

"Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law." Psalm 119:18

## **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

We will be studying Matthew 5-7, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. But today as we begin READ Matthew 3-4, and John 1:19-34 which tell about the beginning of Jesus ministry before He shared this sermon. As you read, pay attention to everyone who is meeting/encountering Jesus for the first time. Then JOURNAL about the following:

- Think about when you encountered Him the first time... what was your first impression of Jesus... what did you feel? ... what did you think? How did you react/respond to Him?
- What is your expectation as you encounter Jesus this year? JOURNAL your thoughts.

#### **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Think of at least 5 people whom you know who need to meet Jesus and encounter His presence.

- WRITE down their names.
- PRAY for each one, asking Jesus to reveal Himself to them this year.
- Thank Jesus for introducing Himself to you.

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"Give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments." Psalm 119:73

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

Yesterday we considered the experience of encountering Jesus for the first time. Just as many in Scripture did not truly understand the person of Jesus when they first met Him, the same can be true for us. So let's take some time today to get perspective of Who He is. See before we study what Jesus had to say in His sermon, we want to learn/understand/remember Who He is as He speaks. So, READ the following Scriptures and JOURNAL what they express about the nature/person of Jesus:

Isaiah 9:6-7 Colossians 1:15 Matthew 1:21 Colossians 1:16 Matthew 1:22-23 Colossians 1:17 Co

Luke 22:70-71 Colossians 1:18

71 John 18:37 Philippians 2:8-11

## SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Using the Scriptures/Notes about Christ you just journaled:

- CIRCLE those that mean the most to you today.
- PRAY, thanking Jesus for Who He is specifically in those ways in your life.
- SHARE one of those Truths about Jesus today with someone.





"Revive me through Thy righteougness." Psalm 119:40

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

Before we jump into the Sermon on the Mount, we will consider the context of history when Jesus spoke it. Simply said, there was about 400 years between the Old Testament and the New. As far as we know, the Israelite nation did not hear from God during those years, and it appears that was because they were so bent on having their own way, so God let them. Even still, during that time, God was working and waiting for their hearts to be ready to meet and listen to Jesus. Galatians 3:3-5 tells us that when *"the fullness of time"* came, God sent Jesus. READ those verses, and then JOURNAL your thoughts about the following:

- How long has it been since you have heard from the Lord?
- Could it be that He has let you have your own way?

• Even still, how might God have still been working, and is your heart ready to hear from Him now? Could this new year be a *"fullness of time"* moment for you?

#### **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Based on the thoughts you just journaled, WRITE out a prayer to God expressing the longing in your heart to to hear from Him in this new year.





23 STRONG January, Day, 4 He Sees Me

"Deal with Thy servant according to Thy lovingkindness." Psalm 119:124

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

When the God of heaven sees us, there is nothing more vulnerable, and yet fully satisfying all at the same time! READ Matthew 4:23-5:2 and JOURNAL your thoughts as you meditate upon the following:

- v. 25 says *"great multitudes followed Him" ...* imagine how many people "*multitudes*" may have included?
- Think of a time you were in a crowd... remember the dynamics of how it felt. Did you feel seen?
- Remember WHO Jesus is, and then read 5:1a again. What do you think Jesus "saw the multitudes" includes? Did He see them as a group, or as individuals... straight into the interior of their minds, hearts and motives?

• Knowing that as God, Jesus is all seeing, imagine some of what Jesus "*saw*" in each individual in the crowd?

WATCH the 23 Strong Teaching Video entitled When He Saw the Multitudes

### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Based on God's Word you just partook of, consider how Jesus also sees you as an individual in the multitudes of humanity.

- JOURNAL some notes about what He sees in your heart, mind and actions.
- TALK to Him about each one.
- THANK HIM for so kindly taking notice of you.



"Be gracious to me according to Thy Word." Psalm 119:58

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

We are going to stay in Matthew 5:1-2 for a bit, so take a moment to READ it again and COPY it in your journal. Then circle this part of verse 1... *"He went up on the mountain"* and JOURNAL about the following:

- Think about practical reasons why Jesus may have gone up on the mountain to speak to the people...
- Think of a greater purpose in Jesus going up; could it be symbolic that His words were an "elevated" WORD?
   Yes! He came from heaven, and remember these people had not heard from heaven in a very long time.
   Speaking from an elevated place, Jesus would bring them Words Of Life! Consider why He chose to speak these elevated Words Of Life, and why the people needed to hear them so much?

