

Step by step around the *kairos* learning circle

So this is what repenting and believing look like!

‘Repent and believe the good news.’ Mark 1:15. The learning circle helps me practically to repent and believe. ‘Repent’ has become limited by its churchy usage to turning away from sin. While it includes this it’s not limited to it. The word means ‘change of mind’ or even better, ‘a mind that goes beyond’ — that is, a mind that learns to go beyond our current fixed way of approaching things. Jesus wants us to develop open, flexible hearts and minds that grow, adapt and change so that everyday life becomes kingdom life. And to ‘believe’ is putting such an attitude into action, trusting that God is at work in and through us. We exercise faith because ‘without faith it is impossible to please God.’ Hebrews 11:6

Working through this learning circle consistently helps to live as life-long kingdom learners and the kingdom grows in our lives.



Kairos—Kingdom lessons in daily life

‘The time (*kairos*) has come, the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.’

Mark summarizes the basic message of Jesus (1:15). Jesus awoke people to the wonder: ‘God is with you’ For some it was personal change: they were cured physically, set free, or through being embraced as someone once untouchable! It’s hard to imagine the joy they felt. As they absorbed and reflected on what God had done for them through Jesus, lives were transformed as they learnt to live in the reality of God’s kingdom.

For others the impact was similar, but their eyes were opened through Jesus’ creative storytelling drawing on everyday incidents to speak of God’s kingdom. Images like a farmer sowing seed, or a mugging on the road down to Jericho, sweeping out a cottage to find a lost coin, a long search for a straying sheep etc.—these opened their eyes to see how their life was deeply saturated with God.

We’re invited on the same path of discovery. How? Jesus taught us to seize events or periods when God’s kingdom brushes our lives. These are our *kairos* opportunities. *Life groups* are places where we help one another develop this different way of looking at things and learn the ways of God’s kingdom in our own life.



Kairos—

Kingdom lessons
in daily life



Kairos—kingdom lessons

Life groups

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How can we become spiritually alert to God's presence in our lives—those **kairos** events or periods in our lives? Such events may be obvious, but much more frequently they are everyday happenings. For instance Jesus said, 'Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet our heavenly Father feeds them.' (Matthew 6:26) What could be more everyday? Experiences like that fly past us! But if we learn to reflect they become wisdom for life. The circle has seven elements.

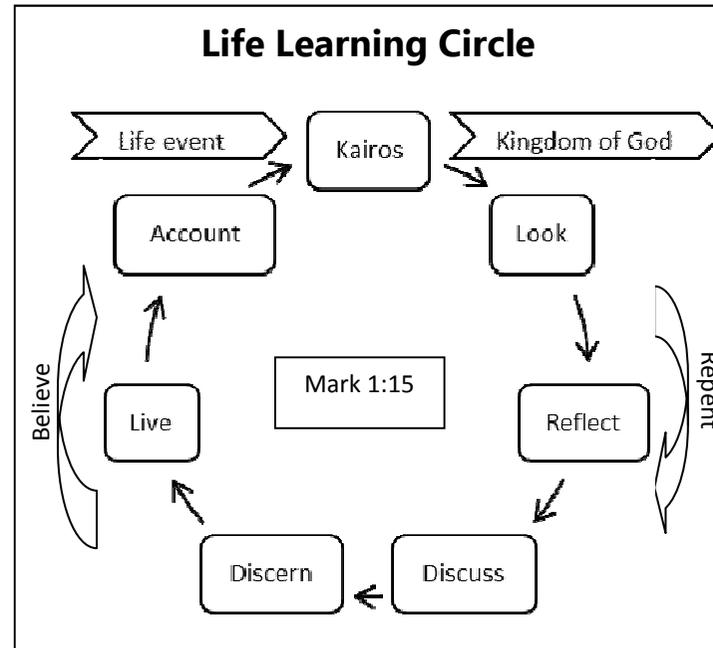
1. **Kairos**—'The *time* has come., the kingdom of God is near.' Mark 1:15 The word for 'time' is not the normal one—*chronos* as in 'chronological' i.e. time as a sequence of moments or 'tick-tock time.' Instead the word is *kairos*. This meant 'occasion', 'key or decisive moment', 'opportunity' etc. Jesus said the decisive arrival of the kingdom was happening in and through his ministry. So what makes a kingdom *kairos* event for us? Here's a very few examples

- Events provoking strong feelings
- Seeing/hearing something that strikes you
- A setback or an opportunity
- A success or failure
- A loss or gain etc. etc.

2. **Look**—'The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!' Matthew 6:22-23. Jesus taught the need to develop a healthy way of looking oth-

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erwise everything is skewed. We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are! Helpful questions to ask: 'Am I seeing this correctly?' 'Is there another way of looking at this?' etc.



3. **Reflect**—'Whenever you pray, go into your inner-room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.' Matthew 6:6. Jesus knew we need time alone, totally alone. Why? We easily become public puppets. We dance to the tune of others or we wonder how we're coming over to others. Full freedom and self-awareness come by being with the Father.
4. **Discuss**—'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.' Matthew 18:20. *Life groups* are where we discover the

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power of small gatherings that release Christ's creative presence. We check things out, draw on more wisdom, receive encouragement and enrich our understanding. We help one another find and understand God's way for us.

5. **Discern**—'God is at work in you, enabling you to will and work for his good pleasure.' Philippians 2:13. Spiritual discernment is finding out what God wants for us (see Romans 12:2). We seek those things that lead to more life and the greater glory of God while avoiding what leads towards sin and death. Then we can plan what to do and how to go about things.
6. **Live**—'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' Philippians 2:13. The purpose of following this process is to live and act wisely for God's greater glory. It is not to become self-centred navel gazers. It is essentially practical and helps us serve in God's mission in our everyday lives.
7. **Account**— 'We make it our aim to please the Lord' 2 Corinthians 5:9. Being a disciple is realizing, because our life comes from God, all of our life is ultimately accountable to God. I've done some personal work on a *kairos* event. I've worked the circle and shared in my group. We've reflected together and prayed. I've had some weeks to live in the light of this. Now some weeks later in my *Life group* I follow through on how I've got on. My group helps me become accountable to God through the habit of open companionship.