



## Part 1: Nine Words

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May 4 & 5, 2013

### The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew Chapters 5-7

**king•dom** (noun)

where a king rules; the effective range of one's will

### God's Kingdom

- Has always been and will always be
- Is present everywhere and at all times
- Ruled by Jesus—even though he chooses to surrender his will to God's

### God's kingdom is known by several names:

- The Kingdom of Heaven (*in Matthew*)
- The Kingdom of God (*in Mark and Luke*)
- Eternity (*in John*)
- Heaven (*in all the Gospels*)

### There are many kingdoms at play.

Ultimately we choose between the rule and reign of our kingdom or God's kingdom.

### When Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is at hand (*Matthew 4:17*), he is saying:

- I am God
- There is new access to God's realm
- We can experience the kingdom right now

It is a kingdom that, in the person of Jesus, welcomes us just as we are, just where we are, and makes it possible for us to translate our "ordinary" life into an eternal one. It is so available that every one who from the center of his or her being calls upon Jesus as Master of the Universe and Prince of Life will be heard and will be delivered into the eternal kind of life.

– Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

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## **Why wouldn't we start now?**

Our kingdom is in conflict with his kingdom.

## **That's why we need the first word of Matthew 4:17:**

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

## **Next Steps**

1. Read Matthew chapters 5-7 (The Sermon on the Mount).
2. Answer this question for yourself: If I could have whatever I want, what would it be?

## **Other Recommended Reading**

*The Divine Conspiracy*, by Dallas Willard

*The Good and Beautiful God*, by James Bryan Smith

## **Small Group Questions**

- 1) As a group, brainstorm all the words, images, movies or ideas that come to mind when you think about the word "kingdom."
- 2) Of all of those ideas, which ones seem in harmony with what you know about God's kingdom? Which ideas seem uncharacteristic of God's kingdom?
- 3) Is there a time in your life when you experienced a profound moment of repentance—either as the one repenting or as the recipient of someone else's repentance toward you? What was it like?
- 4) Why do you think repentance is the key to accessing the kingdom of heaven in the here and now? What is it about repentance that could help us experience the reality of God's kingdom?
- 5) From what you know of God's kingdom, what part of his rule and reign is the hardest for you to accept or live under?
- 6) How can we pray for you right now?

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