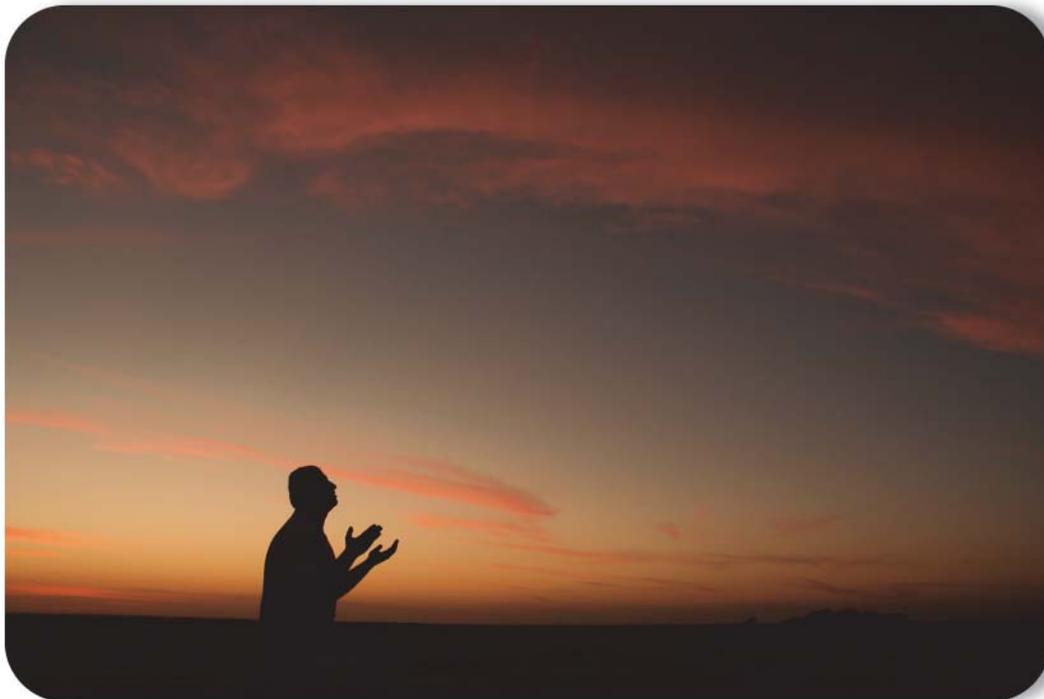


Prayer for the Kingdom

Parameters of Prayer 6



T. M. Moore

The Fellowship of Ailbe
A ReVision Study

Prayer for the Kingdom
Parameters of Prayer 6
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The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Welcome to *Prayer for the Kingdom*

Welcome to *Prayer for the Kingdom*, a guide to helping you seek the Kingdom of God through prayer. *Prayer for the Kingdom* is part six of our course, *The Parameters of Prayer*.

Jesus taught us to pray for the coming of His Kingdom – that it would come on earth in the way it presently obtains in heaven. But what does that mean? What should we seek as we pray for the coming of the Kingdom?

David’s prayer for his son, Solomon, while devoted to his reign, clearly has Messianic overtones, looking forward to the day of Christ and His Kingdom. We can use Psalm 72 to guide our own prayers, as well as our work of seeking the Kingdom of God in our own Personal Mission Fields.

These studies are designed for individual or group use. While you may derive much benefit from studying on your own, that benefit can be greatly enhanced by joining with a friend or a group to read, discuss, share, challenge, and pray for one another.

If you’re in a group, make sure you prepare for each study by reading through the lesson in advance and answering the questions in writing. Take turns leading your group. Let every member share in the privilege and responsibility of facilitating discussions. Group leaders should not feel like they have to “have all the answers.” Their task is simply to lead the group through the readings and questions, and to help everyone participate.

Visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to subscribe to our free instructional newsletters, including *ReVision*, *Scriptorium*, and *Crosfigell*, featuring insights from Scripture and our Celtic Christian forebears.

