

September 18, 2011

Week One Small Group Instructions for *The Kingdom of God*

We recognize that most of your group members will not be receiving their books until this first meeting, so we will spend a little more time this week reading aloud some of the key passages from the book. Please encourage the group to read the next chapter as reading homework for your group's next meeting. **Please note that there are answers to the questions in the back of the book for leaders to reference throughout the study.**

(If your group is brand new, consider beginning with this introduction question.) Share your name, birthplace, how long at the Chapel and greatest cooking flop. **Open answer.**

1. Begin with question 1 on page 17, "As we begin this study, how would you currently define the kingdom of God, or try to explain it to someone who has never heard of the concept?"
2. When you think of a Medieval Kingdom what comes to mind besides a ruling King? **Servants, subjects, Rules, Realm/Boundaries, enemies, symbols like flags, etc.**
3. Ask a few people to help in reading the section, "Recapturing the Vision" on page 12 and 13. Notice the two contrasting views regarding the Kingdom of God that the author challenges as both incorrect; the Kingdom is only a future reality, the Kingdom is completely a present reality brought about by political force.
4. Read Matthew 3:1-3 and 4:17. What does it mean to repent? **Repent is to turn around (turn back to the Lord), to change our mind (to rethink and think rightly that Jesus is God the Son and remove ourselves from the throne of our life and have Jesus be the King of our life).** What is the significance of repentance in the arrival of a new Kingdom? **We must rethink our own lives and the overall world systems in order to receive this new King. We must be willing to turn from our own thoughts and our own ways, in order to submit to this new king.**
5. Read the section, "What is a Kingdom?" on page 19.
6. Lead your group through the section, Discovery Questions, on page 22-23. Look over those passages and note what Jesus had to say about the Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of Heaven, they are used interchangeably.)
7. What did Bill suggest are the two most common misunderstanding regarding Heaven? **When we can go-now, not just when we die; and the location, it is not up somewhere, it is within our hearts if we have received Christ.**
8. Ask someone to read the last passage on page 21. The paragraph begins with "We can make this personal by saying..." Turn to page 25 and look at question 5. Restate the question this way, "Do you think it is possible to bring God's kingdom to the areas of personal life, family, church and civic community?"
9. Continue to make some applications by asking questions 6, 7, and 8 on page 26.

Ask the group to consider rereading the Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 for next week's meeting. Close by asking for any prayer requests and praying for the group as the leader, or praying together as a group.