

Kingdom Perspectives – Part 4

Today is part 4 of our series of Kingdom Perspectives, October 1, 2008. In part 1 we looked at Kingdom Perspectives about kingdom roots. There are only two kingdoms; kingdom of God, kingdom of Satan. And every choice at any moment is a choice between God and un-God as I phrase it. So at its root every thought that we have is functioning in one of those two kingdoms. We looked at kingdom content in conjunction with kingdom roots. The kingdom content of the kingdom of God is everything that's all summed up in Jesus. Anything in your thought life that is not all summed up in Jesus is in fact functioning in the kingdom of darkness called the kingdom of Satan. Then in part 2 we looked at kingdom views. The fallacy of mankind with self on the throne is to think that he has a kingdom. When unsaved he thinks that the kingdom is entirely his and his is the only kingdom that there is. But when we get saved, we have a tendency to think that we have a kingdom within the kingdom of God and we call that our ministry. But we tend to set the parameters of our functioning in that ministry, how often, how long, to what degree and at what cost as we remain the king over our own self perceived kingdom albeit saved in the kingdom of God. But the view according to God and how He views reality is we never had a kingdom, we never will have a kingdom. When Scripture speaks of our functioning as kings, it's always functioning as kings under the lordship of the King of kings which is Jesus Christ Who is overall the head of the church. In part three we looked at kingdom attire. Scripture is very clear to tell us to put off the old man, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, put on the armor of God (which is what we have in Jesus Christ), and put on who we are in Jesus Christ which is our new creation born again spirit. Today we'll continue the sequence in part 4 which is to give kingdom perspectives about the choices that we make.

First poster. Don't try to digest this all at once; but digest it piecemeal as I talk through it. Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us that the secret things belong to God. Hebrews 11:6 tells us without faith it is impossible to please God. Proverbs 3:5 tells us to trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. When you take those three verses together, here's the printout. God does not tell us everything. In fact, He could not because we are not as created beings able to contain omniscience nor to function in omniscience. We will always reach a point beyond which we do not understand. That's why we relate to God by faith, not by understanding. Our faith is always in God Who transcends our understanding. Our faith is never in our ability to understand everything about God. We walk by faith, not by sight, including when we bump up against the limits of God's revelation to us and the beginning of the secret things that God has kept for Himself. We know from Scripture that there are various influences on our choices. God can soften hearts and harden hearts. He can veil minds and unveil minds. He can open hearts and close hearts. He can alter circumstances that play a role in shaping our choices or how we view our choices. That's part of the sovereignty of God. God overrules any other influence at any time of His choosing to accomplish His purposes. Thus, on this diagram, I've represented God as the top portion of this poster; and this poster relates to the roles that are played upon the choices exercised by man. I've drawn God as open-ended at the top. I do that to indicate that we cannot limit the degree of the power of God nor limit the sovereignty of God and His exercise of that sovereignty. The time-honored saying is, you can't put God in a box. So I put Him in a semi-box graphically to show His position related to Satan and man; but open-ended to indicate that we cannot put a limit upon God. The arrows going up and down simply indicate that He can facilitate certain choices and restrain other choices. In His sovereignty He

can do that to any being whether it be Satan or man. And He can do so at any time of His choosing. This is His universe and everything belongs to Him including all that dwell therein. Everything is truly under God. The word creature means a created being. God is uncreated. So God is a being, but He's not a creature. All creatures, being created, are under the dominion of and belong to their creator who is a being, but not a creature.

Satan also has influences. He uses deception and circumstances to shape the decisions made by man. He can keep people blinded. We're told that clearly in II Corinthians 4:4. Through that blindness he functions as the king of his kingdom. I drew the box representing Satan as closed meaning that Satan's influence on choices is finite since he is a creature. He is a created being. I also drew him as underneath God since all creatures are ultimately underneath their uncreated creator—namely God. I drew Satan as under God and adjacent to man since I Peter 5:8 tells us that your adversary (speaking of Satan the devil) prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Satan is drawn as larger than man since his power exceeds that of man. Satan has supernatural powers that man does not have. All you have to do is look at the contest of miracles when the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt, when the sorcerers and so on working under Pharaoh performed all sorts of miracles through the power of Satan. So just because something is supernatural doesn't mean it is of God. Supernatural means it is not of man, at least acting alone. Man is the lesser creature. Satan is the greater creature; but a creature nonetheless; because both Satan and man are creatures—that is to say created beings. The only way that the lesser creature (namely man) can cope with and overcome the greater creature (namely Satan) is for the lesser creature to be empowered by the only uncreated being Who is not a creature (namely God) Who is over all. That way, and that is the only way, that God gets all the glory. If man could overcome Satan on his own, then man would get the glory. But the only way that the lesser creature can cope with and overcome the greater creature is by drawing from the power of the only uncreated being (namely God) thus, God gets all the glory.

