




# THE COMMUNITY

## The Kingdom of God Is Within You | KINGDOM VALUES

### What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

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, but Jesus seems to be saying that they simply need to obediently apply what they already 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.

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### What's the Big Idea?

In this passage Jesus is calling His people to live like members of the Kingdom, specifically by showing the forgiveness, faith, humility and thankfulness that should naturally flow out of an experience with the gospel.

### What's the Problem?

Unforgiveness, unbelief, pride and ingratitude flow from a deficient understanding and experience of who Christ is and what we have in Him.

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### 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.

## What's Our Response?

The study deals with four virtues (forgiveness, faith, humility, and thankfulness). It would be difficult for one person to simultaneously grow in all four. Encourage each member of your group to identify one area of their life that they need to bring into greater submission to Jesus.

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## What Are the Questions?

Luke 17:1-21

### Launch

Think about someone you really respect. What is it about his character that you most wish you could emulate?

### Explore

1. What do you think the key character traits are that distinguish a follower of Christ?

Read 17:1-4.

2. What is the key character trait identified here as belonging to members of Christ's kingdom.

3. Why are Christians able to forgive in a way that non-Christians can't?

4. If we find ourselves unable to forgive, what might this be telling us about ourselves?

5. While the basis for our forgiveness as Christians is Christ's death on the cross, what is the key to experiencing and feeling this forgiveness daily?

6. Have you thought lately of all Jesus forgave you for and what it cost Him to do so? Is there anyone you need to forgive?

Read 17:5-6.

7. Jesus is championing faith here and says the amount is not the issue. What is the key to living by faith?

8. Who do you know that characterizes a life of faith? What dynamics distinguish them as people of faith?

9. What practical steps do you need to take to grow in your ability to trust Jesus?

Read 17:7-10.

10. Jesus is emphasizing the quality of humility. What is the basis for a Christian's humility?

11. What trait is Jesus concerned with that may manifest itself in the life of His followers, if they don't have this attitude? What happened with the Pharisees?

12. What helps you to live with the humility Jesus is describing? Read 17:11-19.

13. What's the final attribute that was present in only one of the ten?

14. Because of God's grace to us in our salvation, at even the worst of times, there are dozens of things that we have been given that should be a source of thankfulness. Take a few minutes and list as many things as come to mind.

Read 17:20-21.

15. How does this exchange relate to all that Jesus has just said?

### Apply

16. As you think of your own heart as Jesus' new kingdom, are there any of these four areas (forgiveness, faith, humility, thankfulness) where you have not allowed Him to freely reign?

17. Why do you think it's hard for you to not surrender to Jesus as king in that area?

### NOTES:

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## What Are the Answers?

1. Allow the group to discuss.
2. Forgiveness.
3. We have experienced Christ's forgiveness for all of our sins. Having been forgiven a great debt gives us the wherewithal to forgive lesser debts.
4. When one is stingy with forgiveness, it suggests that we have not received forgiveness, do not fully appreciate all we've been forgiven from or are not experientially feeling forgiven.
5. Confessing our sins to God and others.
6. Allow the group to discuss.
7. Obediently stepping out and taking the risk that Jesus will do what He promised.
8. Allow the group to discuss.
9. Allow the group to discuss. Getting to know Jesus better by spending time in His word can give us the confidence that he is trustworthy. Also, past experiences of seeing Him prove faithful are huge. Simply taking a faith risk and watching Him show up will increase our ability to trust Him.
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. We are always at risk of becoming prideful.
12. Allow the group to discuss. Seeing Jesus' supreme humility always motivates me to stop thinking things are beneath me.
13. Thankfulness.
14. Allow the group to discuss.
15. We see that rather than in a nation, it is in the heart and lives of individuals where this new kingdom will grow. A heart that manifests these qualities identifies a heart where Jesus is reigning as King.
16. Allow the group to discuss.
17. Allow the group to discuss. Encourage them to go below the surface to the heart issues that make them unwilling to obey and point them to Jesus' grace for them.

## Memorize

The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.

**Luke 17:20-21**



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