

# What is the Kingdom?

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LISTEN TO THE WHAT IS THE KINGDOM VIDEO HERE.

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To understand God's Kingdom we must understand His Son, and to understand His Son we must understand how the Father has revealed Himself. God has chosen to communicate with mankind through everything in nature, through our universal need to believe, through His chosen people (the Jews), and most specifically through His Son Jesus Christ.

The world exists for one purpose: to display the glory of God. Mankind exists for one purpose: to carry the image of our Creator and to glorify Him.

When we begin to ask the question: "How am I to find meaning for my existence?" our search for significance often results in men and women being made right before God. This is the essence of the Kingdom.

We are destined to eternal separation from our Creator. The Kingdom is God's ancient choice to buy back men's souls through paying a huge price. This effort would cost Him His dearest possession - His only Son would need to die.

As this diagram explains, when we experience life and honestly ask the question "who am I?" - we stand at the door of the Kingdom. The God Story explains that the answer to this question revolves completely around the identifying of the King of the earth.

And if there IS a King over the earth, what does His Kingdom look like? This in turn deeply answers the first question of Who am I. I have become a Friend of the King of the earth.

## Matthew: the King & His Kingdom



*A Kingdom Heart requires a Kingdom Shift*

Once we open the conversation about the meaning of our existence (Who Am I?) we may then consider the question "Who is the King?" This is where the Jesus story of the Gospels comes in. In the prophecies and miracles we see unparalleled authority entering human history. Once we have engaged "who is the King?" we then began to ask the question "what is His Kingdom?" The Gospels clearly answer this question with Christ's own words about Himself. We then are able to grasp the friendship God has extended us by offering us life in His Son. And this allows us to be free to return to the question "Who am I?" with a whole new set of presuppositions, not the least of which is where we will spend eternity.

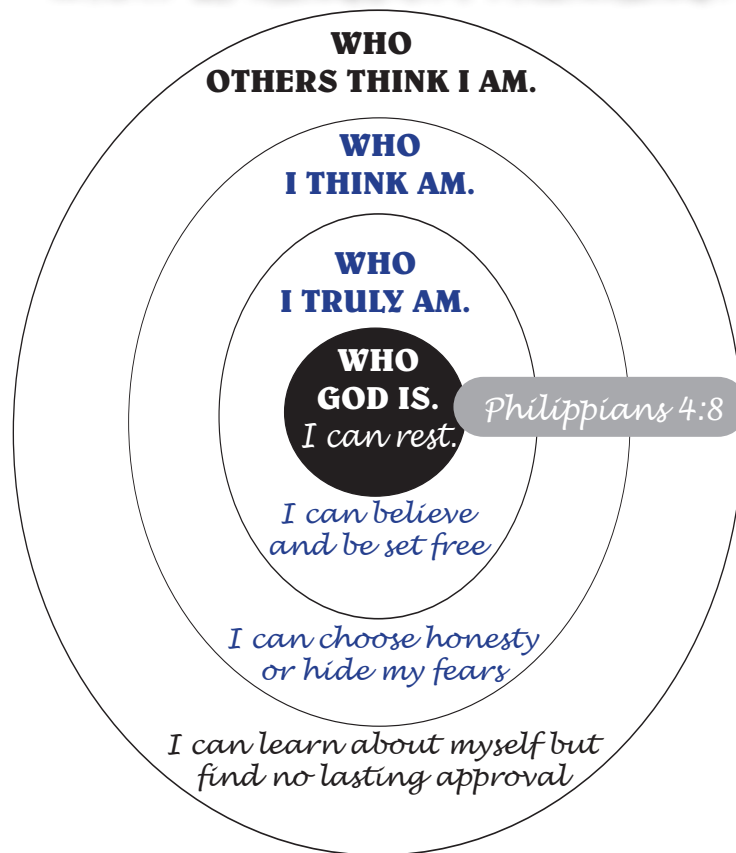
Who has the King chosen to be His friends? Why?

# How do we engage the Kingdom?

The Kingdom is very real. Jesus went to great lengths to articulate this transcendent spiritual reality. Though linked closely with our natural lives, it is very distinct from what we can merely see. It is in this “unseen realm” where we encounter God. This is the arena of Kingdom faith.

Jesus’ disciples experienced a life-changing transition as they began to see this difference. Once they understood that Jesus’ Kingdom was “not of this world” they began to prepare themselves to let go of the seen and exchange it for what is unseen. **This is the realm of the heart. Jesus saves the soul by saving the heart.** The work of the Kingdom is literally to believe the One whom the Father has sent. This diagram describes the core of a Kingdom paradigm: inside - out.