Man is given choice by God. Recall we're given choice that it may be of love because love is relational and relational requires choice. No choice given at all equals robotic slavery; but nothing to do with love. Giving us a command in Scripture would make little sense if we never had any God-given space in which to obey or disobey that command. Also we can facilitate or inhibit certain choices in our own minds by how we approach that particular choice. Man is always given the same choice. That choice is to be God determined or self determined which is what un-God means. If the choice is God and un-God and if we don't choose God, any other choice is un-God—that is to say ungodly, which translates for us to be self determined. Man is never told the precise amount of influence by God, by man, or by Satan on any individual choice made by man. God did not reveal to Job the God-permitted satanic influence upon the life of Job. But Job was still accountable for his choices; whether to choose to walk according to God or choose to walk according to something else. Philippians 2:12 tells us to work out your salvation. It's a command. Work it out with fear and trembling. Then the very next verse tells us in Philippians 2:13 for it is God Who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure. In other words God is willing and working for His pleasure, but we're told to work it out with fear and trembling. Throughout Scripture we're told that God influences the parameters and the choices of Satan and of man. We're told throughout Scripture that Satan can have influences upon the choices made by man and we're told throughout Scripture that man is accountable for his choices. Handle it; because that's what the Word of God says. We're left

with a certain tension state if we try to be overly analytical and walk by our understanding about the magnitude of these various facilitating and restraining influences on any particular choice. But we are given all encompassing spiritual principles by which we are to walk by faith as opposed to walking by our understanding about the magnitude of these various influences at any moment. I Corinthians 10:31 – Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. When you're trying to analyze these influences in microscopic fashion on each choice, then you're giving no glory to God. But when you're taking all that is within you and applying it to the choice at hand to choose God and not choose un-God, then you're doing it to the glory of God. Ambiguity about the magnitude of these various influences upon us at any moment is never to be even regarded as an issue in our choices. We simply rest in God with the perspective that Ezekiel had. Thou knowest Lord. Recall that story in Ezekiel of dry bones when God said to Ezekiel son of man, can these bones live? And Ezekiel said oh Lord God, Thou knowest. Ezekiel didn't try to give the answer; he rested in the sovereignty and omniscience of God and we do the same thing. I do not have to know the degree of influence upon me at any given moment either facilitating or restraining. I function in the light of what I am told to do which is the command that whatever I do (including the next choice) I am to do to the glory of God.

My perspective on each choice then is similar to that of Joshua in Joshua 24:15 – Choose today whom you will serve; but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord. And that's how we're to approach each choice. My attitude in regard to each choice and the roles that these principles play becomes the following. I do not know all the factors or influences that could be facilitating or restraining my choices either directly or through circumstances. But insofar as it depends on me, I will choose the Lord. I will serve the Lord. I will glorify the Lord. I will walk by faith in the Lord and not walk by my own understanding. Because if I demand to understand before I choose God in this choice, then I'm walking by worshiping self and not by worshiping God. Thus, I actively and aggressively with all that is within me choose God rather than un-God with this present choice. I walk by faith, not by understanding. That's to apply the spiritual principle of Romans 12:18 where it says – If possible so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. It is not always dependent on you as to whether you can be at peace with all men. But insofar as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. So the influence of each in regard to the choice that I'm facing right now, Thou knowest, Lord. My role in the choice; insofar as it depends on me, I choose You.

