



Ego and the Empire

"Pride is the beginning of sin. And what is pride but the craving for undue exaltation? And this is undue exaltation—when the soul abandons Him to whom it ought to cleave as its end, and becomes a kind of end to itself." - Augustine of Hippo

1) We can either shape our **EMPIRE** or help shape the **KINGDOM**.

Mark 8:36-37 (NLT) ³⁶And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? ³⁷Is anything worth more than your soul?

Matthew 16:24 (NIV) ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

2) Empire says **ME**, Kingdom says **WE**.

Mark 12:28-34 (NRSV)

²⁸One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ³²Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; ³³and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Galatians 6:2-3 (NLT)

²Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. ³If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

Matthew 25:40 (NIV)

⁴⁰"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

3) The Kingdom of God is **NOW** and **NOT YET**.

Mark 1:15 (NLT)

¹⁵"The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"

Matthew 6:10 (NIV)

¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Luke 17:20-21 (NIV)

²⁰Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, ²¹nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Additional Notes:

scriptures that relate

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| Monday: Psalm 146 | Wednesday: Mark 10:17-22 | Friday: Romans 14 |
| Tuesday: Matthew 6:19-24 | Thursday: Luke 17:20-37 | Saturday: Matthew 18:16-30 |

small groups—talk it over

- Which Guardian of the Galaxy do you most identify with?
- How has our pride and ego gotten you into trouble in the past?
- Read the story of the Prodigal Son. (Luke 15:11-32) How does this story relate to the idea of gaining the world but losing your soul?
- In what areas are you more like Ego, the empire builder, rather than participating God's Kingdom?
- How can you utilize the gifts and advantages you have to help others as opposed to building your own empire?

missions' prayer requests

- Monday:** Pray for peace in Nicaragua so the months of violence and disruption of daily life cease.
- Tuesday:** Pray that God provides for the evacuees of Guatemala due to the volcanic eruption.
- Wednesday:** Pray for the rescue and restoration of victims of sexual trafficking all over the world.
- Thursday:** Pray for the persecuted churches and those who put their lives on the line.
- Friday:** Pray for leaders in countries where there is anarchy that they will tire of evil and seek peace.
- Saturday:** Pray for the protection and safety of missionaries and other workers reaching the lost.