

***Christianity with Power:  
Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural***  
by Charles H. Kraft (1989)

**Jesus' Kingdom Perspectives**

Adapted and edited from the book

Jesus exercised His ministry based on certain guiding principles. His guiding principles should be normative for us as well. Most of the guiding principles of Jesus that challenge our perspectives center around two themes: power and love.

1. **Jesus teaches guiding principles concerning the nature and activities of God.** He teaches that God is our heavenly Father who is always favorably disposed towards His children while demanding obedience and faithfulness. The Father's children are always welcome in His presence. He pines for those who turn away but welcomes them back with feasting when they return (Lk 15:11-32). It means that no matter what that person does, we will desire anything but his highest good. We will also go out of our way to be good and kind to him. \*One who understands and relates to people on the basis of their motives rather than their surface-level behavior or condition. (Lk 5: 17-25; Mt 23:1-36).
2. **Jesus also assumed the existence of the spirit world.** He teaches us about the existence of angels, demons and Satan. That world is very real to Him and it should be more real to us.
3. **Jesus teaches that there are in two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.** As He makes plain in Matthew 12:22-29, these kingdoms are at war with each other. The kingdom of God is assured of victory in this war (Colossians 2:15; 1 John 3:8) because of Jesus's death and resurrection. Yet Jesus doesn't dispute Satan's claim that he is in charge of the world. (Lk 4: 6-7) Jesus seems to have accepted the fact that the "kingdoms of the world" have been "been handed over to [Satan]" and that now "the whole world is under the rule of the Evil One" (1 Jn 5:19).

It is the mission of Jesus and His followers to establish another kingdom behind enemy lines. It is as if Jesus had secretly entered into enemy territory, gathered followers, trained them and then set them loose behind enemy lines. Their mission is to take more and more territory from Satan. Taking that territory is done by freeing those who are captive to and oppressed by the enemy. Our mandate or mission then is the same as Jesus announced for Himself: "*the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord save his people*" (Lk 4: 18-19).

Jesus' kingdom people are to receive the Spirit of the Lord as He did, through the in-filling of the Holy Spirit (Lk 3:21 -22). Then in the power and authority given by God, in the name of Jesus, we are to release the poor, captive, blind, and oppressed people from the enemy. For the "the time has come" when God is rescuing those who have fallen under the influence of Satan. Jesus tells us that there is a conflict with the forces of evil and He enlists us in this war. We, like Jesus, are to fight this war against evil using the power of God's love.

4. **Jesus teaches that this is a power confrontation.** Although He says much about love in relation to the people we are to free, the assumption with regard to Satan is power vs. power. Jesus exercises His authority and power continuously in opposition to Satanic activity both through His teaching, healing and forgiving of sins (Luke 4:32-39).

As the Father had sent Jesus, Jesus sends out His disciples with “power and authority” to oppose Satan by driving out demons, curing diseases, communicating the kingdom of God and forgiving sins. (Matthew 10:1, 7-8; Lk Luke 9:1-2 and 10:9; John 20-21 9:1-2; 10:9; John 20:21-23). Because Jesus Himself has been given authority, He commissions us to go out and do the same things He did and to do even more than He did. (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 6:28; John 14:12)

**5. Jesus and His followers receive all their power from the Holy Spirit** Jesus apparently did no supernatural acts before “God poured out on Him the Holy Spirit and power. [Then] He went everywhere, doing good and healing all who are under the power of the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). In His humanity, Jesus Christ obtained the power to fight against evil not from His inherent divinity, but by His anointing through the Holy Spirit. We cannot do any of the works Jesus promised we would do unless we too are empowered by the Spirit. (John 14:12) We receive our power from the Holy Spirit just as Jesus did and we are His witnesses (Acts 1:8). We are ambassadors for Christ, representing the kingdom of Jesus ( 2 Corinthians 5:20).

**6. Jesus only does God’s works as He sees and does what the Father is doing** (John 5:19). So too we can only do God’s works as we see and do what the Father is doing. We are to maintain a close relationship with the Father as Jesus did. We are to do nothing on our own authority, but to say only what the Father instructs us to say and to “always do what pleases Him” (John 8:28-29). It is crucial, therefore, that we learn to hear God. If Jesus had to spend lots of time in prayer to do this, we must also learn to do so.

**7. To Jesus believing is seeing** (Luke 8:9-10). The knowledge and wisdom of the kingdom are only available to those who first believe and trust the King. Many at the time Jesus came, especially the religious leaders, willfully refused to believe Him and thus blinded themselves to the real issues of the kingdom. To those who did believe, however, Jesus said things like, “Your faith has made you well” (Matthew 9:22; Mark 10:52).

**8. Obedience to God brings knowledge.** When the authorities asked: “How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?” Jesus answered them, “my teaching is not mine, but His few sent me; if any man’s will is to do His will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God whether I’m speaking on my own authority.” (John 7:15-17)

**9. Agape love is the appropriate human response both to God and to man.** When Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment, He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

Jesus goes even further. For not only to love our neighbors, were also to love our enemies and others who treat us badly, even to use the spiritual power God gives us to “bless those who curse [us]” (Luke 6:27-36). That is, we are to “do for others just what [we] want them to do for [us]” (Luke 6:31). We are to be “merciful just as [our] Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36). We are to imitate Jesus by treating our fellow human beings as God treats them.