T. M. Moore
Principal

1 Above All, Righteousness!

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! Psalm 72.1, 2

Seeking the Kingdom

The Christian's highest priority in life is summarized by the Lord's command to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6.33). This mandate does not carry the sense of "Seek first the Kingdom, then you can get on with the rest of your life." The force of it is rather, "In everything you do, at all times and in every situation, seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

Every believer is aware of this concise but comprehensive instruction; many of us, however, have difficulty putting it into practice. What does it mean to "seek" the Kingdom and righteousness of God? How does one take up this calling and carry out this command?

Since I have addressed this question more broadly in other studies in this series, I won't rehearse all the duties and obligations which Kingdom-seeking imposes upon us. Instead, I want to focus on one aspect of this command which every believer can fulfill, every day of His life, and at various times throughout the day.

We can all pray for the coming of the Kingdom.

In fact, we know that Jesus taught us to pray this way in Matthew 6.10. "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." But how do we flesh out that prayer? Does God offer us any more substance to help us in seeking the Kingdom and righteousness of God through prayer?

A script for our Kingdom prayers

Indeed He does. Psalm 72 carries the superscription, "Of Solomon," as the English Standard Version has it. But it is a psalm of David, as verse 20 indicates, and I think the superscription – which, by the way, should be regarded as Scripture – should be translated "To Solomon" – a literal rendering of the Hebrew. David wrote this psalm for and dedicated it to Solomon. He intended it to be used in the worship of Israel to guide the people in praying for their king and his kingdom, and to direct the king and his servants in their work of enlarging and enriching the nation of Israel.

The psalm clearly has Messianic overtones, and so it can also serve us in praying for God's Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. And right out of the blocks the focus of the psalm is on righteousness. David prays that God might give judgment and righteousness to Solomon, so that he might rule the people of Israel according to the very character and purposes of God Himself.

The character of the Kingdom

"Righteousness" describes the *character* of the Kingdom of God, according to the Apostle Paul (Rom. 14.17, 18). Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God's righteousness, so when we pray for the righteousness of God to be more in evidence in the leaders of our churches and the people they serve, we're only asking that we all, together, should be clothed more fully with the Lord Jesus Himself.

Can you pray that faithfully every day? That you, your pastors and church leaders, and all believers might repent of all known sin, put aside every obstruction of transgression or doubt that keeps us from becoming more like Jesus, and begin to see Him increasing in and through us more and more each day?

Prayer for the Kingdom

David prayed that Solomon might be righteous and rule in righteousness. Jesus is righteousness itself, and we are following Him as true citizens of His Kingdom when righteousness is, above all, that which we seek to realize. Pray for the Church – her leaders and her people – that we might increase in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

For reflection or discussion

1. What is righteousness, and how can believers increase in it?
2. Why is righteousness the defining attribute of the Kingdom of God?
3. Why do you suppose prayer is a good place to begin in seeking the Kingdom of God?
4. What are your goals for this study? What do you hope to learn?
5. How would you describe your own Kingdom-seeking activities at this time?

Next steps. Enlist some friends to go through this series with you. Agree to listen to or read each installment and then to meet to discuss what you've learned in a week or so. Draw up a covenant, based on what you learn, and unite in prayer for the Kingdom of God for the next year.

Prayer.

2 More Salvation!

Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor! Psalm 72.3, 4

Blessings all around

The essence of God's covenant relationship with His people consists of blessing. God blesses those who believe in Jesus Christ with the great privilege and gift of eternal life, the substance of which, Jesus explained, is to *know* God and Jesus Christ, in an intimate and transforming manner (Jn. 17.3).

In ancient Israel, when David and Solomon ruled the people of God, the blessing of God consisted above all else in the privilege of having God in their midst, dwelling with and among them, and of their having access to Him through sacrifices and worship. To be in the presence of God, David explained, is fullness of joy and unending pleasure (Ps. 16.11).

Thus blessed by the grace and truth of God, the people of God became fitted to be a blessing to one another and to the nations around them. That blessing – first articulated to Abraham in Genesis 12.1-3 – consisted of bringing others into the intimacy of the knowledge of God and the joy and pleasure knowing Him affords. Other blessings came with that, of course, including the material blessings of health and bounty. But the primary blessing, which was available to all the people of God regardless of their station in life, was to know God and to make Him known.