Next poster. With what attitudes are these choices to be made? There are only two general attitudes available—namely humility and pride. Humility has the following attitude and self on the throne cannot accept humility in making choices. Humility says whenever I choose God I give God all of the glory. This means that I give God all of the credit for the fact that I chose Him. I never try to claim credit or glory for myself because I chose God with any particular choice. I work out my salvation by choosing God. But I never could have done so if God were not willing and working within me to empower me to choose Him. Whenever humility chooses un-God, then humility takes all responsibility for the ungodly choice and never seeks to excuse the ungodly choice by trying to shift the blame onto God, onto Satan, onto others, or onto circumstances. Humility says regardless of anything else I am capable of much more evil than I have manifested except for the fact of God's restraining grace upon me.

Flesh on the throne cannot adopt a position of humility because of this. Pride has the following attitude. Whenever pride chooses God, it wants to give itself the glory and bask in the warm glow of how vigorously it resisted all contrary influences and how well it served God. Pride even hopes that others notice and reinforce the credit given to pride for how wise it was and self controlled it was to make such a wonderful choice as to choose God. Whenever pride chooses un-God, it fixes the blame on God, on Satan, on others, or on circumstances. You notice in humility no glory ever goes to self because God tells us My glory I will not share with another...nor should He since He is the only thing in all of existence worthy of any glory.

Next poster. Now for the electrical engineers among us, I'm going to take a natural law and use it to explain spiritual truth. Ohm's Law is a law related to electrical circuitry. It's usually stated as $E = I R$. This means that in any electrical circuit there's an electromotive force that we think of as causing current to flow, that is to say, the push to make the current flow. That's known by the letter E, electromotive force. We know that in familiar terms related to the unit of voltage. There is a resistance that hinders the flow of current. That's known by the letter R. There is a current which flows and that current is depicted by the letter I. Now on this poster, I've manipulated algebraically Ohm's Law. Instead of writing it as traditionally given, $E = I R$, I've divided each side of the equation by R and you know from your basic mathematics when you divide each side of an equation by the same number, you don't change the equation; it's still an equation. So the equation after you've divided each side by R becomes $E \text{ over } R = I$. This allows us to see the relationship of E (the force) and R (the resistance) on the left side of the equation. Only the amount of current that flows is left on the right side of the equation. So it makes it easy to follow the discussion I'm about to give.

This equation from the natural realm allows us to understand the spiritual realm. In the flesh man views himself as the E. He views himself as the voltage. This is to function in self determination with self as the basis of all. Pride is always the attitude of someone who is in the flesh and pride requires that self view self as the force that's making things happen in the universe including in the spirit realm. Pride tends to view itself as the E. That is to say as the force that makes good things happen in the spirit realm. Pride tends to view circumstances as the R. That is to say as the resistance. And that resistance could include God, Satan, others, or circumstances. Pride thinks that if it were not for these other mitigating influences causing such a high R. that I am providing certainly enough force to make things happen in the spirit realm and to make fruit come to bear.

Someone functioning in the spirit realm has a totally different attitude—namely that of humility. Humility says that God is the E and God is always providing plenty of voltage to make current flow in the spirit realm. The problem is me. I'm giving too high an R. I'm too resistant to the flow of current in the spirit realm. Thus, I provide too much resistance for fruit to be born. That is to say no current flows. Humility, not pride, is the proper kingdom attitude toward all of our kingdom choices. May we never forget James 2:26 – God is opposed to the proud who views himself as the E and circumstances as the R. Oh, but He gives His grace to the humble who acknowledges how God views reality, that God is the E and I am the R

Next poster. All I did was redraw Ohm's Law on this poster to add a little more light and specifics to that which I'm describing. The problem is that we constantly misunderstand our role

