



Links Players

Fundamentals - Lesson 2: The "I" in LINKS Integrating Christ's Reign into Every Area of Life

*...if you confess with your mouth that **Jesus is Lord** and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (Romans 10:9-10, ESV)*

Like me, many of our readers grew up playing persimmon woods. We marveled at the grains, stains, and shapes of those beautifully-crafted masterpieces.

In the early nineties, persimmon woods were on their way out, and metal-woods (an oxymoron) were on their way in. During this transition, significant debates abounded regarding who would be king of the market.

The debate about who would win market share (i.e., wood or metal) has long been settled. However, debates about who is King of the world are still raging (Psalm 2).

In truth, that was decided long ago. However, many still resist Jesus' reign. The Father's mercy and patience allow this futile opposition to continue (1 Peter 3:8-9). Jesus is seated on the throne of heaven (Acts 2:29-35), and nothing could ever change that. Scripture sums that up by declaring, "Jesus is Lord."

The late prime minister of the Netherlands, Abraham Kuyper, captured it best by saying, "There is not a square inch in the whole of creation over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

Saying "Jesus is Lord" acknowledges his governance over all aspects of life. It abandons the throne of our hearts and yields it to him. His commands should govern our personal, familial, professional, educational, political, and avocational lives. Following Jesus in discipleship is a lifelong commitment in subduing every dimension of our life, private and public, under his Lordship.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who died a martyr's death resisting Hitler, once wrote, "When Christ bids a man to come and follow, he bids that man to come and die." Bonhoeffer did not mean that all would die a physical death. But when anyone responds in faith to Jesus as Lord,

that begins a lifelong journey of learning to say, "Not my will, but your will be done."

Jesus calls all his disciples to "take up their cross, deny themselves and follow" (Matthew 10:38-39). The cross we pick up is metaphorical. Just as the Jesus' cross was an instrument of death, Jesus is saying to his disciples that a life committed to following him will demand "death to self."

We often forget, however, an enormous promise—the promise of life— is attached to this self-denial. If one follows Jesus in self-denial, he will "find his life" (Mark 8:34-35). This is the very life of the Spirit of God in the soul of a man or woman.

Prayer – Jesus! We believe in our heart and confess with our mouths that you are Lord. Empower us to yield all dimensions of our lives and loves to you.

READING - Philippians 2:1-11; Romans 10:5-13; Mark 8:34-38; Hebrews 12:1-3; Isaiah 53:10-12

OPENING QUESTIONS: Do you remember the days when we played persimmon woods? What brand did you play? Did you struggle to make the transition from persimmon to metal? How will this technology evolve?

1. Does Jesus command us to take up our cross and die for the sake of death (not necessarily a physical death)? *Hint* - what is promised if we "die to self?" **Mark 8:35**.

2. Does Jesus' die on the cross with no expectation of reward? *Hint* - what does Hebrews say Jesus looked forward to? - **Hebrews 12:1-3**. What does Isaiah prophesy that Jesus will receive if he gives his life in sacrifice (i.e., death)? - **Isaiah 53: 10-12**.

3. What does Paul teach us in **Romans 10:5-13** about salvation? *Hint* - what is it that we are to believe and confess?
