



NAC-USA
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE

The
Kingdom
of God

The
temptations
of Christ

The Lord's
Prayer
and the
Kingdom

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

2015

January

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Session 1: The Kingdom of God

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

Discussion Questions:

When and where in your life do you feel the Kingdom of God is most "near at hand?"

Picture yourself as a Jewish person living at the time of Jesus and hearing these teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. How would they compare with your understanding of God and His plans for Israel?

Would you be disappointed in Jesus' message? Would you be confused? Would you be hopeful? Why?

NAC Catechism

6.2.3.4 The Kingdom of God

The image of the kingdom of God refers to the reign of God in His church. Jesus described the kingdom of God in many parables and with various emphases (Matthew 13). The "kingdom of God" can, for example, represent:

- Jesus Christ, the present Lord Himself (Luke 17:21),
- His church, which is present on earth,
- the kingly reign which will be revealed at the marriage feast in heaven (Revelation 19:6-7),
- the kingdom of peace which Jesus Christ, the returning Lord, will establish on earth,
- the eternal kingly reign of God in the new creation, and
- the realm of eternal life.

In John 3:3,5 it states that the kingdom of God is only accessible to those who have been born to God: "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." To "see the kingdom of God" means to see God face to face. For the firstlings, this will already come to pass on the day of the Lord (1 John 3:2): they will see the realm of eternal life.

How can you grow into a person who reflects the character described in the Beatitudes?

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born." Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." John 3: 1-5

Discussion Questions:

What does being "born again" mean to you?

Do you feel that you have been or need to be born again?

As you mature in your relationship with Jesus Christ, do you feel you are advancing the Kingdom of God?

Is there anything about the Kingdom of God that would cause you to not want to work to be there?

Additional Content

A shortcut to glory

It was on a high mountain that Jesus renounced the devil, who falsely offered Him authority over the world. You will find a prallel finale at the end of the Gospel of Matthew. After renouncing all temptations and thoroughly obeying God's will, the resurrected Son of God meets His disciples on a high mountain and says that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him.

Discussion Questions:

Have you been tempted in this way? Think of a moment that you were tempted to deny the call of God when in a weakened state or when your survival was in question or that of your loved ones.

Do we find ourselves continually asking (tempting) God to prove His love for us?

Do we condition our continuing belief in Him on another round of proof?

Why does God so often put us on a path that requires humility to please Him?

Do you wish that our church would be more impressive?

Have you ever hoped for God to visibly intervene in a situation in your life to prove that you are right or to correct an injustice?

Do you think that we can receive eternal glory without first overcoming ourselves in a similar way to Christ?

How does being reborn of water and spirit assist you in battling against temptation?

How do temptations affect your relationship with Jesus?

How does this shape our immediate expectations for our life in Christ? Please share your thoughts on this subject with one another.

Session 3: The Lord's prayer and the Kingdom

NAC Catechism

12.1.17 The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is a valuable legacy which Jesus gave to those who believe in Him. With it the Son of God gave an example of how we are to pray to the Father in heaven.

This prayer of the Son of God has been handed down in one version containing five pleas (Luke 11:2-4) and in a more detailed version containing seven pleas (Matthew (6: 9-13).

Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...

Discussion Questions:

Please share with the group, how do you personally remind yourself to keep the reign of God alive in your life?

How do you discover the will of God? How do you know it's Him speaking to you?

NAC Catechism

12.1.7.2.3

Your kingdom come

The kingdom of God has already dawned in Christ and is present in His church. "Your kingdom come" means that the Lord is to become more and more perceptible in the congregation.

Beyond that, these words allude to the revelation of the future kingdom of God, which will begin with the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-7). In this respect, the plea that the kingdom of God may come refers first and foremost to the return of Christ to take home His bride. However, this plea reaches even further into the future: after the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, the Son of God will establish His kingdom of peace on earth, in which the gospel will be preached to all human beings. The kingdom of God will appear in perfect glory and endure forever once God has created a new heaven and a new earth after the Last Judgement.

12.1.7.2.7

And do not lead us into temptation

With the plea not to be led into temptation, believers beseech God to help them resist sin with all their strength. Furthermore, they ask that the trials of faith may not be too severe and that they may be protected from many of the temptations of Satan. However, God will permit temptations in the form of trials in order to give believers a chance to prove themselves in faith. (Example - Genesis 22:1-18)

God watches over our faithfulness to Him so that it does not break: "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Lead us not into temptation, Deliver us from the evil one...

Discussion Questions:

How do you identify the influence of evil in your life?

How do you picture yourself actively renouncing the reign of sin and replacing it with the reign of God?

Besides prayer, where do you get the strength to make this decision and to act on it?

For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever...

Discussion Questions:

Do you sometimes feel that evil is winning in the world?

How do you reconcile this with the absolute victory of Christ over sin?

What effect does this have on your faith and hope in God's promise to you of eternal life?

Apostle James wrote as follows concerning the temptation to sin: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God': for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:13-15). This reinforces the certainty that our heavenly Father - who through the Holy Spirit moves us to every good work and provides us with the strength to overcome our imperfections through the body and blood of Jesus - never tempts us to sin, but tests us to prove our faith.

12.1.7.2.8

But deliver us from the evil one

The plea "But deliver us from the evil one" expresses the wish that God may deliver us from tribulations that lead to sin. Furthermore, the evil from which we ask God to deliver us consists of everything that emanates from Satan. Ultimately this is a plea for final liberation from the evil one himself.

Through His sacrifice, Christ made redemption possible. In the Son of God we have "redemption..., the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14). Redemption is an ongoing process, which ultimately leads to perfect liberty from all of Satan's claims. Only then will our redemption be complete.

12.1.7.2.9

Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever...

These pleas are followed by an expression of praise to God, where-in the Most High is given the honor and glory He is due. He, the Lord of His kingdom, assists the believers with His power, so that they may share His glory in all eternity. This will be fulfilled for the bridal congregation at the return of Christ (Colossians 3:4).

Principles of the Kingdom

Love God with all your heart, soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself.

A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Judge not, lest you be judged.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

Discussion Questions:

Currently, how does living your life according to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission expand the Kingdom of God? (Discuss each individually)

Do your own internal belief systems, customs, or culture conflict with the Laws or principles of the Kingdom?

Which of these principles has been the hardest for you to incorporate into your life?

Do you think these laws are negotiable?
