

Kingdom Living Today

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

13. Are Your Goals and Values Noble Enough For Our Lord?

“ALWAYS BE CONSCIOUS THAT YOU ARE
REPRESENTING ME IN THIS WORLD.
SERVE ME WITH WHOLEHEARTED DEVOTION
AND WITH A WILLING MIND, FOR I
SEARCH EVERY HEART AND UNDERSTAND
EVERY MOTIVE BEHIND THE THOUGHTS”

“The other guys are at your regular table,” Keisha the waitress told Jack as he came into the restaurant. “Y’all have been coming here regularly, and I hear little snippets of what you’re talking about. Are you some kind of clergyman?”

Jack gave her a big smile and replied, “No, I’m just an older man who loves Jesus more than life itself. I’m helping these men and their families to live likewise.”

“So, you’re a Christian,” the waitress shot back.

“Far more than that,” Jack responded, delighted that she had engaged him in conversation. He’d been praying for this woman who always served the guys when they met for breakfast each week. As she listened with interest he continued, “‘Christian’ is a word used freely by many who neither love our Lord nor keep His commands. We intentionally follow our Lord and King, Jesus, because we love Him so much. That’s why we purpose each day to trust and obey Him with all our hearts.”(John 15:10)

This was a new concept for Keisha, one that was resonating in her hungry heart. “I can see that in you three men! There’s something different about you and the way you all talk.” She paused as if she was considering something. Then she spoke up hopefully. “My husband and are doing some spiritual soul searching as to what God wants for us. Would it be possible for us to get together with you?”

The smile on Jack’s face was so big it covered his face. He reached in his pocket and pulled out one of the cards he kept for encounters like this with his name, address and phone number. “If your husband agrees, call me. My wife Dee and I would love to share more with both of you.”

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As Jack made himself comfortable in the booth with Brett and Harry, they asked, “What was that all about with the waitress?”

Jack’s grin was anything but casual. “She wanted to know who we were.” Then, pausing for effect so he could drop the BIG bomb, “She asked if she and her husband could meet with me and Dee. They’re doing some soul searching....”

“Hallelujah!!!” an excited Brett let out, followed by a grateful “Amen!!!” from Harry.

Harry erupted with joyful emotion. “This Kingdom living is so exciting and purposeful! The conversations Jan and I have had since we talked about establishing biblical goals and values for our family have changed dramatically. Just yesterday she called me before going into the mall, asking me to pray with her that she’d have an opportunity to represent Jesus to someone.(Colossians 4:5) And it happened! But I’ll let her share it with you.”(Acts 4:20)

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

"Lacie and I are finding that same eagerness to be prepared for any encounters Father brings our way,"(1 Peter 3:15) Brett added with a grin. "Ever since we worked out our family's goals and values according to God's Word, and those of our home fellowship , we have such intense heart commitment to reflect Jesus to people in ways we'd never considered before... Like putting the garbage out for Mrs. Cohen next door. She's developed serious arthritis in her knees and doesn't get around much any more. Our kids are learning the joy of serving others without expecting to be paid!"

Harry added, "Jack, you helped Jan and me to really make a priority of discerning goals and values for our home, especially those that are noble enough for our Lord. Even Josh has been taking part in our discussions!" He chuckled, then went on, "Searching Scripture and praying together as a family each morning before I go to work has been one of those key values that keeps us looking for moments to reach out to others."

Jack was thrilled in his spirit over the events of the morning. "Kingdom talk" and testimonies from his brothers of how they're being guided to serve their King always fired him up. "Let's go over the goals and values for our fellowship family that we established together." He wanted to confirm that they were all in agreement so he recounted the four goals for them. "So do we all agree in our hearts that our fellowship family must spur each of us on to glorify our Father and Jesus through praise, worship and living testimony?"(1 Corinthians 10:31) The other two men nodded in determined affirmation.

"We also decided that our fellowship with each other must stimulate each of us to grow in Christ-likeness.(Philippians 2:12) Also, our fellowship and our mutual desire for communal righteousness needs to keep us living in repentance and pressing on toward the narrow gate.(Matthew 7:13) And finally, our fellowship as extended spiritual family must encourage each of us to reveal Jesus to the lost in our daily lives.(2 Corinthians 5:18,19)

The three men joined hands in agreement, so grateful that they and their families were equally committed with wholehearted determination to love and serve their Lord. As Keisha the waitress observed the men holding hands in prayer, she longed for the day her husband would be among those men.

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The late spring evening was filled with bird songs and crickets chirping by the lake. The four women chatted easily, taking in the refreshing warm breeze from the comfort of their lawn chairs.

"Lita, I'm so glad you were able to join us for our picnic," Lacie said as she, Lita, Dee and Jan watched the men fishing along the shore. The young woman glowed with joy at being included with her little girls.

"I can't begin to tell you how much your kindness has meant to me," she said with glistening eyes. "It's been hard trying to be both Mom and Dad while Juan's been in Afghanistan, but your friendship has been such a comfort."(2 Corinthians 1:5)

Lacie turned to Dee and Jan. "Lita has been such a delight to us! She's begun teaching Spanish to Kirk and Kelsey twice a week. Kelsey's become like a little mother to Lili and Ada, and Lita and I have had fun discussing God's perspective on raising children."