**10. Jesus teaches that forgiving others enables us to receive God’s forgiveness and our unforgiveness of others blocks God’s forgiveness of us** (Matthew 6:12, 14-15) Because of our own propensities for sin, we should not judge and condemn others. Instead, we are called to be generous like God, for “the measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you” (Luke 6:38).

Our natural inclination and worldly “wisdom” pressure us to give others what we get from them or, worse, what we think they deserve. And the unforgiveness, judgment, and condemnation that result often make us ill. Such attitudes also block our relationship with God and the healing He would like to bring to us. There is no

greater blockage to receiving healing from God than the refusal to forgive others. Only adopting God's attitude toward others can free us to relate properly to God, others and ourselves.

**11. If we acknowledge our sin, God will forgive us** (Matthew 4:17; Luke 5:17-25; 1 John 1:9). It is our natural inclination and the way of the world to attempt to hide our sin either by denying it or by comparing it to that of others. "I'm not as bad as so-and-so," we say, trying to rationalize our own sin. But God's standard is the only one that counts. And by that standard we are all guilty. However, when we confess our sin to Him we are forgiven.

**12. We are not to fight back** (Luke 6:29). Jesus teaches us to absorb whatever blows that are leveled at us and not to resist them. The real winners and losers will be determined by God at a later date, not by humans on the basis of what happens now. We are never to take revenge, but instead repay good for evil (Romans 12:17-21). God Himself will take care repaying those who deserve punishment, for He says, "I will repay, I will pay back" (Romans 12:19) therefore, we are to act like Jesus. We are to bless and "pray for those who mistreat" us.

**13. Faithfulness to God and concern for the kingdom are the two most important goals in life. Every other goal is secondary to these.** (Matthew 6:33). Contrary to what the world recommends, we are to forget ourselves. We are not to try to get ahead in the world's eyes but to follow Jesus without hesitation and refuse to worry about material things (Luke 9:23-26; Matthew 6:24-34).

**14. As God's stewards, we are to risk with and for God.** In the parable of the talents the principal lesson taught by Jesus is that doing the right thing with what God gives us is what counts. Whether or not there is "success," as measured by human standards, is not the most important issue. (Matthew 25:14-30)

**15. To be great in the kingdom is to become like a child** (Matthew 18:1-5). Jesus holds up children as models of humility, dependence, trust and innocence. Children are willing to experiment and even to fail. They have an insatiable desire to learn through experience. Likewise, a child is tender. There is a willingness to express emotion and an inability to hide one's real motivation (a lack of guile, John 1:47). The kingdom requires us to shed many of our "adult" attitudes and behaviors to become childlike before God.

**16. One who would lead must seek to serve** (Matthew 20:25-28). Both by word and by example, Jesus modeled what has been called "servant leadership" in contrast to the way that worldly leaders exercise their authority. "If one of you wants to be great, he must be the servant of the rest; and if one of you wants to be first, he must be your slave – like the Son of Man, who did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people. (Matthew 20:26-28)

### **Kingdom Normalcy**

1. These are at least some of the guiding principles in the teaching of Jesus. They contrast sharply with those of human worldviews. In advocating these perspectives, Jesus was both opposing certain human paradigms and advocating a new normalcy for His followers.
2. Kingdom people are to make whatever adjustments are required to move to kingdom normalcy from whatever patterns had been laid down for them by those who taught them to human worldview.
3. What Jesus advocates may be called kingdom principles, the principles that are to become part of the worldview of everyone from any society who seeks to put Jesus our King first. These principles provide a balanced approach to kingdom living. They relate to more than simply the area of spiritual power. They challenge different societies in different ways.
4. The focus on spiritual power figures very prominently in these principles. We from the West are challenged head-on to incorporate that focus into our worldviews. What we call "miracles," are

expected by Jesus to be normal occurrences in His kingdom. They are not, as we have been taught, to be regarded as interferences by God in a domain from which He ordinarily keeps His distance.

5. There are no there “miracles” in the kingdom. Only normal events such as:  
people being saved and obeying God who then are involved in other normal events such as healings, deliverance, angelic protection, leading and revelation via words of knowledge and wisdom, salvation, loving the unlovable, “important” people serving “unimportant” people, forgiving the guilty, refusing to worry or to be bitter or to take revenge or to seek worldly prestige and honor. Such things are only miracles to whose definition of normalcy is tied to the earth.
6. In God’s reality, the universe cannot be split up as Western worldviews do. Nor can the spiritual aspect be disposed of. Jesus came to earth in part to show us how to behave in relation to the universe as God understands it. The concept of miracle as we ordinarily understand it is not helpful to us as we strive to see and relate to things as Jesus taught us. May we learn to judge normalcy by Jesus standards. Let us learn to define “normal” as Jesus defined it by integrating into our worldview Jesus’ kingdom perspectives and by living our lives in accord with them. When we take that step, we will discover that the benefits are great as God gets close.