

Characteristics of a Kingdom Revolutionary: Session #3 - Initiative

Session Objective: This lesson is all about action, or more accurately initiative. Kingdom revolutionaries initiate, they make contact, they love without cause. This week's lesson is all about beginning. It is about following Jesus by moving into the lives of others, rather than simply letting life pass you by! The application of this lesson is for your youth ministry to consider what initiatives you could begin in your church or community. What is God calling some of them as individuals to do? How about as an entire ministry...is there some initiative that God is leading you all towards?

Session Intro: A Kingdom revolutionary doesn't wait for life to come their way, rather, they move with force into the world. In Matthew 11:12 Jesus says, "the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful people lay hold of it." That is a pretty tough quote to swallow for nice Canadian Christians who always defer to others – in everything!

Often it seems in Christian circles, we are told to wait to act until we know what God wants us to do, but often we know what God wants us to do, and do nothing anyway. A youth pastor once told a student, "it is much easier to guide a moving arrow than to try to get it into a bow". His point – God's people need to take initiative. We aren't to act impetuously like King Saul, or to act out of anger like Moses or sinfully like Samson, but we are to act out of a strong awareness and conviction that followers of Jesus are a people of action.

Minimum Prep: Chapter 2 of **Seizing Your Divine Moment**, also read through the following questions and prepare your discussion follow up.

Extended Prep: Lots of places for a white board/butcher paper/overhead. You will also need envelopes, paper and pens for your students.

Session Outline

Small Group Questions:

1. **Can you remember a time in your life when you clearly saw an opportunity to do something good – to help someone, to make a difference, to stop an injustice, but you let it slip away? Why do you think you didn't take the initiative?**

Leader Say: *One of the primary evidences of spiritual maturity is the ability to distinguish between good and evil, or to know the difference between right and wrong. Where there is freedom, we must initiate, where there are boundaries we must honour them.*

Leader Note: Summarize the story in I Samuel 13, and remind your students about the difference between King Saul and Jonathan's actions (this is an important reminder, particularly since some of your students may have missed week one).

- 2. How can you discern where there is freedom and where there are boundaries? How do you determine what is right and what is wrong in terms of your behaviour and initiative?**

The students will give a number of good options – “talk to my parents”, “discuss with godly friends”, “ask my youth pastor”, but ultimately we want them to also have the more complete answer – “seek God’s perspective through scripture, prayer and godly counsel.”

Read Psalm 37:4

- 3. What does this verse tell us about discerning God’s will?**

Leader Say: *The more you love God, the more deeply you care about life, The more deeply you care about people, the more deeply you are committed to making a difference in people’s lives.*

- 4. Augustine once said, “Love God and do whatever you want” – How and why is this statement true?**

Leader Note: As we prepare for question 5 – do you have a personal story of initiative or being on the sidelines. Obviously disclosure of a sideline issue will best prepare the students for the next question.

- 5. Some people are initiators, others are sideliners...which one are you by nature? Why?** *(Of course only the initiators will put up their hands and answer this question!)*
- 6. Would it be a bad thing for you to begin practicing taking initiative? What would happen if you took initiative in some of the more neutral aspects of life (yet scary)? What would happen if you stepped away from the wall and asked that girl to dance? What if you stepped out of your practice room and onto the stage with your instrument? What if you began a conversation instead of waiting for your neighbour to take the initiative? What lessons would you learn from**

these kinds of actions? What are the potential risks or rewards for such actions?

Read James 2:14-18

- 7. Have you made the decision to live a life where you get your hands dirty or have you mostly taken a hands off approach? Why? What is difficult about living a “dirty hands life?”**
- 8. One author has said: “The more God blesses your life, the more you have to lose. The more you have to lose, the more you have to risk. The more you have to risk, the higher the price of following God. In some twisted way, God’s blessing to us can become our greatest hindrances” Do you believe this statement to be true? Discuss the different aspects of this Truth as a group – how can blessings be a hindrance? Are you more concerned about blessings or about following Jesus?**

Leader Note: There is so much that can be discussed here, that you can lead and direct. Think of the apostle Paul’s discussion of marriage – it is a similar concept – marriage is wonderful, but it is a distraction from serving God. Blessings – whether they be material, or academic or relational can all act as hindrances if we don’t stay in tune to God’s voice. Think of stories from your own past – how you made decisions based on a relationship you were in at the time, or how a home and mortgage can cause people to reconsider taking a risk to follow God, etc.

9. What do you do when you hear God’s voice leading you?

- 1. “What do you think is the long term results of hearing God ask something of you, but refusing to act on his leadings?”**
- 2. What kind of situations can you think of in your school, home or at work where you could “get your hands dirty” and really make a difference in the life of another person?**

Extended Prep: use a whiteboard for this question and begin to brainstorm with your group all the things that are possible for you as a person, or for your group collectively to do that would really make a difference.

Leader Note: Does this tie in at all? Many times we experience a powerful learning lesson and return to our social groupings “changed”. We have all seen a person return to tell us how we need to live life differently. I have seen a number of young people or young adults go away on mission, or to a year of Bible college, and come back demanding changes in their local church. Part of being an initiator is this truth, “If God has placed this passion on your heart, He

must want you to take responsibility to make sure it happens". McManus indicates how this protects us from the misdirections of sideliners, or how we as leaders can minimize the negative impact of those who come to us demanding change. How can you help your students to realize that God is going to place things on their hearts that they must take responsibility for – not you, not the pastor, not the deacons, but they must start...

- 3. End your time together by taking some initiatives. Some things will be personal decisions, while others will be corporate. How could you personally and your youth ministry corporately take the initiative on some of the things you have brainstormed...How can you love people more fully? How can you impact your homes, church, school, neighbourhood or places of work?**

Extended Prep: Take some time to make these decisions...seal them with prayer...think through a follow-up method – one idea is to have each student write out a decision they have made. Give them each an envelope, have them place their decision in the envelope, seal it, and self-address it. Collect all the letters. Two weeks later, mail that letter out...each person will receive a timely reminder of the decisions they made just two and a half weeks back.

Or what about if together you planned to follow up on one corporate initiative – to bless your church, community, or whatever ideas you may have generated. Spending time with your students planning this opportunity could be a powerful time of learning and growth for your students.

Comments and Feedback

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.