"This has been a wonderful opportunity for me, too," smiled Lita softly. "I love being with your family, and I know the girls love playing with Kelsey." She paused as she looked over to where Kelsey was playing games with the 3-year-old and 2 year old. "I'm

seeing improvement in their behavior, too. Your daughter is so good at gently guiding them and helping them learn self-control, and you've been such a help, Lacie."

Dee smiled as she took the young woman's hand. "We're so thankful to our Lord that He has brought you to us, Lita. We've been praying on Juan's behalf for Father to bring complete healing,^(Luke 9:11) and that your heart will be at rest as you wait for his return."^(Isaiah 26:3)

"Lita," said Lacie with a smile, "there's a story hour and craft time at the library for little ones on Tuesdays. Kelsey and I would love to bring Lili and Ada if you'd like a couple hours to relax."

Jan added, "I know of a great little thrift shop not far from here that's having a big sale. If you like, I can pick you up while the girls are at the library and we can get some summer clothes for your family!"

Lita smiled gratefully at these ladies who cared so much for both her practical needs as well as her spirit. What loving kindness God was showing her!^(Psalms 116:7) She couldn't wait to have Juan meet her new friends.

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"Grandpa, where did you learn so much about fishing?" Kirk asked as Jack hooked his third bass and handed the pole to the young boy to help him learn how to bring the fish in without losing it.

"Oh, my Dad was an excellent fisherman," smiled Jack, "and fishing was one of those things we really enjoyed doing together. As you're finding out, Kirk, there's a lot more to fishing than just tossing bait into the water."

"Would you show me more?" Kirk pressed. Brett, Harry and Josh were fishing alongside them and stopped to listen to what Jack would say. After all, Jack had already caught three beauties and the rest hadn't even gotten a bite!

Jack was delighted that everyone was so interested.^(Job 32:7) "The first secret in getting the fish's attention is in the tip action. You don't want to just toss your bait out and then reel it in. I caught each of these fish by wiggling the pole tip to make the bait look like it's injured. Even a bass that isn't very hungry can't pass up an 'injured' bait."

"That's all there is to it?" Harry looked dubious.

"Well, not exactly," chuckled the older man. "If the fish aren't biting on what you use first, be willing to change your bait until something does bite it." He paused for moment as he recalled a previous fishing trip. "Years ago I was invited to raft fish on the Yellowstone River in Montana. A couple of men wanted to repay a kindness I'd done for their families. I was using a Rapala lure and catching 20-inch brown trout. They were using a Panther Martin lure and catching little white fish. I offered them one of my lures but they refused."

Brett chortled. "Who'd want to catch crummy fish if you could snag some browns!"

Jack thoroughly agreed. "These guys just refused to change. One told me, 'Montanans *always* use Panther Martins.' They didn't catch one trout the whole trip, and I got 14! I felt really bad that they were so resistant to try something new, especially after seeing all the trout I'd caught."^(Proverbs 9:12)

"I can see how that would sadden you, Grandpa. You're always considering others first, and that's inspired me to change my focus from me to others,"^(Philippians 2:3,4) Josh flashed

a grin of gratitude for this wise man who cared for him like he was his own grandson.

“Thank you, Josh, for such kind words,” smiled Jack as he squeezed the young man’s shoulder, “but I haven’t always been this way. The Spirit of Jesus has changed me over the years to conform more and more to His love and motivation.”(2 Corinthians 3:18)

Just then the men heard the voice of a newcomer a few yards down the beach. It was a man with a boy about Kirk’s age. “I’m sorry, son. We forgot the bait and we don’t have anything else to put on our hooks.”

Kirk jumped in quickly, “Dad, can I share some of our worms with them?”(Hebrews 13:16)

Brett was delighted with his son’s generous suggestion. They walked over and introduced themselves, offering a handful of worms to the pair. The grateful father was thrilled, and the two men immediately found much in common as they talked and helped their sons fish. An hour passed.

Meanwhile, Harry put his hand on his son’s shoulder and turned to face Jack. “Josh asked Jan and me if he could be home schooled his last two years of high school. He’s been praying a lot about it and feels this is what God would want him to do before he leaves home.”(Genesis 18:19; Ephesians 6:4)

One glance at Josh’s face revealed his delight at this prospect. “Grandpa, I really want this. I know it means giving up the sports teams from school, but I want to be a man who lives for Jesus and His Kingdom. I want to be like you and the man I see my Dad becoming!”(1 Corinthians 11:1)

Jack was deeply moved by the determination in the young man’s voice. Delight filled his heart that Josh looked to him as his “Grandpa.”(Psalms 78:4-6)

Brett and Kirk returned just as Harry was querying Jack. “This home schooling stuff is new to us. Would you help us establish the biblical foundations for training our son at home?”(Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

Before Jack could respond, Brett broke in, “I must have missed something. What’s going on?”

“Josh asked to be home schooled,” Harry beamed.

“Wow, that’s great! My family would like to be part of whatever discussion you have on determining your biblical foundations. I’m not sure our own reasons are as complete as our Lord would have. Can we join you?”

Jack was glad that both men were so eager to work together with him on behalf of their families. “I’d be honored to help you. And, we can discuss any ways that Dee and I can be part of the hands-on training of your children in our Lord’s ways. We want to fulfill our role as spiritual grandparents for both your families.”

The father and son fishing nearby looked over and saw three men and two boys holding hands on the beach praying. They felt a spark of yearning for what those families had. Brett had given the man his phone number after he and Kirk had shared their faith along with the worms. The young Dad reached again for that scrap of paper, knowing he’d soon be making that call.