

Matthew 6:33 (ESV) ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:33 (NLT2) ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

Matthew 6:33 (TLB) ³³ and he will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to.

Hebrews 11:6 (NLT2) ⁶ And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV) ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

1. God's agenda, God's purposes are God's call, God's direction on your life, on

my life. God has a particular drumbeat, a particular plan for your life, that is uniquely yours.

God's call on your life is different from the call of the person sitting next to you. God has uniquely gifted you to carry out the ministry of Jesus in your particular setting. Every Christian is called into God's army. God is our commander. We are His soldiers. We are members of God's kingdom. Jesus is our King, and we live to carry out the orders of our King, Jesus. **2. We are**

children of the Light, God's light, and we do our work for God often in dark places so

God's Kingdom will expand wherever we are and wherever we go. God's light blazes

through you. The problem is people often prefer the darkness and do not want us to shine so brightly for Jesus. God's light has a way of exposing where people are walking in darkness away from the Light, away from Jesus.

Every baptized, born-again person is God's child. Every baptized and born-again person belongs to God's Kingdom, the Kingdom of God. Jesus gave His life for you so you will give your life to Him and live for Him in His Kingdom. He died so that you will never die. He died so you will have life and life in abundance. God's love and grace has saved you from the pit of hell, from the kingdom of darkness, and brought you into the Kingdom of Light. He has wiped away all of your sins and empowered you for service in the Kingdom of God.

So, what is the Kingdom of God? **3. God's Kingdom is God's reign, God's rule in your life and the life of the Church.** The church on earth is not God's Kingdom. There are non-believers in the church, children of darkness who have chosen to reject God's saving grace. From God's perspective there is only one Church, the true Church, made up of true believers.

The Kingdom of God is God's rule, God's reign in your life. We are one with Christ. That oneness with Christ is so profound that our lives are hidden with God in Christ Jesus. That oneness with Christ is so profound, that the true Church here on earth is completely united to God's Church in heaven. This is called the church Universal, the church Catholic. Every believer in God, since Adam and Eve and until Jesus comes again is one with Jesus and yes, we are all family, blood related by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. This is who we are and Whose we are.

You know with absolute certainty who your Father is. God the Father is here, and He adores you. God the Son is here, and He is moving among us. God the Holy Spirit is here helping us, comforting us, teaching us everything that God wants us to know and empowers us to give it all away. We are in this together. What a privilege to be a significant part of God's Kingdom. And His Kingdom will never end. God reigns for all eternity and we will reign with Him the Bible tells us in eternity.

Please let me give to you a few ways, a few insights into Kingdom living and thinking. Your mind is an important part of God's Kingdom as God transforms your mind from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of His Light. God has thoughts, ways in which He wants you to think. We are not robots. We can deny His Truth, deny His Light. God does not force us to follow Him or His ways. We can stray as far away from God and His Kingdom as we choose. Sometimes the darkness becomes more enjoyable, more luring than God's Light. On the other hand, God has His ways of bringing us back to God, back to the Light, and He always accepts us back no matter how far we have drifted into the darkness. The blood of Jesus is right there to

wipe away our sin filled habits. God's Light rids us of the darkness that was so alluring. The deeds of darkness lead to death. Walking in the Light of Jesus brings new life. It is called Kingdom living.

4. Kingdom living always involves putting God first in your life. Kingdom living means you live every day seeking God, seeking to carry out His will for you. Seeking God means you deliberately spend time using your brain to hear from God what He wishes you to hear, what God wishes to reveal to you for that given time or day. Yes, God is very much alive. God rewards those who diligently seek Him. Yes, God is here. God has truth to invade your thought life and transform the way you think and what you think about. Seeking God is knowing God personally and wanting God's thoughts to be on your mind. God will not force you to listen. But God's forces are there, the Holy Spirit to be your Helper, your Teacher, your Guide, your Instructor, your Tutor and God's Presence will never leave you nor forsake you nor give up on you. This is Kingdom thinking which leads to Kingdom living.

From time to time I have been in worship services where there has been a special sense of God's Presence in our midst. I think of our former musician Jiyoung. God has greatly gifted her. When she plays, she is serving Christ. When she plays, her love for Jesus is felt by the listeners. She is playing for and to the glory of God. I sense God's Kingdom in our midst as Jiyoung uses her God given gifts for Gods' purposes. God is here and moving among us.

I have been in Bible studies where for reasons only God knows, God's truth is being spoken, listened to, and understood on deeper levels than normal. God has given ears to hear His Truth. You sense something special happening for God's Kingdom is in your midst.

I have heard your testimonies of experiencing the Kingdom of God. You were in people's homes where the topic of conversation has turned to Jesus, the Bible, and specific experiences of ministry where God has used you to change people's lives for the better. The discussion has something more going on than just words being spoken. God's love and truth is so very present.

God's Kingdom is in your midst. God's will is being done. It's why we are put here on earth, to live in the Kingdom of God, seeking His Kingdom first and not our own sinful and selfish ways.

I have received quiet inner promptings to do specific acts of ministry and not really wanting to do them. The inner prompting grows more intense, and I know I have no choice but to obey or disobey. Disobedience is never good. Upon following the inner prompting, one senses that God's will is being done for it is all done in and with the Kingdom of God. Thursday night driving home from church I saw a police car and he had his radar gun on me. I pulled over into the gas station, got out of my pickup and walked over to him. He opened his passenger window and put his hand over to where I could grab it and we prayed. It was easy. No big deal at all. Peaceful would be a good word to describe it for God is a God of peace. God's Kingdom was very present in our midst.

On the other hand, I have tried to do things for God without God's prompting, without God's leading, without God's help, completely on my own, in the flesh and not the spirit and does it ever go from bad to worse. "O, God, please forgive me."

Kingdom living includes your finances. It is not so much that you feel an obligation to give your tithes and offerings to the church and other Christian ministries you choose to support. Putting God first, seeking God's Kingdom and wanting God's kingdom to expand, it is a privilege to give of your finances where you see God's work being done, work that we ourselves are not able to do. When you support prison ministry, that ministry is all about the Kingdom of God advancing in prison. Giving of your tithers and offerings to support Pastor Shields and Bob Yarbrough's mission trips to South Africa impacts more lives than you or I could possibly impact for the Kingdom of God. Supporting the Sunday School is a privilege to support. Jesus invites the children into Sunday school and tells us to keep bringing them to Jesus. It is Kingdom living." "Bring the children unto me," Jesus says.

You have seen a loved one falling into horrible addictions such as drugs, alcohol, sexual sins, and more. It breaks your heart. Their lives are on the line if they do not get help. Sadly, some do die in their addictions. On the other hand I have heard your stories of your loved ones where something happened and the person was delivered. I recently spoke to a recovering alcoholic who has now been dry quite some time. His life hit rock bottom. Through the prayers of faithful Christians, by the grace of God, the addiction was broken, and he has brand new life. Attending AA meetings, being in a 12-step program is so good. There is power in God's Kingdom to deliver you from the darkness, to deliver you from the power of sin to a brand-new life in Christ. The past is forgiven for God's Kingdom has rescued you; you put God first. God's Kingdom is more powerful than the kingdom of darkness.

Friends, the darkness of this world can be so draining, discouraging, frightening, and depressing. If all we do is look at the darkness our lives can only go one direction and it is down into a pit. On the other hand, as you walk in the Light, putting God first, doing away with sin and living rightly before God, God promises to bring good things your way. **5. God gives you eyes to see how truly blessed you are beyond measure. The Kingdom of God is in our midst.** Amen and Amen.