## WHAT IS KINGDOM THINKING?



Notice the core of the circles above. The more attention we give to our “exterior lives” the more we have a propensity to neglect our “interior lives.” This is a huge mistake, for within our interior lives is where **transformation** occurs. As we are transformed we become more than we can be as a mere religious person. Jesus came to rescue lost sheep, release us from captivity, and set us free. This turns our interior lives upside down and offers peace, joy, and a love beyond what we can dream. This opens the door for us to become the “salt” and “light” our world so desperately needs!

What are your thoughts about your interior and exterior life?

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## **Transformation**

*“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

- Romans 12:1,2

**He changes us from the inside-out.**

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LISTEN TO THE [SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION VIDEO HERE.](#)  
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# What is spiritual transformation?

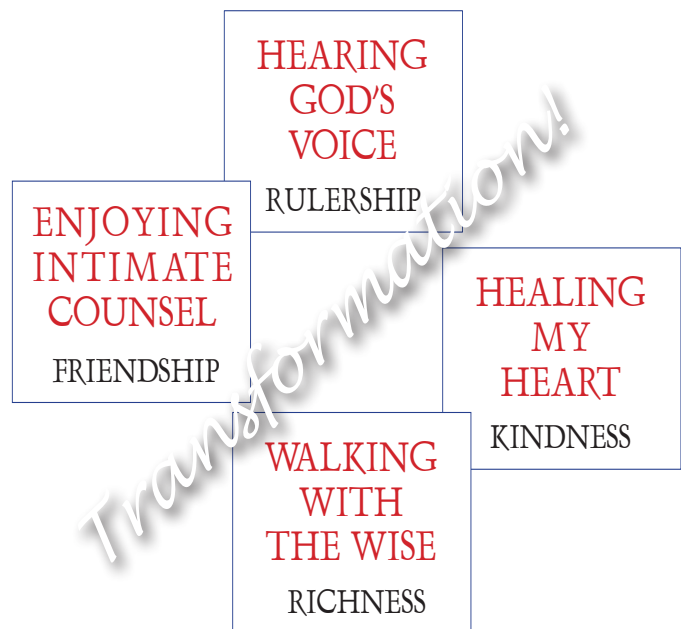
*“Therefore I urge you brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And no longer be conformed to the image of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

- Romans 12:1,2

When Jesus began His public ministry in the synagogue in His hometown (Luke 4) He quoted Isaiah the prophet from chapter 61. “The Spirit of Lord is upon Me, because He has appointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.” It is His full intention to introduce the Good News into the world, and to transform our hearts by transforming our perspectives, values, hopes, and dreams. To release us from the captivity of our sin, to make our blind souls able to see spiritual truth, to set us free and heal our brokenness, and to bring this Kingdom into our hearts are all a part of this incredible **transforming** mission.

This transformation occurs in several remarkable ways. First we are given the opportunity to submit to His Kingship. We become “sheep who know His voice.” This tremendous benefit of **hearing God’s voice** as the Holy Spirit discloses the Father and makes our lives very extraordinary. We are set apart as chosen ones who bend our will before His Kingship and welcome His hand upon our lives.

As this “rulership” grows we began to be changed from the inside as we experience God’s kindness and discipline. Our hearts begin to be released as we understand the perfection of God’s care for us, and **just how free** we are to allow our past brokenness to be overtaken by perfect love.



We also begin to **walk with others who** have similarly encountered God. We begin to open our lives to the Word and prayer, both of which help to define our new, transforming relationship. The impact of exposure to Kingdom **wisdom** begins to **transform our thought paradigms**, and brings a new richness to our lives. It is literally like having our eyes opened from blindness. It also allows our heart to experience true healing.

As this transforming relationship unfolds, we begin to understand the depth of **friendship** God now feels for us, and we begin to enjoy the intimate counsel of God as He directs our lives in our decisions, our relationships, and the **true substance of our souls**.

