



WEEK 8: **WORK THE CIRCLE**

Key Scriptures: *John 5:17, Philipians 2:13, Mark 1:14-15, Matthew 6:9-10*

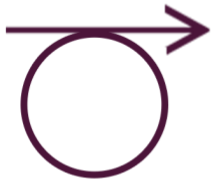
*"My Father is working until now, and I am working."
– Jesus (John 5:17)*

*"It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."
– Paul (Philipians 2:13)*

*"Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."
– Jesus (Mark 1:14-15)*

Pray then like this:

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
– Jesus (Matthew 6:9-10)*



WEEK 8: PRE-GROUP READING

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In this final week of *People Skills: Cultivating Emotionally Healthy Relationships*, we are placing all that we have learned within the broader context of our Christian discipleship. Developing a growing spiritual life in which we love God and others well requires a conscious, purposeful plan -- what Eugene Peterson called "long obedience in the same direction."

Learning some new skills is a start, but using skills well requires practicing them until they become our new instinctive responses. Reversing decades of unhealthy ways of relating requires thoughtfulness and intentionality over time.

Our tool this week is The Life-Change Circle, a tool that we use at ChangePoint to describe how God invites us to change and how we respond to Him. Jesus' first gospel message was that all should "repent and believe" because "the Kingdom of God was at hand."

The Kingdom of God is wherever God is king. Each of us is invited to enter the Kingdom more and more fully as God becomes our king. This is why Jesus teaches us to pray "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." The process of God's Kingdom "coming" in our lives is a process that we are invited into daily.

As followers of Christ, we can be confident that God is always at work in our lives. But ordering our lives so that we are intentionally paying attention to God and remembering him in all we do is no small task! This is especially true in the ever-changing dynamic of our relationships with other people. Holy Spirit-empowered "people skills" won't grow by themselves over time. Our role in God's work in our lives is to intentionally partner with him as he produces change—and spiritual fruit—in us.



WEEK 8: GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Take some time to catch up and connect as a group. Pray to transition into discussion.

Growing Connected

This is the final week of *People Skills*. Take a moment to share what this experience has been like for you. What have you found most helpful? What didn't really connect with you?

Bible Study

Have someone read aloud for the group Mark 1:14-15 and Matthew 6:9-10 (found also under this week's Key Scriptures).

- 1. What does it mean for "God's Kingdom to come" on earth as it is in heaven?**
- 2. What did Jesus mean by saying that the Kingdom of God is "at hand?"**
- 3. Why does Jesus say that the nearness of God's Kingdom means that we should "repent and believe?"**

Tool of the Week

Our final Tool of the Week is the *Life-Change Circle* found on the next page of this guide. Review that tool now.

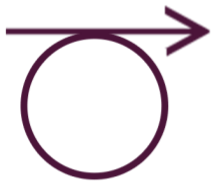
Follow-up Questions

- 4. A *Kairos moment* is an event, large or small, that begins the process by which Jesus wants to change our perspective and move us in a new direction. Share a recent Kairos Moment from your own life. If you're not sure, share a *possible* Kairos Moment.**
- 5. What do you think God was saying to you?**
- 6. What do you think God might want you to do in response to what He is saying?**

Conclusion

Kairos Moments come in all shapes and sizes, but very often they are connected to our relationships with people. All Iceberg Moments *can* become Kairos Moments. Conflict in relationship can be an invitation from Jesus to confront sin and follow Him instead.

We hope that you have benefitted from this People Skills series and that it helps you to cultivate healthy relationships like Jesus in your own life. God invites each of us to bring our lives into his Kingdom and under his authority – and this includes our relationships. As we continue to respond to his prompting, we move more directly into his Kingdom and experience Life in Christ.



WEEK 8: TOOL OF THE WEEK

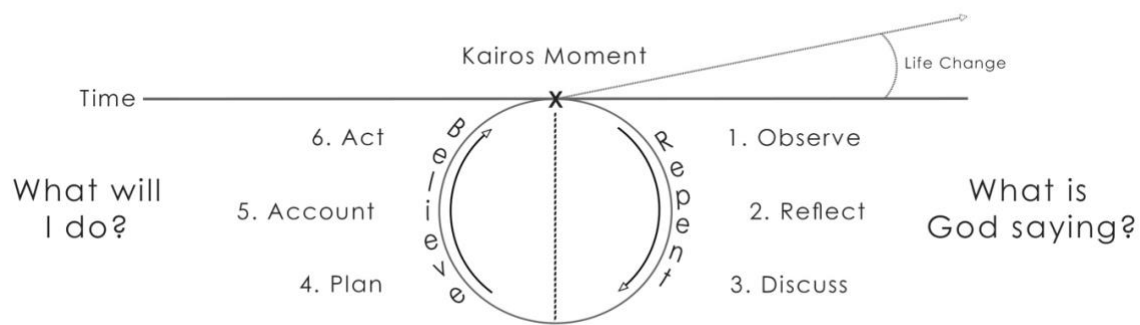
The Life-Change Circle was taken from *A Jesus-Shaped Life* by Bob Rognlien from 3DM Ministries.

Kairos Moments: Recognizing God's prompting and learning to respond.

A kairos moment is an event, large or small, that begins the process by which Jesus wants to change our perspective and move us in a new direction. Repentance means we observe this event and begin to reflect on it by discussing it with others. Through this process we ask others to help us answer the question: Jesus, what are you saying to me?

The word "Kairos" is the Greek word which we translate as "time" from Mark 1:15. This term is quite different from the chronological passage of time. Kairos refers to a critical moment in time, a crossroads. When we reach that crossroads, Jesus calls us to do two things: repent and believe.

The Life-Change Circle



Repent: to repent is not to feel bad about things we have done. It literally means to "change direction," change our minds and gain a new perspective. When Jesus calls us to repent, he calls us to agree with God's perspective. This leads us to the key question:

What is God saying?

Three helpful steps in discerning what God is saying:

1. **Observe** – Ask yourself what happened and how you are feeling about it.
2. **Reflect** – Prayerfully think about what God might be saying through it.
3. **Discuss** – Share your reflections with trusted spiritual partners.

Believe: The word believe in Mark 1:15 is the verb form of the noun we usually translate faith. It means putting our faith into action. It is a call to trust Jesus enough to put what he says into action. This leads us to the key question: **What am I going to do about it?**

Three helpful steps in following through on what God has called you to do:

1. **Plan** – Make a plan about how you will obey God.
2. **Account** – Share with trusted partners your commitment to do this.
3. **Act** – Do what God has called you to.