When, therefore, David prayed that, under Solomon's kingship, blessings might abound in the hills and valleys of Israel, and among the poor as well as in the royal court, he was thinking first of all of the blessings of God's presence and power, and only secondly of the material and personal blessings God's people would know when love for God was expressed in love for neighbor throughout the land. David prayed for the leader of Israel that, under his watch, God's blessings – of all kinds – would be abundantly supplied throughout the nation.

God's blessing on church leaders and members

We should receive these verses as counsel to guide us in praying for the leaders of our churches, first, that God might bless them with a closer, more personal, and more life-changing walk with the Lord in His Kingdom. But we should also pray the same for ourselves and our fellow church members. Unless we are drawn together more deeply into fellowship with the Lord, we will never have the vision or strength to seek the Kingdom at all times and in all situations. But if we grow in our fellowship with the Lord, He will increase in us, and His blessings will flow through us, like rivers of living water (Jn. 7.37-39), to bless others.

But we should also plead with the Lord to supply the material needs of all His people, especially those who are poor or otherwise in need. It is God's purpose that His people should care for one another, as we see both in His Law and in the practice of the first Christians. We must not neglect this means of blessing. And what's more, Christians and their churches must be on the front lines of extending the blessings of God to the communities around them and to the world. Christians have always been first in line to show generosity to the poor and needy, and we must do so even more in these difficult economic times.

Pray that the blessings of God will reach His Kingdom people, drawing us daily more deeply into Him and His life-changing power; and pray that we will go forth from His presence, blessed, and ready to be a blessing to the people around us, whatever blessing they may require.

For reflection or discussion

1. Meditate on Philippians 2.12, 13. What does it mean to "work out" (not *for*) your salvation?

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2. Meditate on Psalm 116.12-14. In what ways is this an apt metaphor for seeking more of the salvation of God?
3. What are some of the fruit of salvation that you would like to see more of in your own life?
4. What are the steps, or what is the process, by which believers increase in the salvation of the Lord?
5. Suggest some ways that you might pray for increased salvation among the believers you know.

Next steps. In what ways would you like your own walk with the Lord to increase in blessing? How do you expect to be a blessing to others in your everyday life? Talk with some of your Christian friends about these questions, and pray daily that God will bless you and them, and will make you a blessing to others.

For prayer.

3 An Influence for Peace!

May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more. Psalm 72.5-7

A mixed bag

We're looking at Psalm 72, David's prayer for Solomon and his kingdom, as a guide for us in seeking the Kingdom and righteousness of God through prayer. Prayer is the most fundamental means of Kingdom-seeking available to us, and since the Lord has seen fit to provide us a prayer template to use in this effort, we should make the most of this blessing every day.

Thus far we've seen that we should pray for our King Jesus to advance His Kingdom by bringing the *character* of the Kingdom, which is righteousness, more fully into the lives of pastors, church leaders, and believers everywhere (vv. 1, 2). Further, from verses 3 and 4 we've learned that we should pray for one another that the Lord will draw us more closely into Himself and fit us there to be a blessing to the people around us, whatever their needs might be.

In verses 5-7 David prays for the influence King Solomon and the nation of Israel should have on the nations and peoples around them. And this influence is a kind of mixed bag, as we shall see.

Fearing God and His people

First, David prayed that the oppressors of Israel would fear King Solomon and the people of Israel, much, we might suppose, as the people of Canaan did when Joshua led the people across the Jordan River. God certainly is not much feared these days; His Church even less so. People should fear God because of Who He is and what He is capable of where wretched sinners are concerned. God is holy, and He hates and condemns sin. Moreover, He has the power to destroy sin and those who traffic in it. But if people either don't know or don't believe this, they're not likely to fear God or those who are His ambassadors.

The fear of God is thus attached to the holiness of God. If we as a people were more truly holy, would we command more respect from the people around us? Would the voice of the Church carry more weight in matters of ethics and morality if we were a more holy people, and if we proclaimed our holy and sovereign God more faithfully? I can only believe it must be so. Pray that Christians everywhere will follow Paul's command to "bring holiness to completion in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7.1) and that, as we do, those who do not know the Lord might begin to fear Him as they should.

