

Our Kingdoms Must Fall
If We Will Follow Christ

1. The Kingdom of Career

The most important thing in this kingdom: my educational and professional goals and successes.

This is what I tell myself about this kingdom:

-Spiritual Distortion (ie. Lie): It's okay for me to be so committed to my studies/career even when I could be growing more in the Lord. God wants me to succeed in my career, so I can _____.

-Worldly Lie: It's possible to believe with my heart while being most committed to my job and education. God knows my heart even if my life doesn't show it to other people.

-Family Lie: My family needs me to be / expects me to be a super-educated / successful person so I can care for them / make them proud.

-Other: (You write one; or invite a trusted friend to help you see what distortion you adopt.)

This is what I have sacrificed for this kingdom: time, resources, friendships, money,

I protect this kingdom: with my words, my thoughts and actions

I might die or kill these things to protect and establish this kingdom: relationships, peace with God, usefulness to God, sacrifice of personal wealth/opportunity or advancement

Biblical Truth: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Matthew 6:33 & Acts 1:8) "You will be my [Jesus'] witnesses..."

Gospel Motivation: Because Jesus died for me and accepts me, I want every part of my life to be used for His glory.

Notes:

2. The Kingdom of Relationships

The most important thing in this kingdom: relationships; romantic, friendships, associates

This is what I tell myself about this kingdom:

-Spiritual Distortion (ie. Lie): God tells me to love my neighbor so it's okay that I cross boundaries and sacrifice godliness for others because it's loving.

-Worldly Lie: Human love for one another is the most important thing in the world.

-Family Distortion / Lie: My boyfriend / girlfriend / mom / dad / brother / sister / aunt / uncle / son / daughter / _____ deserve my fullest commitment over anything else because family is everything.

-Other: (You write one; or invite a trusted friend to help you see what distortion you adopt.)

This is what I have sacrificed for this kingdom: money, other relationships, righteous standards, purity, commitments, opportunities to grow or help others grow in their faith

I protect this kingdom:

- self-righteously because it feels noble
- with excuses because I assume others will agree with me
- because I'm too embarrassed by past mistakes to ask for help
- because I don't know how to live without being there for others first
- easily because others don't know how to confront it

I might die or kill these things to protect and establish this kingdom: other relationships, time-management, productivity, peace with God and usefulness to God,

Biblical Truth: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:37) & Acts 1:8 "You will be my [Jesus'] witnesses..."

Gospel Motivation: Jesus' grace towards me changes how I view other people. People are not there to please or please me, but to love and see God show his grace to them.

Notes:

3. The Kingdom of Esteem

The most important thing in this kingdom: others perception of me / reputation

This is what I tell myself about this kingdom:

-Spiritual Distortion (ie. Lie): "It's important to have a good name. Plus, if people think well of me, they'll think well of Jesus." or "God knows my true weaknesses but others don't need to."

-Worldly Lie: You must act in such a way that others think well of you. Put on a happy face.

-Family Distortion / Lie: You've got a name to uphold: your family name.

-Other: (You write one; or invite a trusted friend to help you see what distortion you adopt.)

This is what I have sacrificed for this kingdom: humility & brokenness (I won't show my true colors), servanthood (unless it shows others how good I am), usefulness to God

I protect this kingdom:

- by just talking about my strengths
- by never being seen in my weaknesses
- by never being seen without a smile
- by acting like I've got my act together even if it hurts me or others
- by lying about my strengths so others will think well of me
- by failing to tell the whole truth about my weaknesses so others think well of me

I might die or kill these things to protect and establish this kingdom: honesty, authentic relationships, opportunities to connect with others, lasting relationships (because it's risky for people to know who I really am), faithfulness to Jesus; who models and calls me to follow him into humility and authenticity, relationships (romantic or otherwise) with people who value and daily live-out authenticity

Biblical Truth: God's grace is sufficient for us; and his power is grown when we are weak. (2 Corinthians 12:9); "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets." (Luke 6:26 & Acts 1:8) "You will be my [Jesus'] witnesses..."

Gospel Motivation: In Christ, the favor that God has given to me (while I was still His enemy) frees me from needing to constantly seek affirmation from others.

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4. The Kingdom of Curiosity

The most important thing in this kingdom: speculation, hidden meanings and untold ways of doing things / being

This is what I tell myself about this kingdom:

-Spiritual Distortion (ie. Lie): "The Bible says that the road to destruction is broad. It's possible I'm the only one on the right road."

-Worldly Lie: You can't trust any religion or religious teachers, only what you discover for yourself. If people get on the bandwagon, it's probably going to break down.

-Family Distortion / Lie: You've always been special. Go make a name for yourself.

-Other: (You write one; or invite a trusted friend to help you see what distortion you adopt.)

This is what I have sacrificed for this kingdom: fellowship with Christians, (because I have acted like no one understands things like me), confidence in doctrine (because I'm always speculating instead of standing on the truth), peace with people (because I assume I'm the only one with peace with God...b/c I'm the only one who is right), usefulness to God

I protect this kingdom:

- by pointing out minor flaws / inconsistencies in others
- by constantly speculating about what people aren't saying
- by constantly speculating about the hidden things of God
- by arrogantly assuming I'm right just because I see an error in others
- by avoiding / staying free of commitment to doctrine
- by remaining aloof from people who commit or speak quickly and confidently

I might die or kill these things to protect and establish this kingdom: relationships with people who speak boldly about things of God or life, authentic Christian fellowship based on the core of Christianity (in favor of pursuing speculation and curiosity), the reputation of others with whom I disagree (because I assume that God agrees with me)

Biblical Truth: God wants us to stand firm in our faith: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this

law." (Deuteronomy 29:29) We are to avoid people and things that "promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith." (1 Timothy 1:4) Ephesians 4:14-15 teaches us to value leaders and authentic fellowship "so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (& Acts 1:8) "You will be my [Jesus'] witnesses..." not merely advancing our own curiosity, but helping others get rooted in the truth.

