

the gospel according to...

matthew

experiencing the presence of the Kingdom

Have you ever wondered what it would look like in your life to fully connect with the kingdom purposes of God? What does this mean in the dailyness of life? We all have errands to run, problems to solve, bills to pay, stuff to maintain and limits physically. Does God expect us to be super human? What does God expect? Does God expect anything?

As we study the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the gospel of Matthew, you will be encouraged to look deeply into the heart of God. You will be challenged to commit fully and be comforted to know you are not alone. You will see that every day and every moment God is present and His kingdom is at hand. You will discover the immeasurable blessings of Kingdom living. And, if you choose to listen and put His Word into practice, you will grow deeper into Christ and experience His presence more personally.

Let's fully engage! Join us in this study. Open His Word everyday. Listen to His Spirit speak to you. Share openly with your small groups. Pray for transformation.

His is an upside down kingdom. It is counter cultural. It is radical. It is beautiful.

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----> **connect...** Read the introduction and ask yourself the following questions (you may want to journal your answers):

1. How well do you know the Lord?
2. As you live out your day, how mindful are you that you belong to the kingdom of God?
3. Are you aware that this kingdom operates from an opposite view than the world we live in?
4. Do you understand that your King (your Lord) desires your love above anything else?
5. Do you understand that your King (your Lord) loves you completely, unconditionally and faithfully?

----> **discover...** Write out the following verses below:

Isaiah 30:18:

Psalms 36:5-9:

----> **consider...** Read these verses aloud in prayer to the Lord and ask Him to show you these truths about Himself as you study and embrace the book of Matthew.

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----> **connect...** Psalm 84 beautifully expresses a heart longing to know its King. As you meditate on just a few verses a day, make them your prayer. Think about them all day long. Start with Psalm 84:1-4.

----> **discover...** Read Matthew 1:1-17. Genealogies were very important to the Jewish people in order to prove their tribal memberships or their right to inheritances.

1. Do you recognize any names on this list? How many women are mentioned? (It is very unusual to see women's names in genealogies.)

2. Notice how each generation is recorded. Abraham was the father of Isaac, Boaz, the father of Obed, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, etc. What does it say in verse 16 about Joseph? Why is this significant?

3. Read verse 17 again. What does this communicate to you about God?

4. Read John 1:1 and John 1:14. What do these verses teach you about Jesus?

----> **consider...** Think about the sovereign God who has a perfect plan. Jesus came at the exact appointed time of God to be grace and hope to a dark world. Do you ever wonder if God still has a plan? Do you believe His timing is perfect? It's important that we learn to base our faith on the facts of God's Word and not our feelings based on our circumstances. Talk to God and ask Him to grow your faith through the knowledge of His Word (Romans 10:17).

----> **apply...** Have you learned Romans 10:17 by heart? Write it in your journal and pray it before the Lord (i.e. "Lord, I see now that faith comes through hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ. Open my mind and heart to Your words and may my faith grow deep....").

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----> **connect...** Read and pray through Psalm 84:5-9.

----> **discover...** Read Matthew 1:18-23. Matthew does not give us much detail concerning the birth of Jesus but Luke does. Let's read the Luke account along with Matthew. Read it **slowly**, allowing God's Spirit to point to things you may not have noticed before.

1. Read Luke 2:1-20. (Note: to the Jewish people in that day, betrothal [engagement] was the equivalent to marriage—except that the husband and wife did not live together. At the end of their engagement period, the marriage was consummated.) What stands out to you as you read this account? _____

a. Who visited Jesus at the manger? _____

b. What did Mary do? (v. 19) _____

c. What had Mary been told by the angel in Luke 1:35-37? _____

2. Look back at Matthew 1:18-23. What was Joseph's initial response to Mary's news? _____

3. Verse 21 says that they were to name the baby Jesus. Why? _____

a. What will He be called according to verse 23? _____

b. How about Luke 1:35? _____

c. Put yourself in Mary and Joseph's shoes for a minute. Can you imagine being told this? Share your thoughts. _____

----> **consider...** Meditate on the miracle of Jesus' birth for a few moments. Jesus existed before Mary and Joseph (or anyone else) existed. He participated in the creation of the universe—the Eternal One was now appearing in human flesh. Ponder this unfathomable fact with your Father. What else amazes you about it? Do you know why He did this?

----> **apply...** We will learn a lot as we study Matthew about why God came in the flesh. Write down any questions you have in your journal. Continue learning Romans 10:17 by heart.

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----> **connect...** Read and pray through Psalm 84:10-12.

----> **discover...** Read Isaiah 7:14. What does this prophet say? _____

1. Now read Matthew 1:20-25. Summarize what took place. _____

2. When Jesus was only eight days old, another man confirmed His identity as the Christ—the Son of God. Read this account in Luke 2:21-32.

a. What did Simeon do when he saw Jesus? (v. 28) _____

b. What did he say as he praised God? _____

c. How did he describe Jesus in verse 32? _____

i. For whom was Simeon eager to have revelation? _____

ii. Who would He bring glory to? _____

d. Who revealed this to Simeon? _____

e. How did Mary and Joseph react to Simeon in verse 33? _____

f. What did Simeon then say to Mary in verses 34-35? _____

----> **consider...** Think again about being Mary or Joseph at this time. What questions may they have had? They had to totally rely on the words spoken by the angel during that one visit. Simeon brought encouraging words, but also words that were quite disturbing. What do you do when you are confused? Do you turn to the truth of God's Word and rely on them regardless of your circumstances or what others are saying? Ask God to help you learn how to turn to Him first.

----> **apply...** Journal any thoughts you have and keep praying through and learning Romans 10:17.

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----> **connect...** Slowly read/pray through all of Psalm 84. Do you desire to dwell in the courts of the Lord?

----> **discover...** God spoke through the prophet Isaiah at least 700 years before Jesus was born, predicting His birth and laying out promises He would fulfill as the Messiah. (Note: the Jewish people have lived lives of oppression for generations—caused by their own sin and the sins of others.)

1. Read what Isaiah recorded in Isaiah 9:1-7.
 - a. What does Jesus bring to those walking in darkness (v.2)? _____
 - b. The battle over sin has been won through Jesus! Souls have been harvested and rejoicing takes place. What else did Jesus accomplish by coming according to verse 4? _____
2. Read Verses 6 and 7 again. How will these incredible promises be fulfilled according to Isaiah (v. 6a)? _____
3. Think about what this child will be called. What does each title tell you about Jesus Christ?
 - a. Wonderful Counselor _____
 - b. Mighty God _____
 - c. Everlasting Father _____
 - d. Prince of Peace _____
4. What do you learn about His type of kingdom in verse 7? _____
5. How is all of this accomplished? Who initiated the solution to the yoke of sin that burdens mankind? _____

----> **consider...** Think again about the master plan of God. Adam and Eve chose to sin through disobedience to the Word of God (see Genesis 3). That “bad” seed has been reproduced through every generation (see Romans 5:12ff) bringing condemnation to all men. However, Jesus justifies that sin—“so also the result of **one** act of righteousness was justification that brings life for **all** men” (Romans 5:18). So, the birth of Jesus is much more than a heartwarming story—it brought us life. Let the truth of God’s plan penetrate your heart and mind. Spend some time talking to Him about this and thanking Him for sending Jesus.

----> **apply...** Journal your thoughts to God. Write out Romans 10:17.