Daily blessings

But we must also pray that God would use His people throughout the day to bless and edify those around them through words of comfort, encouragement, affirmation, and truth, and deeds of love and kindness. These, like rain on mown grass, can provide refreshment and renewal to people, leaving them with a taste for the peace – the *shalom* – of the Lord. Peace is the *condition* of the Kingdom, the overall state of things as the righteousness of the Kingdom comes to light in the lives of its citizens.

So pray that we might be able to influence others for the peace of God (cf. 1 Tim. 2.1-8). Pray that God would use the evidence of holiness and our consistent practice of grace and truth to bear witness to Himself and His eternal power. The world will begin to fear God again, and to know the blessings of His peace, as we pray for our leaders and one another, that, by holiness and love, we might be able to influence those around us for peace.

Prayer for the Kingdom

For reflection or discussion

1. What is the fear of God? What does it mean to bring holiness to completion in the fear of God?
2. In what sense is it right to think that the unbelieving world should “fear” the ambassadors of God’s Kingdom?
3. What are some of the ways that Christians can bring the peace of Christ’s Kingdom to the people around them?
4. Just because believers are peace-makers, should we always expect to be at peace with the world around us? Why or why not?
5. Suggest some ways, in addition to prayer, Christians can encourage and help one another in being an influence for peace.

Next steps. Do the unbelievers you know fear God? Your neighbors or co-workers? Ask a few of them whether they do. If they don’t, ask what might lead or convince them to fear Him. Talk with your Christian friends about this exercise.

For prayer.

4 Kingdom Increase!

May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust! May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! Psalm 72.8-11

A growing stone

In one of the most compelling Biblical images of the Kingdom of God, Daniel explained that it would be like a growing stone (Dan. 2.44, 45). Once the Kingdom has come it will increase and grow and overcome all opposition to it and every other kingdom that exists on earth. Isaiah rejoiced to see the coming of the King Whose Kingdom would increase without end (Is. 9.6, 7). And Jesus taught, in the parable of the wheat and the tares, that the whole world would be sown with the good seed of the Kingdom of God (Matt. 13.24-30, 36-43).

David prayed for Solomon's rule, that it would extend to other nations and tribes, and that peoples far and wide would recognize Solomon's wisdom and take shelter under his rule. This is precisely what came to pass in Solomon's day, as we read in 1 Kings 10.

But Solomon's, being an earthly kingdom, could not continue to increase perpetually. However, we expect and seek otherwise for the Kingdom of God.

The way of Kingdom increase

Jesus taught His disciples to pray that the Kingdom of God would come on earth as it is in heaven. In heaven the rule of Christ is enjoyed to the full extent of that domain, and all the subjects of His realm present there know increasing fullness of righteousness, peace, and joy. What we seek on earth is the parallel development of that realm, the increase of righteousness, peace, and joy according to the working of God's Word and Spirit in and through His people (Rom. 14.17-19).

Jesus taught that those who truly come to know Him and enter His Kingdom are indwelt by His Spirit, Who flows in and through them like rivers of living water (Jn. 7.37-39). The Kingdom increases in us who know the Lord as we surrender more and more of our lives – soul and body – to the rule of King Jesus. The more we learn Christ, as Paul puts it (Eph. 4.17-24), the more we are transformed into His image, so that we think with His mind, feel with His heart, aspire to His goals, and work with His power to make all things new.

The Kingdom comes to others through us, first, as they experience our transformed lives and the hope we have in Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3.15). The righteousness and peace they see in us, and the increasing experience of salvation which we demonstrate, will cause many of the people around us to want to know more. Thus we will be able, following the example of Jesus, to proclaim the reality of the Kingdom of God and to explain that citizenship in that glorious realm is available to all who believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins.

The witness of our lives and words thus becomes a platform for the powerful working of God's Spirit, Who is the operative agent of the Kingdom of God. He must transform us. He must empower us for witness. He must pique the consciences and convert the hearts of those who would be saved. He must enlarge our vision and sustain our prayers for the greater increase of the Kingdom of God.

