

Lesson #20

Training For Reigning

The Very Little Thing

The Parable of Stewardship has been referred to several times in this study and it deserves reference again here because it provides a picture of the servants of Christ who are in training for reigning. If you remember, the parable was told because the disciples thought the kingdom would appear immediately. Therefore, their service to the Nobleman during his absence was with the kingdom in mind.

The servants were each given an amount of money called a mina and told to do business until the King/Nobleman and the Kingdom would appear. When the King returned, He summoned his servants that they might give an account of their stewardship in His absence. To the servant who increased his mina from 1 to 10, the King said, “Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.” To the servant who increased his mina from 1 to 5, the King said, “Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over five cities.”

The point to made here is that the level of authority and responsibility that was given to the servants after the kingdom appeared was based on their stewardship before it appeared. We may feel that what we are doing is a very little thing, but if we do it faithfully, it will qualify us for something much bigger in the kingdom when it appears. In other words, what we do in this age is training for reigning with Christ in the kingdom age. Jesus also spoke of ruling and reigning in His message to the churches at Laodica and Thyatira:

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

— Revelation 3:21 (NKJV)

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- *‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’*-- as I also have received from My Father;

—Revelation 2:26-27 (NKJV)

Developing a True Witness

In the beginning of this study, we looked at what Jesus said in John, Chapter 8 regarding His witness. He said, ... My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going” (see John 8:14). We identified the strategy of preparation by looking at **where we came from** and **where we are going**. Now we are looking at the personal application of the strategy in our present plans and actions so we, like Jesus, might be able to say, “My witness is true.”

Most Christians have little or no outlet to share with others. Even when we are able to share, our witness often lacks the foundations that would make it a “true” witness. Many people are simply taught they are Christians and will go to heaven if they believe in God, go to church, or say a prayer. Yet there is often no mention of a repentance from sin, knowing Jesus, baptism, being a disciple, or preparing the

way for the kingdom. Without a solid foundation and a true witness, those we convert are in danger of being the wood, hay and stubble we read about in 1 Corinthians who are built into the church but fail to endure in the day of the Lord (see 1 Cor 3:10-15).

Most Christian’s correctly understand that salvation is not by works. Salvation is a free gift of God’s grace through faith (Eph 2:8:9). Yet as we stand in the truth that we are not saved by works, we must remember that we are created in Christ Jesus *for* good works (Eph 2:10). It is through these works that we overcome, prepare the way, and receive rewards.

The actions/accelerators that correspond to the three “Whendicators” presented in the previous lesson (see chart below) represent a general outline for what can be described as Training for Reigning. If our works in this age do not correspond to these foundational concepts, then what we build will not count for much and may be consumed. But if we build on the foundations, the first oracles of the doctrines of Christ, what we build will stand.

Training For Reigning

	Principle One	Principle Two	Principle Three
Principles of Preparation	Repentance From Dead Works and Faith Toward God	Doctrines of Baptisms/Cleansing	Laying on of Hands
Whendicator	When the church is mature and walking in unity of the faith (Eph 4:13).	When the Church is walking in purity and holiness (Eph 5:27)	When the Church has taken the gospel of the Kingdom to the ends of the earth (Matt 24:14)
Principle to Action (Accelerator)	Avoid dead religion and develop listening ears and seeing eyes	Pursue holiness and walk in obedience	Multiply Yourself
Simply Stated	Faith	Purity	Multiplication

Three Training Grounds

Training for reigning takes place in every aspect of our lives. But God has established three institutions where we should certainly apply the principles of preparation and their corresponding actions. In doing so, we gain real governmental wisdom that will be rewarded when Jesus returns. Let’s take a look at these three institutions which represent three training grounds for kingdom preparation.

1) *Family*

Faithful and godly government in one's family is a basic training place where we practice leadership and prepare to rule with Christ in His kingdom. The Family unit is the basic building block of a culture and is the first institution where the foundational principles must be applied by practicing faith, purity and multiplication.

The nuclear family unit was defined in the beginning when God said: **A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh** (Gen 2:24). Man was created in the image of God and woman was created out of man's flesh. When a man and a woman come together in unity, they reflect God's image and His share in His creativity by producing children.

Satan hates families and seeks their destruction because successful families prepare the way for Jesus to return. This is why he seeks to break up the family, upend its biblical order, and redefine marriage.

2) *The Church*

Faithful leadership in the family qualifies one for leadership in the Church (see qualifications for overseers in 1 Tim. 3:2-7). Paul says plainly to Timothy, **"... if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?"**(1 Tim 3:5).