Think about qualities that distinguish God's Word from the words of man? JOURNAL A LIST.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Based on your meditation of, "He went up on the mountain" ...take part in the following movements:

- JOURNAL about an area(s) of your life where you need an elevated Word from heaven...
- Using the Qualities of God's Word List you created, PRAY through each one, asking God to give you words like that for the need(s) you expressed in your journal.
- PRAY also that the Lord will ready your heart to hear His heavenly words from the Sermon on the Mount.

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23 STRONG January Day 6 He Sat Down!

"Teach me Thy statutes." Psalm 119:26

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

Today, let's do it again... READ Matthew 5:1-2 and COPY it in your journal. Then circle this part of verse 1... *"and after He sat down"* and JOURNAL about the following:

- In our culture today, what things may indicate that someone has authority to speak on a certain subject?
- In the culture of Jesus' time on earth, a common indication that a religious leader had authority to speak
  was that when he spoke, he "sat down" ... sitting down indicated authority. Consider then how this action of
  Jesus made a statement about WHO He was. How do you think that affected those in the crowd, specifically
  the religious leaders of the day who were known for their authority?
- Also READ the follow up words of Matthew after Jesus finished speaking this sermon found in 7:28-29. and consider then the end result. How did the authority of Jesus' words affect the people listening that day? And how did His authority compare to those of the religious leaders?

### **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Based on your meditation of these words, "and after He sat down" ...take part in the following movements:

- CONSIDER the authority of Jesus' words in your life. Do you humble yourself to the authority of His Word?
- Knowing the impact His Words in this sermon had on those listening that day... how does that affect your
  intention to humble yourself to the authority of His Words as we study this sermon this year? What would
  that humility look like in the day to day for you? JOURNAL your thoughts.
- WATCH the 23 Strong Prayer titled <u>Amazed at His Teaching</u>, and pray with Sharon in your own heart.



# 23 STRONG January Day 7 Coming to Jesus

"Incline my heart to Thy testimonies." Psalm 119:26

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

And again (2) ... READ Matthew 5:1-2 and COPY it in your journal. Then circle this part of verse 1... *"His disciples came to Him."* and JOURNAL about the following:

- What a Divine moment this was. See, we have already taken note of Jesus truly "seeing" the people, His
  intent to bring them words from heaven, and the way He took His place of authority to teach them. Now
  it was their turn to decide if they wanted to experience this moment, and more with Jesus. Take note of
  who came to Him... the multitudes, or His disciples?
- The word "disciples" does not mean the 12 Disciples... at this point, only 4 had been chosen by Jesus. This was referring to anyone in the crowd who wanted more... who wanted to learn from Jesus and truly follow Him.
- Consider reasons why some would not have come up on the mountain to Jesus... and why some would. Also consider what those who came to listen to Him might have had to lay aside/leave behind to do so.
- Consider yourself... are you a disciple? Would you have gone up? How are you coming to Jesus now?

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Based on your meditation of these words, "His disciples came to Him" ...take part in the following movements:

- MAKE A LIST of at least 5 descriptions of a disciple of Jesus. Be careful to include actions and heart postures.
- PRAY about your desire to "come to Jesus" in each of these ways. Ask Him to teach you, help you, lead you.
- DECLARE to Jesus that you are "coming to Him" to listen as His disciple as He speaks this sermon to you.

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# 23 STRONG

January Day 8 When Jesus Opens His Mouth!

"Thou art good and doest good, teach me Thy statutes." Psalm 119:68

# SPIRITUAL FOOD

Last time for now ... READ Matthew 5:1-2 and COPY it in your journal. Then circle verse 2... CONSIDER the following thoughts:

- Powerful things take place when Jesus opens His mouth! And remember, this was likely the first time God had publicly spoken to His people in over 400 years, so this was a Divine Moment we don't want to miss...
- On Day 5, you made a list of some distinct qualities of God's words. Review your list.

