

Making Biblical Decisions

Study Guide

LESSON
SIX

THE SITUATIONAL
PERSPECTIVE: PURSUING
OUR GOAL



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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON AND STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video lesson. If you do not have access to the video, the study guide will also work with the audio and/or text versions of the lesson. Additionally, the lesson and study guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — In the Notes section of the study guide, the lesson has been divided into sections that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the study guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each section and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:30)

In this lesson, we will focus on the success and triumph of God's kingdom as it spreads from heaven to cover the whole earth.

II. Circumstances of the Kingdom (3:37)

A. Importance of the Kingdom (4:24)

God is most glorified through the establishment and triumph of his kingdom in Christ.

1. Beatitudes (6:48)

Christian Ethics — Theology, viewed as a means of determining which human persons, acts and attitudes receive God's blessing and which do not.

Jesus specifically set forth the blessings of God's kingdom as the reward or goal that was to motivate his listeners to live ethically.

2. Lord's Prayer (10:01)

- Father in heaven

- hallowed be your name

- your kingdom come

- your will be done

3. **Earthly Needs (12:15)**

Of all the goals we have in life, our first concern should be the glorification of God through the triumph of his kingdom on earth.

B. **Components of the Kingdom (13:57)**

1. **King (14:12)**

Kings were expected to:

- protect and provide for their people
- treat them with kindness
- rule wisely to benefit their people

God is frequently presented as the suzerain or supreme emperor over all creation.

God was king in a special way over Israel in the Old Testament and the church in the New Testament.

2. **People (17:49)**

The people that God has called to himself:

- Old Testament — often Abraham and his descendants
- New Testament — generally the church

When God created the world, he set up humanity as his vassal kings.

It was humanity's responsibility to:

- populate the whole world
- improve the world as God had improved the Garden of Eden

From the beginning, God's kingdom was global in its focus and destiny:

- God ruled directly over all humanity.
- He intended the world to be his kingdom.

God narrowed his focus to a national level, concentrating on Abraham's descendants as his special kingdom.

Under the kingship of Jesus, the focus of God's kingdom was centered on the church.

3. Covenants (23:39)

God administered his kingdom through covenants that expressed:

- God's goodwill toward his people
- the people's obligations toward God
- the consequences of:
 - blessings for obedience
 - curses for disobedience

Six major covenants between God and his people:

- Adam
- Noah
- Abraham
- Moses
- David
- Christ

C. Development of the Kingdom (26:52)

Historical phases:

- creation = initial peace
- fall = rebellion
- redemption = final peace

1. Initial Peace (28:01)

Adam and Eve were obedient servants. As a result, there was peace between God and humanity.

All the components of the covenant worked properly to favor humanity.

2. Rebellion (31:06)

Humanity violated one of their covenant obligations. As a result, they received the covenant curses.

Instead of turning to God in repentance and keeping our covenant obligations, we continued to rebel and to perpetuate the covenant curses.

3. Final Peace (33:06)

God began to restore peace to his kingdom immediately after humanity's fall into sin.

Protoevangelion (“first gospel”) — God offered to send a redeemer to rescue humanity from the curse of sin.

III. Life in the Kingdom (35:44)

Westminster Shorter Catechism 1:

Question: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever

A. Glorify God (37:12)

1. Glory of God (37:36)

Glory of God as the goal of ethics:

- fame or reputation God receives through his works

- honor and praise to God

2. Glorification of God (41:01)

Human beings are obligated to glorify God because he is our king.

Purpose of humanity:

- rule over the earth as God's vassal kings
- spread his rule and the blessings of his kingdom throughout the whole world

As we fulfill God's purpose for humanity:

- his worthiness, fame and reputation increase
- in this way his glory increase

B. Enjoy God (45:55)

Proper human enjoyment brings glory to God.

1. Role of Humanity (46:58)

In God's ideal kingdom, everyone:

- loves the Lord
- shares fellowship with him and with his people

2. Role of Law (49:24)

One role of the law is to instruct us to live in ways that lead to blessing and enjoyment.

If we use the law wrongly, it can lead to terrible consequences.

The proper use of God's law is a great blessing to humanity.

- delight
- gracious gift
- covenant blessings

When we obey God's law, we enjoy him because:

- he blesses our obedience
- it pleases us to bring pleasure to the God we love

When we obey God's law, we glorify him by:

- fulfilling his purpose
- acknowledging his worth
- expressing thanks

IV. Program of the Kingdom (54:18)

In every age God has given rather specific goals to tell his people how to establish his kingdom throughout the whole world.