Pray for the Spirit

Thus our prayers for the Kingdom's increase, in and through us, must be wrapped in an envelope of prayer for the filling and working of God's Spirit in His people and among the lost of this world. The power by which the Kingdom increases is not the power of politics or the sword. Only the power of God's Spirit can

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bring people to their senses, endow them with the gift of faith, and begin the work of transforming grace in every aspect of their lives.

Let us pray, then, beloved, for the work of the Spirit, that He might increase the Kingdom of God in and through us!

For reflection or discussion

1. What are some ways that you routinely experience the Spirit of God increasing the Kingdom of Christ in you?
2. What is the Gospel of the Kingdom? Jesus and the Apostles preached it, and we are called to proclaim it as well. In the space below, outline what you consider to be the key components of the Good News of the Kingdom of God.
3. Who are the people, week after week, whom you are in a position to influence for the progress of the Kingdom? In what ways?
4. What hindrances are preventing more progress of the Kingdom in and through your life? How can you overcome these?
5. In what ways would you like to see more of the increase of God's Kingdom in and through your life over the next several weeks and months? How do you plan to pursue that?

Next steps. Talk with some Christian friends about this question. In what ways would you like to see more of the Spirit's work coming to fruition in your life? Pray for and encourage one another to seek the Spirit in prayer and to submit to His power more and more each day.

For prayer.

5 Love for the Least!

For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight. Psalm 72.12-14

An upside-down agenda

When the Gospel of Jesus Christ came into the cities of the Roman world, people readily observed that something new and different had arrived. The Thessalonians declared that Paul and the other followers of King Jesus were turning the world upside down (Acts 17.1-9). It would be more accurate, I think, to say that they were turning it rightside-up.

The kingdom which Solomon inherited was unlike any kingdom the world had ever seen. It revolved around the presence of the living God, Who dwelled in a glorious temple in the midst of His people at the same time He made His home in the heavenly realm over all creation. His character, His Law, and His agenda of love were the dominant motifs of Solomon's kingdom, at least during the early years of his reign.

The story of Solomon judging between two prostitutes epitomizes the character of his kingdom, and foreshadows the agenda of Christ's Kingdom which was to come. Here were two prostitutes – women driven to destitution and degradation, perhaps by circumstances beyond their control – present before the greatest king of the day, seeking justice in a dispute over a child. What other king anywhere in the world of that day could be bothered by such a situation? The kings of Solomon's day dealt in power and wealth and influence. The poor and needy of their kingdoms had to fend for themselves. We recall, for example, Daniel's rebuke of King Nebuchadnezzar because his policies were ruinous to the poor and, thus, offensive to God (Dan. 4.27).

But in Solomon's court, in the very shadow of the dwelling place of God, justice and love were to be extended even to the very least of all the people of the land.

Caring for the least of these

Jesus made a virtue of caring for those who could not care for themselves. "as you did it unto one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Mat. 25.40). These days, when so many people are in obvious need, churches need to consider whether they are doing as much as they can to extend the grace of the Lord through the means of material benefit to the poor and needy of their communities. Jesus reached out to the poor, thus signaling for all His followers that the Kingdom He inaugurated, where righteousness and peace would flourish, must be extended to people, first of all, at the point of their immediate needs. Those who are hungry, despairing, confused, sick, or possessed by spirits will not be persuaded by doctrines or indictments that the Kingdom of God promises a better life for them.

They will be persuaded by deeds. This is why Christians have always taken the lead, community by community, in providing services for the poor and needy. Whereas governments can be impersonal and difficult to deal with in caring for the needy, churches can create loving and caring environments in which to feed, house, clothe, and tend to people's needs. Governments lust to provide such services because by so doing they make people dependent upon their largesse and, thus, inclined to support in office those who support them materially.

But governments cannot give to the poor and needy what they really require – the dignity of a soul restored to God and beginning to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. And churches cannot give this to poor and needy unless we improve and extend our outreach to them at the point of their need.

Prayer for the Kingdom

Let us therefore pray, dear friends, that the Kingdom of God may increase in the hearts and minds of church leaders and people, such that they are moved to greater compassion for the least of those in our communities, who will most likely only come to know the Lord when they are led to Him by those who show them consistent neighbor love and concern.