The Church is the kingdom of God in a scaled down or compartmentalized form and is another training ground for reigning. Governing in the Church is preparation for something bigger. Paul reproved the Corinthians for delegating government to the world and failing to govern the church, implying that church government was a prelude to ruling the world with Christ.

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

— 1 Corinthians 6:1-3 (NKJV)

If Satan can prevent or hinder the church from preparing the way, he prevents or hinders the return of Christ and the judgment that is stored up for him. This is one of the main reasons he hates the Church and seeks to corrupt it and destroy it. When we seek to build churches of faith who walk in purity and work at multiplying, you can expect Satan to attack with dead religion, uncleanness, and independence to prevent reproduction. Of course, we know that Satan's efforts will ultimately fail, but that does not prevent him from creating havoc and causing failure for individuals where he can.

3) *Civil Government*

We must also take the foundational purposes into civil government. Like the church, civil government is an institution established by God, and as such, it is designed to work according to His principles. The founders of the United States made this point in the Declaration of Independence when they wrote:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men..."

Within these few words we clearly see their belief in God the Creator, their belief that rights come from that Creator, and that the purpose of government is to protect the rights given by Him. Without doubt, their belief came from the scriptures that make it clear that good government is an institution established by God.

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

— Romans 13:1-4 (NKJV)

This passage not only teaches us that civil government is established by God, but also that its purpose includes 1) the punishment of evil, and 2) rewarding good. When government fails in its purpose, it is no longer legitimate and must be changed. The founders of the United States understood this as well as we see when we continue reading the Declaration of Independence...

"...whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The founders looked to the Christian scriptures as a guide for civil government. They chose the form of government known as a republic based on the biblical model for civil government first organized by Moses based on the counsel of his father-in-law Jethro (see Exodus 18). They designed checks and balances against tyranny by setting up a separation of powers - Judicial, Legislative, and Executive - based on Isaiah 33:22.

For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver, the LORD *is* our king; he will save us.

— Isaiah 33:22 (KJV)

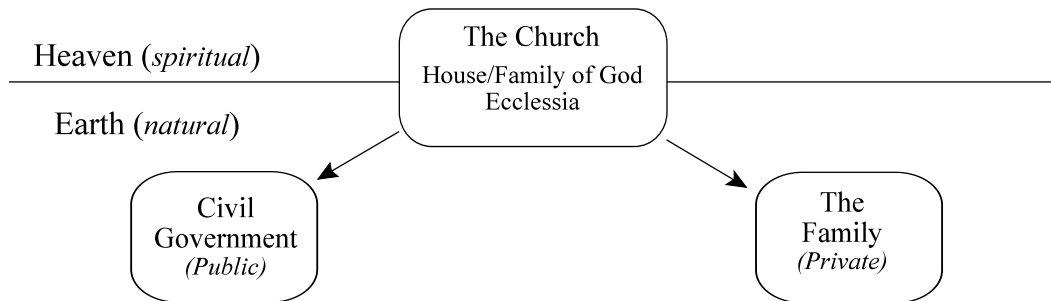
Just as Satan seeks to control and destroy families and churches, he also seeks to destroy civil governments. As we see so clearly in the world of politics, the application of faith, purity, and any attempt to help them multiply is met with unmitigated fury from the anti-Christ elements who have entrenched themselves in civil government. Nevertheless, for civil government to fulfill its function as an institution of God, these values must be embraced and advanced without apology. As we do so, we are in training for reigning.

Strive for Balance

Volumes could be and have been written on each of the three institutions above. People have different callings and may focus on one of the three more than the others. However it is important for

us to have a balanced understanding and participation in each. Working with Christ, we are building His primary institution, which is the church. The chart below is a simplified illustration of how the three institutes relate.

Three Institutions Established by God



Each institution supports the other, but the church operates in both heavenly and earthly realms. It is both God’s governing body (ecclesia) and it is God’s family (house). As such, the church is primary and should be a training institution that speaks into civil government on a public level and the family on a private level.

Not Waiting Around

We cannot establish the kingdom government of God on earth before Christ’s return, He will do that when He returns. But we can bring kingdom principles to bear on His institutions: our families, our churches and in civil government. When we apply the foundational principles and purposes to the areas we are presently responsible to govern, we in training for reigning. The basic idea of strategic preparation, implies a job to be done and leads to the practical conclusion that our works and His return are not unrelated. We are not simply waiting around till Jesus comes, we are preparing the way.