

CHAPTER 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: “WHAT MATTERS MOST”

Seek First: How the Kingdom of God Changes Everything, by Jeremy Treat

1. If you were to ask the average person what was the most important thing Jesus talked about, what do you think would be some of the answers?
2. Were you surprised to read on p. 13, “The number one thing Jesus talks about was the kingdom of God”? If so, why? If not, do you remember when you first learned this?
3. On pp. 13-14, the author said, “Jesus gave his followers many commands, but there was only one thing he said to seek *first*. ‘Seek first the kingdom of God’ (Matt. 6:33). This is the one thing that changes everything. According to Jesus, what matters most in life is the kingdom of God.”
 - What thoughts or questions come to your mind as you read this statement?
 - Do you feel like you are on the same page with Jesus regarding what matters most? Why or why not?
4. On p. 15 we read, “The kingdom is first and foremost a statement about God. God is king, and he is coming as king to set right what our sin made wrong. The phrase ‘kingdom of God’ could just as easily be translated ‘reign of God’ or ‘kingship of God.’ The message of the kingdom is about God’s royal power directed by his self-giving love” (p. 15).
 - What do you find helpful about this statement, and what does it clarify for you?
5. Read this paragraph from p. 18, “God the Creator-King reigns *over* all his creatures, but he also reigns *through* his people. This was God’s design from the beginning. Adam and Eve were sent out from the garden as royal representatives of the king, called to steward his creation and spread the blessings of his reign throughout the earth. Instead they chose to seek their own path to power and glory, apart from God... Ever since sin entered the world, God’s kingdom project has at its heart a rescue mission for rebellious sinners, drawing them into his work of renewing his creation as king” (p. 17).
 - How would you summarize in your own words about what the author is saying here about God’s original plan to share his reign with humans?
6. In speaking about the place of God’s kingdom, the author states on p. 18, “After the fall, making the world God’s glorious kingdom would require a reversal of the curse and a renewal by grace. And that’s exactly what God set out to do. The Bible is a rescue story, not about God rescuing sinners from a broken creation but about him rescuing them for a new creation. God’s reign begins in the human heart, but it will one day extend to the ends of the earth... The message of the kingdom of God is not an escape from earth to heaven but God’s reign coming from heaven to earth. The focus of God’s reign is his people, but the scope of God’s reign is all of creation.”
 - Have you ever thought or been taught that God was going to abandon this creation and that the goal was for us to get to heaven? Have you seen this emphasis in various Christian circles?
 - Do you find the author’s statement about the scope of God’s reign being “all of creation” and that God wants to rescue us for a new creation encouraging? If so, how so?
7. What is your biggest takeaway from this discussion? What is the one thing you want to remember going forward?