For reflection or discussion

1. Does the Gospel turn the world upside-down or rightside-up? Explain.
2. Why are government programs for the poor inadequate? How can church outreaches to the poor and needy do a better job?
3. What opportunities for caring for the poor and needy exist in your community? Find out as much as you can about each one.
4. What percentage of a church's giving do you think should be devoted to helping the poor and needy? How did you arrive at that percentage?
5. Why is it natural to expect that the Kingdom of God will be in evidence where His people are caring for the poor and needy?

Next steps. See what you can find out about your own church's ministry to the poor and needy in your community. Is there some place you can plug in to help?

For prayer.

6 Increasing Praise and Thanks!

Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day! May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field! May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed! Psalm 72.15-17

Blessed to praise

David prayed that God would abundantly bless the people of Israel under Solomon's rule, so that the people of Israel would celebrate the virtues of their king and continue the legacy of his reign. He longed to see all the good of the land associated with the wisdom, benevolence, and judgment of his son. The people would surely be supportive of Solomon and his sons if they understood that all their richest blessings were the result of his wise and generous rule.

How easy it is to take for granted the blessings which God brings to us day by day because of Jesus Christ. Seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High, Jesus Christ upholds the universe and everything in it. His Word of power maintains the cosmos down to the smallest particle (Heb. 1.3). There is not a detail of existence, anywhere in the vast universe, that does not owe its being and continuance to the power and grace of King Jesus Christ.

But do we as the subjects of this King refer our daily blessings to Him as we should? Do we thank and praise Him for our daily food? Our clothing and shelter? The blood coursing through our veins, the breath in our lungs, the electricity racing along our nerves and bristling through our brains? Do we thank and praise Him for our freedoms? The gifts and abilities, and all the opportunities for service and improvement He daily provides? And do we rejoice and give thanks in the midst of the trials He allows us to endure, knowing that, in Him, even these will work together for our good?

The consequence of the Kingdom

The *character* of God's Kingdom is righteousness. We long to be like our King and so we yield to His Spirit, Who works powerfully within us to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ and make us willing and able to do what pleases Him (2 Cor. 3.12-18; Phil. 2.13). The *condition* which this brings into our lives is peace. As we experience the inward work of the Spirit we know that God is with us, Christ is attending to us, and there is nothing in this world that could give us reason to be afraid. We are filled with a peace that passes understanding as we realize the increasing presence and work of Christ and His Kingdom in and through our lives (Phil. 4.6, 7).

And this leads us to lives of joy. Joy is the *consequence* of the peace we know in the Kingdom of our righteous Lord. And joy cannot be contained. It breaks out in singing, smiling, shouting, talking and sharing, and a buoyant spirit and life. When asked about such joy, we must be careful to make it plain to all that the Lord of glory is our joy and our hope. All our blessings, every aspect and detail of all our existence, even the very time in which we live, are daily, unmerited gifts of Jesus' abounding grace and love. These things do not just happen. Nor are we capable of doing or realizing them on our own. No, God and His King, our Lord Jesus Christ, are causing us to abound with such goodness, and we cannot contain our joy, but will give increasing thanks and praise to Him Who is the Source of all our good.

Pray for the people of God

Let us pray, therefore, that God's people will see and acknowledge all their daily blessings. That we will set aside all grumbling and complaining and submit to the work of God's Spirit in transforming us for Kingdom living. Let us learn to give praise and thanks to God as naturally as we breathe His air, see with His photons,

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hear by His sound waves, and work by the strength of His presence in us. Let us seek the presence and increase of the Kingdom by increasing praise and thanks to our good, wise, and generous King.

For reflection or discussion

1. Why do you suppose Christians are so reluctant to give thanks and praise to God in everyday situations? Is this a good thing? Why or why not?
2. Suggest some ways you might become more mindful of opportunities to give thanks and praise to God throughout the day.
3. How does giving thanks and praise to God relate to the presence and progress of the Kingdom of God?
4. Suggest some ways that believers might help one another to be more overt and public in giving thanks and praise to God.
5. What will you do, in giving praise and thanks to God, to seek and increase His Kingdom?

