

January, 2012

“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant...”

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

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## Citizenship in the Kingdom of God Part III The Kingdom Culture – Core Values

By Robert C. Benson, President

*“Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways. You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed...Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever.”*

Psalm 119:1-4,152

### A. Situational Analysis

**Like all nations, governments, businesses, organizations and families, The Kingdom of God has a culture that says, in so many words, “This is the way we do things around here, if you do it our way you will succeed here; if you don’t, you will not succeed here.”**

**Stop to think** about how magnificent it is to be a child of God and a joint heir with Christ with the rights, privileges, benefits and power of that status. The apostle John exclaims it this way in 1 John 3:1, *“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”*

**Emerson said, “A company is but a shadow of its president.”** Is that not true? All of us have seen the evidence of this statement in the companies/organizations/families around us. **In the same way, the Bible tells us God wants His children to reflect His nature and His culture** and He has equipped us with everything we need to accomplish that objective.

**In Part I** of this series on Citizenship in the Kingdom of God is a summary of some characteristics of the kingdom form of government and their relationship to the Kingdom of God.

**In Part II** of this series, you will find a discussion of the power principle of the Kingdom of God, “Power submits to Power.” Both of these can be read at <http://www.abadvisors.com>.

**This article** is a discussion of the Kingdom culture, a culture of values and behavior Christ instructs the citizens of His Kingdom to demonstrate (even commands it in Matthew 28:18-20).

What does this have to do with business? Although all Christians have a responsibility to understand God’s culture, those of us who are Christian marketplace leaders in business seem to have a greater responsibility to understand God’s culture, obey it, and teach it to others. “*For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required*” (Luke 12:48 NKJV).

## **B. Core Values of the Kingdom Culture**

*“If you love me, you will obey what I command. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.”*

The Lord Jesus Christ, John 14:15, 15:9-14

**There is no separation between the secular and spiritual** for those who are members of the Kingdom of God on earth, “*a holy nation.*” God, family, work, social and personal are all part of one life to be lived as citizens of the Kingdom of God. We are God’s children and ambassadors of the Kingdom while we are living on earth.

Note that the Lord Jesus Christ does not suggest that you comply with the Kingdom culture, He commands it. And He makes it crystal clear that our wellbeing is contingent on our obedience to Him. Jesus Christ, King of God’s Kingdom, sets forth some key core values of the Kingdom and how to learn them in John 13-17.

## CORE VALUE: LOVE

The first and greatest Core value of the Kingdom is Love.

**Christ commands us to love each other**, *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12).*

**Love is the very nature of God**, *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:7-8).*

**God’s love is enormous**, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16)*

**In doing so, you demonstrate God’s very nature**, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*



*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:5-11).*

**The apostle John said demonstrating God’s nature of love is how you know that you are really God’s children (i.e. born again).** *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

*We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.*

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

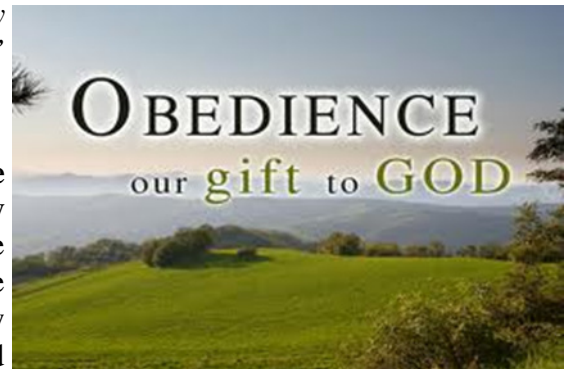
*We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 4:7-5:5).*

## **CORE VALUE: OBEDIENCE**

**Another key core value of the Kingdom is Obedience.** *"Jesus replied, 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me'"* (John 14:23-24).

