Kingdom Men

MEN OF DEVOTION

Men who are part of the kingdom of God look radically different from what the world values in men or teaches men to become. The world often tells men that they do not need religion, that religion is for the weak, or that their devotion should be to themselves (their careers, pleasures, images, etc.). Yet, Jesus calls us to deep devotion to God and others. He does not just call people to accept He is real intellectually; He calls us to be fully devoted to Him. After all, He is the King, and those in His kingdom honor Him and let Him rule their hearts and lives. Therefore, kingdom men are men of devotion!

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4, 17

If you have experienced the saving grace of God and been raised with Christ to live in newness of life (Colossians 2:11-12; Romans 6:3-4), then your devotion must change. Although you may have been devoted to yourself and the pursuits of this life in the past, you have now died to that former way of life (Colossians 3:5-9). This includes the mind that was previously focused on the things of the flesh (Romans 8:5-8). Your mind must now be focused on the things above, where your new King (Jesus) reigns (Colossians 3:12-17). Your commitment and devotion must be to honor King Jesus throughout all aspects of your life in what you say and do!

DANIEL 6:3-7, 10-11

Daniel was devoted to honoring, serving, and worshiping God no matter where he was and how difficult the circumstances were. Notice how Daniel was devoted to God even when he lived under the rule of the Medes and Persians. Even those who hated him and wished him harm could see this. Daniel was devoted to God in prayer (three times per day) and in living an honorable life. Then, even when his enemies devised a plot against him, Daniel was unwilling to change his devotion to God! His devotion to God was never determined by whether his circumstances were difficult or easy. Ultimately, God rescued Daniel from the lions' den (vv. 16-24). Therefore, devotion to God must never depend on our circumstances. Instead, it must only be determined by the worthiness of the God we serve and worship! Worshiping God, then, is not something that should be treated as optional whenever it is convenient. Instead, kingdom men are devoted to worshiping the God who wants people to worship Him in the way He wants them to worship Him (John 4:21-24), because He is worthy of their devotion (Psalm 95)!

ACTS 2:42, 46

These early followers of Jesus provide a model for kingdom men today. It was not enough just to become followers of Jesus (as they did in Acts 2:37-41). Instead, they gave themselves fully to the cause of Christ and immersed themselves in the practices of their new life for Christ (learning the apostles' teaching, sharing in fellowship with other believers, partaking of the Lord's Supper, praying, meeting together with the church, and spending time with other believers). Their devotion was not just momentary. It was a new way of life that needed to be sustained throughout their lives, despite the challenges and struggles that people experience. Christians must embrace the goodness of what God has provided in Christ and remain committed to following Him until the end (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

ACTS 11:19-26

Followers of Jesus came to Antioch after being scattered by the persecution that started with Stephen, who was killed in Acts 7. Saul (before his conversion) brought intense persecution against the disciples of Christ, and all the church in Jerusalem was scattered, except for the apostles (Acts 8:1-3). These disciples, however, were so devoted to Christ that they did not give up in their faith. Rather, they preached God's word wherever they went! Now that the gospel had been spread in Antioch, these new Christians were encouraged to remain true to Christ with loyal and devoted hearts. Therefore, while there are many things that try to pull followers of Jesus away from faithfulness to Him (e.g., persecution, temptation, suffering, discouragement, distraction), His people must remain loyal to Him. This faithfulness, however, requires a heart that is firmly devoted and committed to following Christ, no matter what challenges arise (Revelation 2:8-11; Romans 8:18)!

MATTHEW 6:19-24, 33

This world attempts to convince men to be devoted to many things that promise earthly satisfaction and fulfillment. A man is often measured by his income,

possessions, accomplishments, pleasures, image, etc. Yet, while many are devoted to these worldly pursuits and treasures, Jesus says that none of them will last (Luke 12:16-21; Ecclesiastes 2:1-11)! Instead, only heavenly treasures that are accumulated through devotion and service to God will remain. But having these requires more than a casual interest in spiritual things. It involves devotion to God as your true and only Master (1 John 2:15-17)! It requires devotion to the kingdom of God and God's righteousness above all else! So, we must be devoted to letting God rule our hearts and lives through our service to King Jesus. Then, we must be devoted to doing what He declares to be right (as taught in Scripture). These must be the priorities in our lives!

MATTHEW 22:36-40

Kingdom men are not just to intellectually acknowledge God or to observe certain religious practices. They are expected to love God with all their hearts, souls, and minds. Then, they are expected to love other people as themselves. These two commands continue to express the love that must characterize God's people under the new covenant, since all the other commands continue to depend on them. With this kind of love toward God, men will keep and practice whatever God commands without viewing it as a burdensome obligation (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3). Instead, obedience will flow from a willing and devoted heart that truly wants to honor and serve God (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Romans 12:1-2). Then, loving other people as themselves will not be a burdensome obligation they are forced to obey. Rather, their love for others will reflect God's love and flow from the same devoted heart that serves God (Luke 10:25-37).

CONCLUSION

Men in God's kingdom are men of devotion. Rather than being devoted to themselves and pursuing their own fleshly desires and ambitions, they are deeply devoted to King Jesus. They have died to their former lives that were ruled by their own desires. Now they seek those things that are above, where the King reigns. Their devotion to God and what He desires runs so deep that they remain faithful even in the face of great opposition. They love God and love others. They worship God faithfully. They seek the things concerning God's kingdom and His righteousness above all else in their lives!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

Where was your devotion prior to coming to Christ?

Where must your devotion be after coming to Christ?

What can you learn about devotion from Daniel?

What can you learn about devotion from the disciples of Christ in Acts 2?

What can you learn about devotion from the disciples in Antioch?

Why is devotion to one master essential?

What is involved in seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness first?

What does devotion to God require concerning your love for God and others?

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