

Characteristics of a Kingdom Revolutionary:

Session #7 - Advances the Kingdom

Session Intro: God desires to work through his people. It began with Abraham, but throughout the Bible we read again and again of God's plan for his people. Israel was called to worship God alone...to be a beacon of righteousness in a dark world, and to be the nation through which God blessed all nations.

God wants his people to move into the world. To "advance". Too often people seem to think that they must wait for a clear sign from God. In the confusion, it seems best to wait for clarity. But is that God's way? Consider the plans of God – do they bring clarity? When God asked Noah to build an ark in the desert, was their clarity? When God told Abraham to take his only son to an altar for sacrifice, was there clarity? When God told Gideon to leave only a handful to fight against a mighty army, was that clarity? Or how about telling a rag tag group of ex-slaves that they were to inherit a land presently occupied by giants? March around a city 7 times, doesn't seem like solid military strategy, and in the story of this series – Jonathan vs. the Philistines, climbing up an embankment with just your armor bearer to face many men, that isn't clear – in fact we could argue, it isn't sane.

And yet, in all these cases, God was calling his people to advance. They didn't have all the answers, they had little to no control over the outcome, but God did!

Session Objective: This lesson is a focus on our movement forward. We begin to answer the question, "how can I discern God's will for my life?"

Preparation: This session only requires the leader to read through the session, think about the questions, and provide an atmosphere for dialogue and inquiry. In any situation a white board/butcher paper or overhead would be helpful. Read the scripture passages ahead of time.

Session Outline

Small Group Questions:

Read Philippians 4:8-9

- 1. What does Paul tell us is God's will for our thought life?**
- 2. Do you think we need to ask God, "what is your will that I think about, or what is your will that I keep my mind away from?"**

Leader Say: *So many times we find Christians – young and old immobilized by a seemingly spiritual question, They are asking, “what is God’s will for my life?” One author says, “think any go thoughts you want; do any God deed you desire to do. Do it boldly, whatever the cost.*

- 3. There are certain things you don’t need permission to do. Together make a list of all the things you don’t have to ask God permission if you can do them...**

Leader Note: *A white board/butcher paper/overhead will help with this exercise, your students should start flowing with ideas: love your neighbour, love your enemy, feed the poor, care for the lonely, stand up for justice, do what’s right, be holy, ... The list goes on.*

- 4. If we have such a large list of things we don’t need permission to do, why do you think we spend so much time waiting around to get permission from God – or as we put it “a sense of where he is leading us?”**

Leader Say: *The truth is that many times we don’t want to do what God wants us to do. We know the truth, but are looking for a way out. Sometimes we even cloak our sin in spirituality. Consider the situation of a person in the midst of divorce who says, “God had one person in mind for me as my wife, unfortunately I didn’t listen to him, and I married the wrong person, but now I have found the right person, and I feel God’s blessing in this relationship” - Do you see anything wrong with this statement? (Have your students discuss this!)*

The truth is, pretty much everything is wrong with that statement. It goes against everything we know about the character and person of God. We know he hates divorce. We know that adultery is a sin. We know that God is involved in a mysterious way in the sexual union of a man and woman. The truth is - “when you married your wife, she became God’s will for you.” It doesn’t matter how long this person sits and tries to “discern the will of God in this situation” – because God has clearly revealed his will, the person simply did not want to accept it, and so he waited, asking, “Is that your final answer?”

Read Judges 6:11-16

- 5. What does God clearly tell Gideon he is going to do through him? Was God vague in any way, was there any room for doubt?**

Read Judges 6:18

- 6. What was Gideon’s response to God’s promise that he would use Gideon to save the Israelites?**

Leader Say: *Christians for centuries have used Gideon's fleece as a starting point for "discerning God's will" – but if you read the story carefully you can only assume that God was humouring Gideon with incredible patience. God had clearly and strongly answered the question Gideon was asking, before Gideon asked it – "Yes I want to use you to bring about the rescue of my people from the Midianites" I believe that Gideon's fleece is no model for our behaviour, it is in fact a lesson in God's patience despite our unbelief. God had clearly called Gideon, but instead of acting, Gideon stalled.*

Read Acts 16:6-10

- 7. Was Paul wrong to make plans and start on a journey to Mysia? Should he have consulted with God first?**
- 8. In this situation, God redirected Paul's journey. If you and I are in close contact with God, what does that tell us about how we should move forward in our faith journey?**

Leader Say: *We need to remain closely connected to our Lord, but we can also have confidence that if we are walking in his mandates – love others, be his witness, make disciples, serving others....we can move forward in all of these areas, confident that we are fulfilling the will of God, unless he clearly redirects you or I towards other tasks. It takes a sensitive spirit to know that God is redirecting, but Paul's story is great encouragement that the time is now, for us to move forward - in light of God's word spoken to us through scripture. One author has said, "Those who seize their divine opportunities move with the God-given "yes" unless God says "no". They work from the go and wait for the stop." Sounds a lot like the actions of the apostle Paul in Acts 16 doesn't it? God is calling us into action. He has given us the Bible. But we must understand the Bible is not a road map, it is more of a compass.*

- 9. What is the difference between a map and a compass, how is one more useful than the other?**

Leader Say: *A road map tells you exactly where to go, and where to turn, but a compass keeps you headed in the direction you need to go, it keeps you pointed straight. God's word is a compass that fills us in on the values, virtues and truths about God and how to live as a Kingdom revolutionary. His word gives us many directives and a clear vision for life. But the Bible certainly doesn't answer all of our questions. However as we have talked about over the course of this session, there is incredible latitude and freedom for the follower of Jesus. We know God's heart, we know God's law, so often the answer is for us to begin moving, focused on our desire to be led by God as we make decisions, and serve Him.*

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.