as Christians and our assignment as Christians and our methodology of how to function as Christians. My will is given to me by God. It is my chooser; therefore, it is my worshiper, because what else is your chooser other than choosing what to worship? But recall the fundamental spiritual principle. I get to choose; but I don't get to choose what the choices are, I don't get to choose the consequences of the choices, I don't get to choose not to choose, and I don't get to choose both simultaneously. The choices given by God are self and Jesus Christ. Here's what we're to do. We're told in Scripture to fix our gaze upon Jesus. Jesus is the E. Self is the R. When I use my will to set the mind and set the gaze upon Jesus, here's what happens according to spiritual Ohm's Law. R decreases. Self is controlled as a fruit of the Spirit. F increases. That is to say I'm now converting I into a spiritual term of spiritual fruit which I label F. Fruit is born in the kingdom of God. Who gets the glory? When my will is used to fix my gaze upon Jesus and R diminishes and fruit grows, God gets the glory. I didn't do anything to make fruit grow. All I did was gaze at Jesus. This is the spirit realm to function the way I just described. That's Romans, chapter 8. I acknowledge that Jesus is the E, that I am the R, that I am to use my will to set my gaze upon Jesus. As I set my gaze upon Jesus, R decreases and F increases and Jesus gets the glory as He provides the force. The force that Jesus provides is through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came to bear witness of Jesus. The Holy Spirit came to bring glory to Jesus. That only occurs when we join in the mission of the Holy Spirit which is to bear witness of Jesus, to bring glory to Jesus, to fix the gaze upon Jesus. The Holy Spirit never came to help us bear fruit independent of gazing at Jesus. Because all we do then is bear witness of self and bring glory to self. The Holy Spirit didn't come to help us decrease R by looking at R as we'll see here momentarily.

Now here is what happens when I misunderstand my role and misunderstand how I am to function in the spirit realm. This becomes the flesh dependent on flesh. First I may regard myself as the E and circumstances as the R. I then try to take my will and become the E and make F increase. Anytime that I do that, anytime I'm trying to be the E (increase the force) and make F increase, R increases because I'm relying on the power of self (bringing glory to self) to accomplish the purposes of God and God will not share His glory with anyone. So anytime you're trying independent of gazing at Jesus to accomplish something in the spirit realm, you're bearing witness of self and bringing glory to self and taking credit for any F. And God will not allow that to persist. When you do that you then become proud of what a good E you are which simply means that R is increasing. And as R increases, F will decrease. The second way that flesh operates in the spirit realm according to Ohm's Law is that even if I realize that I am the R, then here's what I immediately do. I immediately shift into gear to decrease the R. But when I focus on R, R increases. That's because I'm relying on R to try to decrease R and no being will ever do anything to decrease itself. That increases R because I'm using the power of self to deny self. And the power of self can never deny self. If it could do so, self control would be a fruit of self, not a fruit of the Spirit.

So here's the bottom line by way of review in Ohm's Law in the spirit realm. In the flesh when I focus on R (to try to decrease R), R increases and F decreases. When I try to be the E, R increases and F decreases. When I look and try to increase F directly, R increases and F decreases. That's why we have so many wonderful church programs in so many dead churches. In the spirit this is how God views reality. I'm the R. Jesus is the E. And I am to fix my gaze upon E. When I fix my gaze upon E, R decreases and F increases and God gets the glory.

One more point I need to make about R observing E; we are to observe E, but here's how we tend to do it when self is on the throne. R must not be busy observing how well R is observing E. If R observes R observe E, then R increases because the focus is still on self and not on Jesus. So I stand up and teach to bring glory to God. But as I teach, if my focus is on how well I'm teaching because instead of focusing on glory to God, I'm focusing on how well I'm teaching to bring glory to God, then I am in the flesh and R is increasing. Likewise if a singer is singing to bring glory to God, but focusing on how well singing is being done to the glory of God, then the focus is on self and not on God and when focus is on self, you cannot bring glory to God. So that abominates what is intended to be worship. It is not true worship.

Next poster. We'll go through this step by step, so don't try to take it all in at once. This poster shows us how we are to show improvement in the kingdom of God based on how we understand kingdom choice that we are making at any moment. The flesh with self on the throne cannot be improved for it is depraved. Romans 7:18 – For I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh. The spirit, which is the new creation self, cannot be improved for it is perfect. Ephesians 4:24 says – And put on the new self, the new creation in other words, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and true holiness. Improvement, therefore, is to put on number two, the new creation. We covered that in Kingdom Attire last week. Improvement is simultaneously to deny number one. That's part of Luke 9:23 – If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. So improvement is not by improving flesh. Improvement is not by improving the new creation. Improvement is simply to put on Kingdom Attire; to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, put on the armor of God, put on the new creation, and deny self; because you can't put on both simultaneously. Improvement in putting on number two and denying number one is what causes transformation by the renewing of the mind as we're told in Romans 12:2.