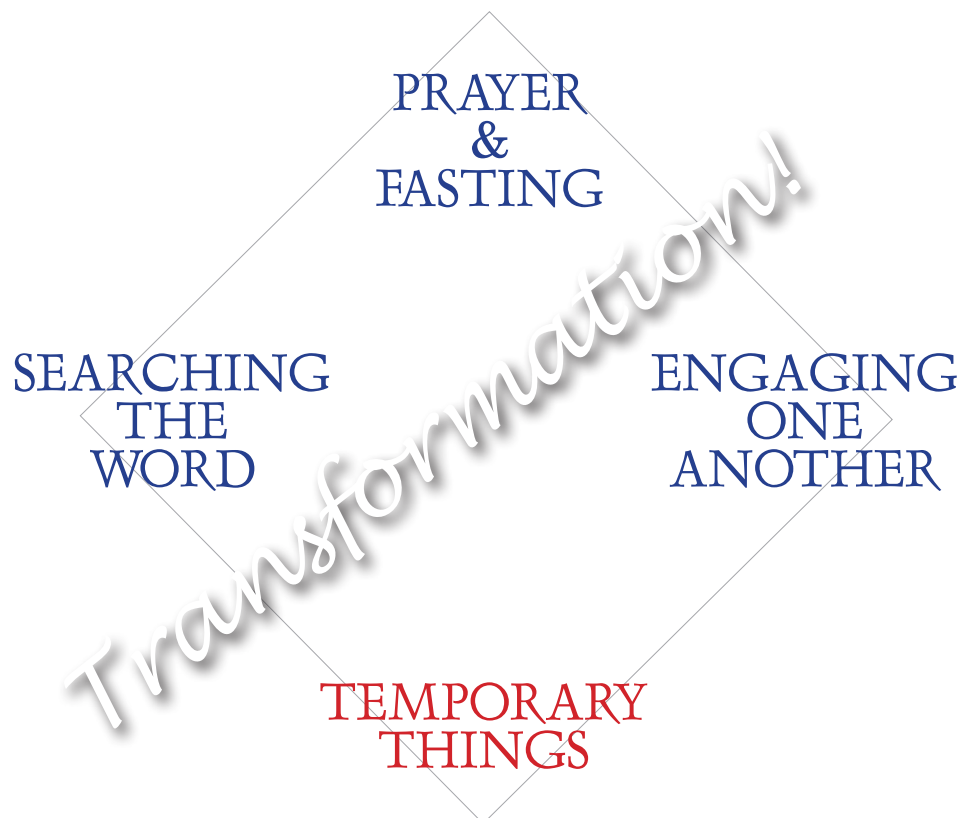
## How does transformation occur?

You have certainly heard of the saying “I want to have it all.” Jesus was very clear. He made it plain that we cannot serve God and “stuff.” He also asked the question “what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul.” In these sweeping statements He makes it painfully clear that we must choose. We can either “have it all” in this world or in the world to come - it is our decision.

This choice for living involves an exchange of priorities, because “where our treasure is, our heart is there also.” Someone has said that there are only two eternal things on the earth, God and people. Jesus lived completely for both. He overcame His humanity and every temptation you or I will ever experience - and chose life. This is what so uniquely qualifies Him to be our leader - and our Savior.

His example is very clear. If we want to be transformed we will make the same exchange. We will exchange temporary things for those which result in eternal treasure. *Praying and fasting, searching the Scriptures, and choosing to engage people at their true point of need is how Jesus prioritized His life.*

He invites us to engage in such a life of transformation as well, knowing very well that it will cost us dearly. It will cost us in this world to store up treasure in heaven. This is the fertile soil of transformation. What a contrast!



*Family - Income production  
Personal recognition - Accumulation  
Attainment - Leisure and pleasure*

# How would a transformed life look?

There is a limiting benefit in setting standards for richness and poorness, religious attainment, recognition by our peers, or our resume' of clubs and accomplishments - without embracing the idea that God is at work in our lives to transform us.

We should consider how God feels about us in Christ, and avail our inner heart to His hand upon our life. We must look to where our time is being allocated and where our preoccupations with living are directed.

Those who love being transformed by God usually have several characteristics in common. We love the idea of having a **pure heart** of devotion. God is so big in our lives that He has come to have first place, pure and simple. This doesn't mean that we won't become distracted - even on a daily basis - but it does mean we constantly return to home base. We love God so much because He first loved us, and we offer our hearts for devotion to His purposes.



*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength - and you shall love your neighbor as you love yourself."*

- Jesus

We are also taken with the idea of **knowing God**. We long to be with Him, we want to hear from Him, and we are excited to see His hand move in and around us. We desire to be "His man or woman" and we value His approval. We have learned that He loves **true kindness** toward our "neighbors" as we reject isolationism and self-centered living, and use all of our resources for the welfare of others. We are deeply excited about **growing life**, and hopeful God will use us to be a part of His plan for feeding the souls of our neighbors.

*We have found a home in the two great commandments of the Law, and like Jesus, are seeking to "love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength - and to love our neighbors the way we love ourselves."* This is what transformed living looks like!

# Transformation Observations

Take a few minutes to summarize your thoughts on the subject of spiritual transformation.

What would be your **definition** of transformation?

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In what ways do you feel you are getting in-tune with **hearing God's voice**?

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Who would be the **wise people** with whom you walk?

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In what ways do you see your **friendship with God** developing?

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In what ways do you sense that your **heart is being healed**?

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HEARING  
GOD'S  
VOICE  
RULERSHIP

HEALING  
MY  
HEART  
KINDNESS

ENJOYING  
INTIMATE  
COUNSEL  
FRIENDSHIP

WALKING  
WITH  
THE WISE  
RICHNESS