Now READ the following Scriptures that describe some of the nature/value of God's voice when He speaks. And as you think about Jesus opening His mouth to speak this sermon to you, JOURNAL your expectations based on what you find in these verses:

Hebrews 4:12	Psalm 119:50	John 6:63	Jeremiah 33:3
Psalm 119:105	John 5:25	Psalm 32:8	Job 37:1-5

# SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Based on your meditation of Matthew 5:2...

- THANK Jesus for the privilege of hearing His voice.
- PRAY and express your expectations as you prepare to "listen" to Him speak to you in this sermon.
- PRAY for everyone in this study who has also come to Jesus to listen to Him... that our ears and eyes will be open, and our hearts ready to take in the Divine Words Jesus will speak to us in Matthew 5-7.



"How blessed are those who observe His testimonies" Psalm 119:2

# SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we will begin to actually take in what Jesus said in this amazing sermon. See before we actually dig in deep, it is good to get really familiar with His words as a whole. Doing so will take us almost to our 23<sup>rd</sup> day, but it is so important, so settle in and let's do it! And as you do, it is ok to have questions... in fact it is good ©

- PRAY and ask the Lord to "bless you as you observe His testimonies." (Psalm 119:2)
- READ Matthew 5:3-12.
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend <u>Dwell</u>.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 5:3-12...

- COPY it.
- · After you copy it, UNDERLINE the words "blessed" and "kingdom" in the verses you copied.
- PRAY thanking the Lord for His heart to bless, and asking Him for great understanding of these blessings in the coming days.

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# 23 STRONG January Day 10 What Jesus said...

"... that I may have regard for Thy statutes continually." Psalm 119:117

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

Today we will continue taking in what Jesus said in this amazing sermon, keeping in mind that our goal is to get really familiar with His words as a whole, and that having questions is good. As we approach the next section, let me mention that it is rich with meaning that may not be fully understandable at first look. That is ok, just familiarize yourself with Jesus' words and know that we will come back to them with more focus later.

- PRAY and ask the Lord to help you, "have regard for His statutes continually." (Psalm 119:117)
- READ Matthew 5:13-20.
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend <u>Dwell</u>.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 5:13-20...

- COPY it.
- After copying, DIVIDE it into 3-5 sections and give each section a title.
- UNDERLINE the word "kingdom" in the verses you just copied.
- Start MAKING A LIST of imagery that Jesus uses in this sermon. You should be able to list 2 from this section.



"... revive me in Thy ways." Psalm 119:37

# SPIRITUAL FOOD

Our survey of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount moves forward today... and we will hear Him begin to address the brokenness of relationships that He sees among the people that day, and in us. He wants to show us a better way. See as we take in His words, let us remember what we have already seen and heard thus far... that Jesus sees us, and is bringing a powerful word from heaven to bless us, that we might be revived in His ways.

- PRAY and ask the Lord to "revive you in His ways" (Psalm 119:37)
- READ Matthew 5:21-32
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend <u>Dwell</u>.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 5:21-32...

- · COPY it.
- UNDERLINE each time Jesus says, "You have heard" and "but I say to you."
- Make a list of the different relationships and dynamics Jesus is addressing in these verses.

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"Teach me Thine ordinances." Psalm 119:108

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

So yesterday we began surveying the, *"You have heard... but I say"* statements that Jesus makes in this sermon. Today we will continue them. In each one, Jesus is going beyond the behavior and straight to the heart. Keep that in mind as you take His words in today...

- PRAY and ask the Lord to *"Teach you His ordinances."* (Psalm 119:108) for the things He will say today are His decisions *(ordinances)* about how things are to be done, but you will more than likely find them challenging.
- READ Matthew 5:33-48
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

- Concerning Matthew 5:33-48...
- COPY it.
- UNDERLINE each time Jesus says, "You have heard" and "but I say to you."
- CONTINUE YOUR LIST of the different relationships and dynamics Jesus is addressing in these verses.
- ADD "weather" (verse 45) to your imagery list that you started on day 10. You should already have "salt and "light"





"I confidered my ways and turned my feet to Thy testimonies." Psalm 119:59

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

Today we head into chapter 6 where Jesus will continue to speak past our behavior to what is going on in our heart, but today and tomorrow He will get into the ways that affects our relationship with Him. Just 1 chapter in and we have already heard so much, and there is much more coming. As you take it all in, remember these first days are for surveying; later we'll definitely come back to it all with much deeper focus and understanding. But even as you survey, His Words are powerful, so as Jesus speaks to your heart, respond!