Here is the key point in summary fashion. We can never improve the old self or what's otherwise called the old man or the Adamic nature or the sin nature. It cannot be improved. This is the root of what the Bible calls flesh and in my flesh dwells no good thing. The flesh is always to be denied, not improved. The flesh is depraved and will always be depraved until it is annihilated because it will not go into Heaven with you. Likewise our new creation spirit cannot be improved; but for an entirely different reason. Our new spirit, our new creation self cannot be improved because it is already perfect. The only thing left that can be improved is your mind. And that's why we're told to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. We are never told to improve our new creation self. We're never told to improve our flesh. And the person trying to improve his flesh walks in futility because he's the one who says it's wrong to lust; so I will not lust, I will not lust, I will not lust. Lust comes out of the flesh with self on the throne with a lust to fulfill self, independent of God, functioning in self determination and it will never not lust because it is opposed to anything that God says.

So last time we talked about Kingdom Attire. Recall what it means to put something on in Scriptural terms. It means to call to mind, to pay attention to, to meditate on, to apply as the frame of reference for all interpretation, for all analysis, for all decision-making and order one's life based upon it. That's what it means to put it on. In short form it means to walk by faith in. And every moment in our Christian lives we are walking by faith in self or we are walking by

faith in Jesus Christ. It's that simple. Improvement, therefore, is to simply improve in walking by faith in Jesus Christ. But here are key points. We never improve Jesus. We never improve our new creation spirits. We never improve our old selves. We never improve what we have in Jesus. That's why we're told to put on the armor, not improve the armor, then put it on. We don't even improve in our faith. We improve in our utilization of our faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We have this faith or we would not be Christians. We have this faith or we would not have the Holy Spirit indwelling us. We have this faith or we wouldn't have the Holy Spirit sealing our perfected spirits. So we don't improve our faith; we simply improve in our utilization of our faith. That's why the disciples said to Jesus increase our faith; and He said if you have faith, here's what it will look like. We simultaneously improve in refusing to walk by faith in self. But here's a key point. We do not decrease faith in self by trying to decrease faith in self. That's a work of the flesh. That's why you can't conjure up faith and you can't conjure up diminution of faith in self. You fix your gaze upon Jesus, not try to improve self. As you see Jesus the way that He is revealed in the Bible, then faith in self cannot be maintained. Can you imagine the idiocy of functioning in the power of self when you're looking at the power that created the heavens and the Earth by speaking a word? The absolute idiocy of faith in self is revealed only when you are looking at Jesus and seeing Him as the Bible revealed Himself to be. Any maintenance of faith in self simply means that you're refusing to look at the Jesus as revealed in the Bible.

So here is our kingdom choice in stark terms. At every moment in our Christian lives we will either be putting on divinity or putting on depravity. We don't get to choose the choices. And we don't get to not choose because you're going to be attired in something every moment of your thought life. And it's going to be either depravity or divinity. The self functioning on the throne, which is the root of the flesh, is depraved. It is hostile to God. You're not going to improve that. The spirit with Jesus as the basis is divine. You're not going to improve Jesus. You're not going to improve what you have in Jesus. You're not going to improve your new creation. You're not going to improve your faith. You are to put it on by paying attention, setting the mind and seeing truth as revealed in the Bible about the Jesus of the Bible and then all R will melt away. We are to partake of the divine nature and we partake of it by putting it on. But if we default and do not put it on, the default position is self on the throne which is the root of the flesh. So may the starkness of that statement be imbedded in us that at every moment we're putting on either depravity, the old self on the throne, or putting on divinity which is Jesus Christ on the throne in regard to your next thought because that's the only way you're going to show improvement. So you don't need a breakthrough. Jesus Christ provided the only breakthrough you ever need. There's nothing you have to break through. All you have to do is live in the light of what Jesus broke through which is to overcome sin, to overcome death and to grant you the gift of eternal life by being a born again spirit which has been created in righteousness and true holiness in the image of God. Put it on. That's how you show improvement. And that's how kingdom choice is to function based on how God views reality because I didn't make this up. It is written and that's where this came from. So this has to be our kingdom perspective about our kingdom choices.

So my time is more than up and I thank you for yours.