

# Kingdom Living Today

*Illustrating the WAY of God's Kingdom for a Modern World*

## 4. The Spirit of Truth Guides You Into All Truth

“THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN ME  
TALK WITH EACH OTHER, AND I THE  
LORD LISTEN AND HEAR.  
THEY RENEW THEIR COVENANT IN ME  
IN THEIR HOMES AND EAT TOGETHER  
WITH GLAD AND SINCERE HEARTS.”

Brett was awakened from a pleasant nap by the phone ringing next to him. When he answered, an excited voice greeted him. “Hi Brett, this is Harry. How are you?”

The young man responded eagerly, “Hey, Harry, I’ve missed you! Lacie and I have kept you and Jan in our prayers every day. What’s it been, about three weeks since we’ve seen you both?”

“Yeah, about that.” Harry paused, then went on, “Jan and I have something important to talk over with you and Lacie. Is there a chance we can get together soon?”

Delighted, Brett responded warmly, “Sure! I’ll talk with Lacie and then she and Jan can set up a convenient time for us to meet.”

“That’ll be great, Brett. We’re looking forward to seeing you both!”

+ + + + +

The two couples hugged like long lost friends, then made their way into the dining room of Brett and Lacie’s modest home. They’d hardly sat down when Lacie blurted out, “I’m so glad you’re here but I really want to know why you’re both so excited!”

Harry and Jan started to speak at once then laughed. “You go first, Harry,” said his wife with a grin. Harry leaned forward. “It has to do with what’s happened since Brett encouraged me to download *The Gospel of the Covenant* around the time you two left our congregation. Jan and I started to get up early like you said you’d been doing together. (Psalms 5:3) The more we read that article and the more we looked into the Bible, we became convinced that the ‘gospel’ we’d believed was far from the truth!”

Brett and Lacie’s eyes met as they nodded in agreement. Then, looking directly at the other couple, Brett answered, “We know what you mean. That’s exactly what we concluded about what we used to think was the gospel as well. Now we see how man-centered and self-serving it had been. A false gospel has nothing to do with the reconciling work of Jesus so we can love God and live in ongoing, obedient trust by His Spirit.”

Lacie added, “I can’t begin to tell you how great it is to now know we have a Kingdom purpose in our lives rather than just meeting our own interests through activities and programs at the church building!”

Jan had felt the weight of the decision they’d made even more than Harry had. “Then we’ve probably followed in your footsteps...” She paused a moment then announced as her face brightened, “Harry and I have embraced the *Gospel of the Covenant* together! We aren’t the same two people you knew three weeks ago!”

**Restoration Ministries International ([restorationministries.org](http://restorationministries.org))**

*Sharing the Hebraic Foundations of the Earliest Followers of Jesus  
Preparing Today's Followers of Jesus to Fulfill Their Part in His Kingdom*

Lacie jumped up from her seat and reached out to Jan. “This calls for hugs all around!” After they’d all enjoyed warm hugs of affirmation Harry continued, “The toughest part for us was going to the leadership and telling them we needed to leave so we could pursue everything our Lord desires of us.” He sighed and glanced away briefly. “I wish I could tell you the meeting went well.”

Jan picked up that thought. “As they listened to us, we could feel their attitude harden. One of the men actually said, ‘I suppose you’re going to join Brett and Lacie because we’re *not good enough* for you.’ That crack really hurt me!”

Brett sensed they were still smarting from that encounter and gave them some perspective that he and Lacie had received from the Holy Spirit in prayer. “It’s not so much that you were looking *to leave* as you were *pressing forward* for more of God in your life!(Philippians 3:12-14) You aren’t rejecting people. You’re just responding to your hunger to experience a relationship with God that the Bible promises.”

Encouraged by Brett’s insight, Harry nodded. “I agree. And our Lord has certainly been feeding that hunger with wonderful spiritual truth.(John 6:35) We’re definitely not the same!”