**The word "if" in the Bible seems to have become an invisible word in the politically correct world of today.** As you can see below, most promises and blessings are dependent on the word "if." See below how many critical areas of our lives are connected to our obedience:



**LIFE:** *"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die'"* (Genesis 2:15-17).

**BLESSINGS:** *"If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 28:1-2).*

**PROJECTION:** *“If you make the Most High your dwelling — even the LORD, who is my refuge — then no harm will befall you, **no disaster will come near your tent...** ‘Because he loves me,’ says the LORD, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name’” (Psalm 91:9-10, 14).*

*“However, **if you do not obey the LORD your God** and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, **all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:**” (Deuteronomy 28:15).*

**UNDERSTANDING AND FREEDOM:** *“Jesus said, ‘**If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free**’” (John 8:31-32).*

**CONNECTEDNESS:** *“Jesus replied, ‘**If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him**’” (John 14:23).*

**ASSURANCE:** *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven**” (Matthew 7:21-22).*

*“**This is how we know that we love the children of God:** by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome” (1 John 5:2-3).*

**Even Christ had to learn obedience.** *“During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. **Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him** and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 5:7-10).*

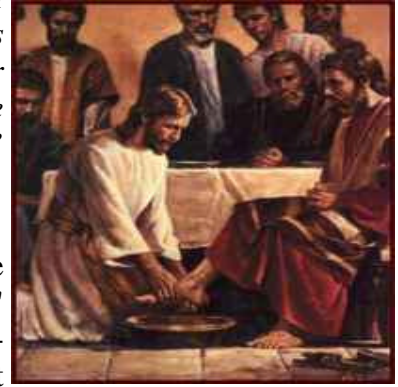
*“**Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:** Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).*

## **CORE VALUE: SERVICE & SERVANTHOOD**

Regardless of our position in the business – the leader, a manager or staff members – all Christians are called to serve one another as Christ served us.

*“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them.*

*"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them"* (John 13:3-5, 12-17).



“In reality, all believers are "ministers." The apostle Paul urged the true pastor-teacher to "equip the saints" so they can minister to one another (Ephesians 4:11-12). The model, of course, is Jesus, who "did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). His service is revealed in the fact that He gave "His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Jesus' servanthood radically revised the ethics of Jew and Greek alike, because He equated service to God with service to others. When we minister to the needs of the hungry or the lonely, we actually minister to Christ (Matthew 25:31-46). And when we fail to do so, we sin against God (James 2:14-17; 4:17).” (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers).

## **CORE VALUE: SACRIFICE**

**Your greatest offering to God is yourself, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command”** (John 15:13-14).

**By doing so you are transformed into your new nature, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will”** (Romans 12:1-2).

**This transformation enables you to effectively walk in the Spirit, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

*But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.*

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. (Ephesians 5:1-10).*

## C. Action Plan – The Pursuit of Godliness

*“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”*

John 17:17

**As discussed in the core values above, love is the very nature of God and sincere love from God living in you is the outcome of the pursuit of Godliness.**

### **IT IS BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH**

Please do not misunderstand what I am saying in this article. The Bible makes it VERY clear that your salvation is a free gift from God and all you have to do to receive that gift into your heart is to believe in His Son Jesus Christ, *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”* (Ephesians 2:8-10). What the apostles are saying is that **the evidence** of a person really being born again, believing in Christ and Christ is living in him/her is that *“those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires”* (Romans 8:5). Therefore, with the Spirit of God in a person, her/she will inevitably want to be like Him by pursuing Godliness. However we can’t take any credit for the faith to pursue Godliness. That faith, belief in Christ, and sincere desire to pursue godliness is all totally a work of God’s grace. All we can do is choose to be a willing participant in the process through an act of our free will.

**The pursuit of Godliness is so important to God that Christ prayed for the sanctification of all believers** (current and future) in John 17:17 *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”* The NIV Bible says the Greek word used here as sanctify is “hagiazō” (set apart for sacred use or make holy).”

**The apostle Peter makes it clear that the pursuit of Godliness is a process, the end result of which is sincere love for one another.** *“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love”* (2 Peter 1:3-7).

*“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart”* (1 Peter 1:22).

**Unless you are already doing it, we recommend, regardless of how long you have been a Christian, that you begin reading the Bible on a regular basis, and “the Counselor, the Holy Spirit...will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I [Christ] have said to you” (See John 14:26).**

In the next issue of *The Spirit Led Business*<sup>™</sup> we will discuss The Kingdom Culture of Holiness and Godliness, along with some thoughts by famous writers on the pursuit of it.

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**If you don’t have a Bible, you can go online to [www.netbible.org](http://www.netbible.org) . And if you want someone to talk to about the things in this letter, call us at ABA!**

Note: All Bible verses are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

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