A. Cultural Mandate (55:18)**1. Definition (55:47)**

Cultural Mandate — God's command that human beings expand his kingdom to the ends of the earth through the development of human culture.

2. Creation Ordinances (58:23)

Ways God reveals his commands:

- verbal — by words
- natural — through the world around us
- creation ordinance — a command that was revealed through God's first acts of creation, when he made the heavens and the earth.

Marriage: based on the purpose for which God created two genders, male and female.

God's purposes in creation:

- are expressions of God's character
- are normative for all human beings

Marriage directly relates to the Cultural Mandate's command to fill the earth, to be fruitful and multiply.

Labor: Adam was created to labor in God's garden; Eve was created to help him.

Labor directly relates to the Cultural Mandate's command to subdue the earth, to establish human societies throughout the world.

3. **Applications (1:03:35)**

Initial peace — the Cultural Mandate was a creative command:

- create more people through marriage
- create ordered societies through labor

Rebellion — corruption and curse applied specifically to marriage and to labor.

The Cultural Mandate still obligates us to:

- marry and procreate
- labor to spread God's kingdom to the ends of the earth

The Cultural Mandate's expanded application:

- subdue and fill the earth with God's faithful people
- restore and redeem fallen human society by purging sin from our cultures

Marriage and labor have redemptive qualities:

- Marriage and reproduction would eventually produce the Savior.
- Labor would sustain the human race long enough to produce the Redeemer.

Noah

- fill the earth
- sustain the world

Abraham

- innumerable descendants
- inherit the whole earth

Jesus

- will perfect the world and the human race
- will be married to the church

B. Great Commission (1:11:42)**1. Definition (1:11:56)**

The Great Commission is:

- Christ's appointment of the eleven faithful apostles as his authoritative representatives
- his charge to them to spread the kingdom of God throughout the whole world

Three essential elements:

- Jesus' statement that he possessed authority
- Jesus' charge to the apostles
- Jesus' assurance that he would empower and protect the apostles.

2. Implications (1:14:28)

The church's responsibility is to continue the kingdom program that the apostles started.

Church's job:

- evangelize everyone in the world
- bring believers and their families into the church
- baptize them
- teach them to obey everything that Jesus commanded

3. **Cultural Mandate (1:16:04)**

Aspects of the relationship between the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission:

- **Similarities**
 - Build God's Kingdom
 - Fill the Earth
 - Subdue the Earth

The Great Commission is Christ's application of the Cultural Mandate until he returns.

- **Differences**

Cultural Mandate: for every age

Great Commission: for the church

Cultural Mandate: fundamental responsibility

Great Commission: primary application

Cultural Mandate: broad commandment

Great Commission: narrow commandment

- **Priorities**

Cultural Mandate has priority because it:

- came first
- expresses the ultimate goal of humanity

Great Commission has priority because it applies the Cultural Mandate to the special circumstances of the present age

The Great Commission's statements are normative interpretations and applications of the Cultural Mandate for our time.

V. Conclusion (1:23:47)

3. Outline the historical development of the kingdom of God through its three major periods.

4. Why and how are we to glorify God?

5. Why and how are we to enjoy God?
6. What is the relationship between God's glory and our enjoyment of him? How can it be said that they comprise a single goal?

7. What is the Cultural Mandate? How does it's modern application compare to its original application?

8. What is the Great Commission? How are we to apply it in modern life?

9. What is the relationship between the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission? What should we do when they seem to be in tension?

Application Questions

1. How does consideration for God's kingdom aid us when making ethical decisions?
2. Describe a practical example of paying proper attention to the kingdom of God in an ethical decision.
3. What implications can we draw for Christian ethics from the fact that human beings are the image of God?
4. List three changes might you make in your life to increase God's fame and reputation, and explain why they would have this effect.
5. In what ways is your life characterized by joy and peace? In what ways do you fall short of this goal?
6. Do you think of God's law as a joy and delight, as a burden, as irrelevant to Christian living, or as something else? Why? How does your view of the law need to change to become more biblical?
7. How can marriage aid a person in fulfilling the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission? How can singleness aid a person in fulfilling these same commands?
8. What would society look like if the Cultural Mandate were successfully and consistently applied throughout the world?
9. What are you currently doing in life to help fulfill the Great Commission? What additional steps could you take to be more effective in reaching this goal?
10. What is the most significant insight you have learned from this study? Why?