Jan joined in eagerly. “I’ll say! There’s such intensity of purpose in my heart that I’d never known before we entered our Father’s Covenant.(2 Timothy 1:9) The closest experience I’ve ever had to this is when my Dad was walking me down the aisle and I saw Harry standing there waiting for me. With my whole heart I wanted to be his.”

Lacie chimed in, “Wow, Jan, you pictured what resonates in our hearts, too!”

As the ladies headed for the kitchen to bring out the meal, Harry’s face grew somewhat somber. “Brett, I need to tell you that as Jan and I were going through the *Gospel of the Covenant* together, I had to fight off anger.”

Startled, Brett asked, “Anger? In what way?”

“I was angry that I’d been duped into believing that I was a Christian by just agreeing with some verses spoken by a pastor! The motto of the congregation seemed to be “Once saved, always saved,” like it was a bumper sticker slogan. But I sure didn’t see very many people living as though loving and obeying God was their highest priority!” He shook his head sadly. “I guess I thought that since I was “saved”, then that’s all there was to it. The idea of growing into Christ’s likeness never even occurred to me since no one ever addressed it.”

Brett nodded appreciatively. “I know what you mean, Harry. I used to be self-satisfied with just attending services and taking part in activities. But I’d never heard how critical sanctification was and how God was calling me to work out my salvation during my earthly pilgrimage.”(Philippians 2:12)

“Well,” admitted Harry, somewhat calmer, “before I embraced the stipulations of our Father’s Covenant I had to confess my anger before Him. Now I can tell you with all my heart that I really want to become more and more like Jesus!”(2 Corinthians 3:18)

Hearing Harry’s heart, Brett smiled softly. “I used to have twinges of resentment that I’d been fed a lie. But then I realized that the folks who proclaimed me ‘saved’ were prisoners of deceit themselves. I began to pity them rather than blame them.”

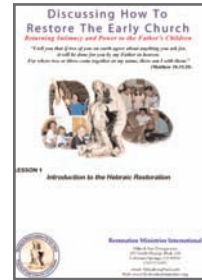
Returning with steaming plates, Lacie piped up, “I bet each of us could look back and be tempted by regret or hard feelings. But instead,” she added, “let’s keep encouraging each other *daily*.(1 Thessalonians 5:8-11) As Jesus said, “*No one who puts his*

*hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*"(Luke 9:62)

Jan set her fork down and asked with a shy smile, "Does this mean that we're going to fellowship together?"

Harry turned toward his wife with a grin. "I was thinking the same thing. Brett, what do you think about that idea?"

"I'd like that very much," he responded. Then, hesitating a moment, Brett went on, "But before we decide, we need to think about what *God* intends for fellowship to be. When I was at the Restoration Ministries website I noticed their *Discussing How to Restore the Early Church* button. There are 50 lessons there, but Lesson 45 caught my eye, especially two subjects: 'Living Righteously Through Repentance and Confession', and 'Upholding Communal Righteousness.'"



Harry glanced at him thoughtfully. "I've never even heard anything about those topics. What did you discover?"

"I downloaded the entire lesson and Lacie and I read it and discussed it. It was news to us that the primary reason the first followers of Jesus fellowshiped in homes was to uphold communal righteousness among each other."(Psalms 26:4,5; Proverbs 3:33; 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11)

Lacie added, "They wanted to live righteously before their Father *so their prayers would be answered!*(Psalms 17:1; 34:14) The earliest followers of Jesus were Jewish, and they knew from their history, such as with Achan's theft(Joshua 22:20) and Korah's rebellion (Numbers 26:10), that God holds the whole community accountable for one person's unconfessed sin(Numbers 16:22)."

"Because of Achan's sin," Brett noted grimly, "36 Hebrew warriors were killed by the people of Ai. And because of Korah and his rebellious cohorts, not only their households but 250 other men were consumed by the Lord's fire. There was a real sense of communal responsibility and accountability from God's perspective."

