some of the elements of how God's kingdom would manifest itself in the world due to Israel's rejection of their Messiah. Jesus taught that the kingdom would not come with great glory, but would begin small and slowly spread to the entire world. He also taught that He would return a second time, and therefore would not be visibly present in this new phase of the kingdom. Finally, he taught that the subjects of His kingdom would include Gentiles. In this passage, Jesus adds an additional description—the character qualities of those who belong to the kingdom.

We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback on this study to [cru.comm@uscm.org](mailto:cru.comm@uscm.org).

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

#### LUKE 17:1-21

While Jesus has taught some very important lessons about God's new plan for establishing His kingdom, He has not directly dealt with the question, "How should kingdom people live?" Here He describes the guiding values that kingdom members are to embody.

#### **Forgiveness: Luke 17:1-4**

The first quality that members of this new kingdom are to embrace is forgiveness. The basis for membership in the kingdom of God is reception of God's unmerited forgiveness of our sins, accomplished by Christ's death on the cross. As recipients of God's forgiveness, Christians are to freely grant forgiveness to others.

The Pharisees become prime examples of those who sought after justice rather than mercy and forgiveness. When one is stingy with forgiveness, it makes it clear that they have either not received forgiveness, do not fully apprehend all they've been forgiven from, or simply are not experientially feeling forgiven. This is why it is so important for Christians to confess their sins. While Christians are granted forgiveness of their sins due to Christ's death, confession on an on-going basis is essential for feeling and experiencing this forgiveness as it relates to specific sins. Additionally, having a close Christian friend with whom we can share our hidden areas of sin for prayer and support, can also aid in feeling God's forgiveness.

#### **Faith: Luke 17:5-6**

Second, Christians are to live their lives by the dynamic of faith. The question is asked of Jesus how His followers can increase their faith. Jesus indicates it is not the amount of faith that is important, but it is Who that faith is in, as well as stepping out in obedience upon that faith.

This is an important lesson. The disciples were asking for Jesus to give them more faith, and Jesus seems to be saying that they simply need to obediently apply what they had. They knew Jesus, they knew what He could do, and they knew what He wanted them to do; therefore, they had all that they needed to step out in trust. Ironically, as we act obediently in faith, we see God provide and bless; as a result, our faith actually does grow.

**Humility: Luke 17:7-10**

In their positions of spiritual leadership, the Pharisees had become prideful. Christians in contrast are to be characterized by humility. Our salvation was a product of grace, and our lives are lived as an overflow and extension of that same grace. There is nothing we can do of spiritual value, and nothing we can become, without God's empowerment. It is such a realization that leads the Christian to true humility, which is an accurate perception of what and who we really are. Such a perspective holds no place for pride.

**Thankfulness: Luke 17:11-19**

When the Israelites were set free from Egypt, rather than being thankful, their hearts reflexively grumbled, and they became discontent with the great provisions of God. This lack of thankfulness plagued them through their entire existence as a nation. Christians, as the new people of God, are to be a thankful people. People who never lose sight of all that God has done for them, and is doing for them. An ever-deepening understanding of God's grace leads to profound and abiding thankfulness.

**God's New Kingdom: Luke 17:20-21**

In this passage, lies the connection to the kingdom of God. Where is this kingdom? Jesus says that He reigns in the hearts of individuals who have received him as their Savior. His reigning influence in the heart is powerfully manifest in lives that model forgiveness, faith, humility, and servanthood, as well as genuine thankfulness. Hearts in this condition allow Him full freedom to reign, empower, and direct. Hearts in this condition also manifest evidence that Christ is indeed reigning in their lives.

**This study is accompanied by an article. Take the time to read it over before the study. Hand it out to the group at the end of the study and have them read it this week.**

WHAT IF THERE'S A  
PROBLEM?

None apparent.

# FORGIVENESS • PG 3

## WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

While the study deals with all four virtues (forgiveness, faith, humility, and thankfulness), it would be difficult to emphasize action in all four areas. Therefore, the last question, designed for application, is for the group members to consider in which of these areas they need to see growth.

## MEMORY VERSE

Luke 17:3 "If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."

## WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS?

1. Jesus taught that the kingdom would not come with great glory, but would begin small and slowly spread to the world; that He would return a second time, and therefore would not be visibly present; and that the subjects of His kingdom would include Gentiles.
2. Allow the group to record their answers and share them.
3. Forgiveness, faith, humility, and thankfulness.
4. They have experienced Christ's forgiveness for all of their sins.
5. When one is stingy with forgiveness, it makes it clear that they have either not received forgiveness, do not fully apprehend all they've been forgiven from, or simply are not experientially feeling forgiven.
6. Confessing our sins to God and others.
7. You have all you need if you have faith in Him.
8. Obedience to step out in faith with the knowledge we do have of Christ.
9. Allow the group to share.
10. Our salvation was a product of grace, and our lives are lived as an overflow and extension of that same grace. There is nothing we can do of spiritual value, and nothing we can become without God's empowerment.
11. Pride
12. Thankfulness
13. Give the group time to make a list.
14. Allow the group time to think of what may be an application of the study for them.