

International Conversation Café

Is Faith Relevant to My Life?

Human Need: To Be Part of a Bigger and Greater Story Than Yourself

Have you ever been involved in a school or work project with other people? If you have, you know that group projects work well when the work is divided up with everyone working on an area of their expertise. When the project is finished, it tends to be much better than if one person worked on it alone. Even when we do work on a project alone, we borrow ideas and further the work of someone who has studied before us.

Can you tell about a group project you were involved with? How did you feel about working with others? How did you feel about the result?

God's kingdom is like a big group project. The author and initiator of the project is God. He began the project when he created the heavens and earth. The goal of the project is to bring people from every nation, tribe, people and language, the pleasure of knowing, loving, and honoring God. How would he do this? First, he created people, in his image, like his representatives. They possessed intelligence, emotion, choice, and creativity, just as he has, only to a lesser degree. He also gave them the responsibility to care for the earth.

²⁷ So God created human beings in his own likeness.

He created them to be like himself.

He created them as male and female.

God blessed them. He said to them, "Have children so that there will be many of you. Fill the earth and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the seas and the birds in the sky. Rule over every living creature that moves along the ground." ~Genesis 1:26-28

What were the responsibilities given to the man and the woman?

How would you describe the role of the man and woman to each other and to God?

God's project went pretty well for a time. The man and woman enjoyed God's presence. But one day, the woman and man disregarded the director's (God's) instructions and ate from a tree they were told not to eat from. Because they were ashamed, the man and woman hid from God. Then the relationship between the man and woman broke when they began blaming each other for what went wrong. However, God found the man and woman and made peace with them through a sacrifice.

The project continued forward but with mixed results. Some people turned to honor God, the Creator. But many people rejected God and his kingdom. Just as the first man and woman blamed each other, people continued to destroy each other with jealousy, selfishness, and greed. This is not how God intended his kingdom to grow.

But God was not willing to stop the project. He had a plan to get his kingdom project back on track. First, he sent Jesus to tell and show people how to live with peace toward God and others. Then Jesus took the blame for everything that had gone wrong. He sacrificed his life to pay for the wrongs we had

done to God by putting other things in the place of God. He suffered for the wrongs we had done to each other as well. "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross." ~1 Peter 2: 24

Summarize in your own words why Jesus came to earth.

Next, God raised Jesus from the dead, "but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen," and gave him the power to give life to everyone who would trust in him. "All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." ~ Acts 10: 39,43 The Bible says Jesus is the king over the kingdom because he has the power to give eternal life, "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." ~Romans 6:23

Why do you think the story of the resurrection is important to the project of restoring God's kingdom?

Remember, the goal of the project, God's kingdom, is to bring people from every nation, tribe, people and language, the pleasure of knowing, loving, and honoring God together. We are not talking about a political kingdom. Jesus said his kingdom was not of this world. We are talking about people who are willing to live under the rules of his kingdom, under the protection and love of God.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. ~Romans 14:17,18

How would you describe what the kingdom of God is?

Do you long for a greater purpose in life than accumulating wealth, fame, or power? Are you interested in living with peace and love for all people as God intended? Would you like to be under the care of a leader who truly loves and is just? Then maybe you should consider joining the project of God's kingdom with Jesus as the director and king. How do you join? Here was Jesus' invitation to people when he was on this earth. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" ~ Mark 1:15

Repent means to have a change of mind, to turn from one's sin and turn to God.

What are the main thoughts in these verses?

Retell the main thoughts of this discussion from the beginning.

You might wonder how this project leads ends? What about those who don't choose to follow Jesus? These would be topics for further investigation. For now, you might want to consider the conclusion of the story summarized in these words. You can be part of the greatest and best story.

Therefore, God exalted him (Jesus) to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ~Philippians 2:9-11

Questions? Observations? Thoughts?