"Being righteous in God's sight entails not only the righteousness we're given in Christ," responded Lacie. "There's also the way we *live* in Him by obedient trust, whether we continue to stay repentant or not.(1 John 3:7) Father God doesn't answer the prayers of the unrepentant, those who live unrighteously.(Psalms 66:18,19; Proverbs 15:29) So the early followers of Jesus met in homes together to help each other remain repentant."(James 5:19,20)

"I get it," said Harry. "If they confessed their sins one to another and turned away from them, their prayers would be answered just like with the prophet Elijah!" (James 5:16-18)

Brett joined in, pointing to the Bible on the counter. "By the second chapter of Acts we find out they're meeting in homes. In fact, that was the pattern throughout the Newer Testament(Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Philemon 1:2), and look how our Father answered their prayers!"

Jan had just read the Book of Acts and chimed in, "Like how God got Peter out of prison when the believers gathered in the home of John Mark's mother to pray!(Acts 12:5)

Brett smiled. "After reading that lesson on home fellowships, I've spent some time praying about how Lacie and I would commit ourselves to others in fellowship.

**Restoration Ministries International (restorationministries.org)**

*Sharing the Hebraic Foundations of the Earliest Followers of Jesus  
Preparing Today's Followers of Jesus to Fulfill Their Part in His Kingdom*

If we're to fellowship together as extended spiritual family, Harry, I promise, with God's grace, that Lacie and I won't hold onto any unconfessed sin that would hinder our Father answering your prayers or ours."(Proverbs 15:8,9)

Harry beamed with gratitude. "I understand the importance of what you just vowed. Answered prayer is what Jan and I are longing for too." He paused for a moment. "Answered prayer sure got the first followers of Christ noticed. And answered prayer brings testimony to our Father's glory!"

Jan added with joy, "And when our Father answers our prayer according to His will, we know we're in fellowship with Him as family!"(Matthew 12:50)

Brett affirmed his friends. "You've summed that up well."

Harry put his hand over his wife's and proclaimed so the hosts of heaven could hear, "Then on behalf of us both, I promise with God's grace that we won't hold onto any unconfessed sin that would hinder our Father from answering your prayers."

Gleaming with joy, Lacie spoke up. "I take it that we're now a fellowship of two homes that promise to maintain communal righteousness by His Spirit?"

Brett was first to respond, "That sure meets my heart and spirit!"

Harry and Jan laughed. "Ours too!!!"

Lacie turned to everyone. "If it seems good to you all, I think we should have communion together like the first followers of Jesus did in their homes." Everyone agreed.

As Lacie went into the kitchen for some bread and wine, Harry said, "*The Gospel of the Covenant* article calls communion the *renewal* of our Covenant with our Father. If that's so, then we should reaffirm the stipulations of our Father's Covenant. Brett, would you lead us in this?"

Brett nodded as his wife returned with the bread and cup. "Father, we want to renew our Covenant with you which the shed blood of Jesus made possible. First, please search our souls for any unconfessed sin. Let's each take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to show us anything we haven't confessed."(1 John 1:9; Daniel 9:4,5) After a pause, he went on. "Father, we want to affirm our love for you, and please, help each of us love you more."(Joshua 22:5)

At that, the others responded, "Amen!" Brett went on, "We affirm our heart's desire to obediently trust you in all things.(Deuteronomy 13:4) And this too we ask you to increase in us." The others nodded in agreement as Brett continued, "We also affirm our forceful conviction and steadfast determination to live in Covenant union with you, and to finish our pilgrimage on earth having completed the purposes you've prepared in advance for us to do.(Ephesians 2:10)

"And finally," Brett concluded, "we affirm our forgiveness of everyone who has ever hurt us.(Matthew 6:14) More than that, we pray blessings on them!"(Luke 6:28) Everyone murmured, "Amen."

Brett went on, "Father, we thank you that we can renew our Covenant with You through the body and blood of Jesus. Thank you for accepting His sacrifice that reconciles us with You." He then passed around the bread, declaring, "This is the body of Christ given for us"(Luke 22:19), then the cup to each person, affirming, "This is the new covenant in the blood of Christ." With grateful hearts, each thanked their Lord as the room resounded with joyful voices singing praise long into the evening.