Next steps. Keep a list of every blessing of God that comes to mind this day. Thank and praise Him for it as you write it down. Share your gratitude with someone near you. At the end of the day, go through the whole list and increase your thanks and praise to the Lord.

For prayer.

7 Increasing Glory!

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended. Psalm 72.18-20

God's redemptive purpose

From the beginning of God's redeeming work with Israel, His purpose has been to glorify Himself through His people. The glory of God is the presence of God as He makes Himself manifest to the world. God glorified Himself in ancient Israel by filling the Tabernacle with His presence and leading His people through the wilderness in a pillar of smoke and fire. He glorified Himself in the nation by giving them His good and wise Law, overcoming all their enemies, endowing their kings with wisdom, and receiving their joyous and sincere worship.

God has determined that the knowledge of His glory must cover the earth as the waters cover the seas (Hab. 2.14). The glory of God is everywhere present, as David reminded us in Psalm 19.1-4. But the glory of God, though everywhere present, is not everywhere observed and acknowledged. It is the calling of God's people to make God's glory known to the world, so that his glorious name might be blessed forever and the whole earth will be filled with his glory.

Glory in the details

The Apostle Paul taught that everything in our lives has potential for bringing glory to God, even down to such mundane, everyday activities as how and what we eat and drink (1 Cor. 10.31). In the Kingdom of God, as we are increasing in righteousness, dwelling in peace, and abounding in joyous thanks and praise to King Jesus, we will show in all our words and ways that something really new and powerful has begun to occur in our lives. People will experience the reality of the Kingdom of God, and the glory of God will brush up against their lives, as we seek consciously to live for His glory day by day.

The glory of God is attached to everyday things according to a string of superlatives. Words like goodness, beauty, excellence, compassion, kindness, generosity, thoughtfulness, long-suffering, graciousness, and more all betoken the working of God's Spirit bringing the Kingdom of God to light in our lives. We can pray that such attributes might attach to more of our words and deeds. We can learn how to yield to God's Spirit in everyday situations, so that He can make Christ known in and through us by such means. And we can encourage our fellow believers to let Jesus increase and themselves decrease to such an extent that these attributes, and others like them, might increasingly come to characterize our lives in every detail.

A prayer for the King and His Kingdom

Since prayer is the most characteristic Christian practice, it only makes sense that praying should be the most common and most effective means by which we seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. We must pray every day that the righteousness of Jesus Christ would increase in our lives, that we would know more of the Lord's salvation day by day, and that peace would be a primary influence issuing from us to others. We must pray that grace would reach to the last, the lost, and the least in our communities, and that many would come to know the Lord and submit to His gracious and joyous rule. We must pray that His Kingdom will increase on earth as it is in heaven, His Spirit would work powerfully in and through us, and that praise and thanks and the glory of God would increase wherever we His people are present.

Will you pray for the King and His Kingdom? And will you encourage others to pray with you? If we can make praying for the Kingdom our daily practice, we may expect to see more real evidence and progress of the Kingdom in our everyday lives. Thus we may hope to become more consistent and effective in realizing our primary charge from the Lord Jesus Christ. to seek first His Kingdom and righteousness.

Prayer for the Kingdom

For reflection or discussion

1. Meditate on 2 Corinthians 3.12-18. Paul says we are changed from glory to glory. What does this mean?
2. Explain how the glory of God can be everywhere present but not everywhere acknowledged.
3. How should believers expect to make the knowledge of God's glory known in their daily lives?
4. What is the most important lesson you've learned from this study?
5. How do you plan to make that lesson a working part of your discipleship?

Next steps. Write out a version of a prayer for the King and His Kingdom that you might use each day. Begin using it right away. Share it with some of your friends, and encourage them to join you in this Kingdom-seeking prayer.

For prayer.

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For reflection

1. To date, what has been your approach to praying for the coming of the Kingdom of God? Does this psalm help you understand better how to pray for the Kingdom? Explain.
2. How do you expect praying Psalm 72 to help you in seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness?
3. What can keep you from praying this way? How can you overcome those obstacles?
4. How can believers encourage and help one another in praying for the Kingdom like this?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned about the praying for the Kingdom? How do you expect this to affect your prayer life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the contribute button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.