Gospel Motivation: In the Gospel, I see that Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection are the center point of history and Christ wants me to make this known for others. I must not waste time on worldly speculation but anchor my life on Jesus and his Word.

Notes:

5. The Kingdom of Comfort

The most important thing in this kingdom: ease, status quo, worldly peace, avoidance of challenges or risk, games and play

This is what I tell myself about this kingdom:

-Spiritual Distortion (ie. Lie): "Jesus is the Prince of Peace so I should live a peaceful life." or "A mark of God's blessing is comfort and ease."

-Worldly Lie: "You only live once, enjoy it!" or "Eat, drink and be merry!"

-Family Distortion / Lie: "Your personal well-being and safety are the most important things in life." or "I want you to live a better life than me."

-Other: (You write one; or invite a trusted friend to help you see what distortion you adopt.)

This is what I have sacrificed for this kingdom: opportunities for personal growth, opportunities to participate in the blessing of others, being shocked with the faithfulness of God through difficult situations, intimacy with Christ when the chips are down

I protect this kingdom:

- by staying constantly busy with amusements (games, frivolous conversation, frivolous actions) instead of eternal goals
- by being a champion of balance instead of zeal for the Lord
- by trusting that "someone else will do it"
- by choosing the easiest path instead of the opportunity that comes with a challenge
- by backing down from opportunities to grow or be expected to grow
- by avoiding / staying free of commitments
- by staying away from zealous / passionate people
- by staying near to zealous / passionate people without doing what they do
- by only doing what leads to worldly security instead of faithfully trusting God with the future (in finances, relationships, education, vocation, etc.)

I might die or kill these things to protect and establish this kingdom: conversations about my frivolous habits; relationships with passionate people; opportunities that involve risk, diligence when the result would be demanding of my time/comfort/peace/play; missions trips or other events that involve personal risk; listening to teachers/preachers who press for action; I might avoid any & all talk about change, personal sacrifice or being expected to grow

Biblical Truth: "We walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Corinthians 5:7). "Without faith it is impossible to please [God]" (Hebrews 11:6). "The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion." (Proverbs 28:1) "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:1-3) (& Acts 1:8) "You will be my [Jesus'] witnesses..." not protecting our comfort, but pursuing Christ's mission as Christ's witnesses.

Gospel Motivation: Jesus became utterly uncomfortable for my redemption; even unto death, my life is now his to lead- and I trust he will lead it best because he sacrificed most.

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6. The Kingdom of Physical Pleasure

The most important thing in this kingdom: food, sensuality, feelings, rejecting foods

This is what I tell myself about this kingdom:

-Spiritual Distortion (ie. Lie): "God has given me all good things to enjoy freely, so I will enjoy them." or "If God didn't want me to feel this good, he would have stopped me." or "My sin with my body is not THAT bad because at least I didn't _____." or "My feelings are so important!" or "We're going to get married anyway."

-Worldly Lie: "It's your body, do what you want with it." & "Feelings are neither wrong nor right, they just are."

-Family Distortion / Lie: "We are a family that likes to: eat/be fit / look good...and you will do that too."

-Other: (You write one; or invite a trusted friend to help you see what distortion you adopt.)

This is what I have sacrificed for this kingdom: physical health (not being fit) or physical health (not maintaining an appropriate diet/weight), sexual purity, intimacy with friends who I have overwhelmed with sharing my feelings, God-given human dignity (because of guilt or shame), intimacy with friends because of fear or shame, hope for a long and healthy life

I protect this kingdom:

- by making little allowances for myself instead of learning self-control
- by surrounding myself with others who are similarly addicted to some sort of physical pleasure or emotionally lacking in self-control
- by planning to change without taking steps to change
- by holding onto control rather than inviting God to dictate my life direction and decisions
- by overly-associating my choices with my worth
- by refusing to believe God's Word about my choices
- by justifying my sinful choices beneath excuses
- by avoiding people who think differently than me about my health/choices/feelings / etc.
- by refusing to imagine a different pattern of thought/behavior
- by refusing to pursue a different, God-honoring path of behavior

NOTE WELL:

God is not simplistic. He knows the truth about every life. Some problems exist and persist because of situations beyond our control. This guide is not an attempt to simplify everything and spread guilt. Rather, the goal is to bring the light of truth so that those who can be freed by these truths will be freed. There are some conditions and life-consuming issues that are not simple to deal with. God is aware of that, and so must we be.

I might die or kill these things to protect and establish this kingdom:

- challenging opportunities that might force me to face my fears
- conversations about my habits
- relationships with people whose lifestyles oppose my own
- opportunities that involve risk to my physical pleasure
- the voice of my conscience

- I might sabotage relationships that don't make me feel good about my decisions
- I might kill fellowship with Christians who remind me that God has standards about the area of my sin

Biblical Truth: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." (Romans 13:14). "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (Galatians 5:16-24) (& Acts 1:8) "You will be my [Jesus'] witnesses..." not pursuing our fleshly desires, but Christ's kingdom.

Gospel Motivation: God accepts me because of his love, mercy and sacrifice. He has freed me from slavery to my body, my impulses, my flesh. With his help, I can live for Christ, and not for my feelings; physical or emotional.

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