- PRAY and ask the Lord to help you "consider your ways and turn your feet to His testimonies." (Psalm 119:59)
- READ Matthew 6:1-8
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 6:1-8...

- COPY it.
- HIGHLIGHT any repetitive statements you see.
- MAKE TWO LISTS... the first being... descriptions of what the hypocrites do, the second being descriptions
  of what Jesus says for you to do instead.

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# 23 STRONG

January Day 14 What Jesus said...

"Be gracious to me according to Thy Word." Psalm 119:58

# SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today is like Part 2 of what we surveyed yesterday; it includes The Lord's Prayer and more words from Jesus about outward acts of righteousness, and intentions of the heart. The Lord's Prayer is probably familiar, but ask God to give you fresh ears and eyes as you survey it. And remember, just like with all of passages, we will come back to this one too with a more focused look at a later date.

- PRAY and ask the Lord to "be gracious to you according to His Word." (Psalm 119:59)
- READ Matthew 6:9-18.
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.
- \*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 6:9-18...

- COPY it.
- Pause and PRAY through The Lord's Prayer, talking to the Lord about each line...
- In verses 16-18, continue to HIGHLIGHT any repetitive statements you see, in tandem with those you highlighted in verses 1-8 yesterday.
- ADD TO THE TWO LISTS you made yesterday, using new descriptions from verses 16-18.



"Remove the false way from me and graciously grant me Thy law." Psalm 119:29

# SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we move forward in chapter 6 where Jesus will continue to speak more Truth into the activity of our hearts. We will hear three Truths in particular which are clear words from heaven that we all need to hear. So get your heart ready for His words by asking God to, *"remove the false way from you and Graciously grant you His law."* (Psalm 119:29)

- READ Matthew 6:19-24
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

- Concerning Matthew 6:19-24...
- COPY it.
- DIVIDE the verses into three sections and GIVE each section a title.
- ADD "treasures" and "eye" to your imagery list.



# 23 STRONG

January Day 16 What Jesus said ...

"O may Thy lovingkindness comfort me, according to Thy Word to Thy servant." Psalm 119:76

# SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we'll finish our survey of chapter 6 with rich words from Jesus that can reach deep into our anxious hearts with His abiding love and care, if we let them. I can't wait to dig in more to this section with you in the months to come, but for now, take these words in, get familiar with them, and ask God to let *"His lovingkindness comfort you, according to His Word."* (*Psalm 19:76*)

- READ Matthew 6:25-34
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

### **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 6:25-34...

- COPY it.
- HIGHLIGHT the words "anxious" and "more/much more" and "all these things" in the verses.
- ADD "birds of the air" and "flowers of the field" to your imagery list.
- CIRCLE the phrase "seek first the kingdom of God" in verse 33.





"May my heart be blameless in Thy statutes, that I may not be ashamed." Psalm 119:80

# SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we'll get started in Matthew 7, and hear Jesus speak words about judging; words many are familiar with, even people who don't follow Him. His words are pretty straightforward, so open your heart to hear them today, praying, *"May my heart be blameless in Thy statutes, that I may not be ashamed" (Psalm 119:80)* and then in the days to come, we will dig in even deeper to find more of His Truth we might have missed.

- READ Matthew 7:1-6.
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 7:1-6...

- COPY it.
- HIGHLIGHT the words, "judge" and "speck" and "log" each time you see them in these verses.
- ADD "speck and "log" to your imagery list.

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# 23 STRONG January Day 18 What Jesus said...

"Establish Your Word to Your servant." Psalm 119:38

### **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

Our verses for today from Jesus' sermon have a definite connection to His words from chapter 6:25-34. It seems He diverts to a different subject in 7:1-6, and then now comes back to the conversation again in verses 7-12. Perhaps we will see more of the reason why later, but for now, take in verses 7-12, all the while remembering His words from chapter 6 too. And as we do, let's pray *"Establish Your Word to Your servant"* (Psalm 119:38) because oh how we need the Truth of His love and care established in our hearts!

- REVIEW Matthew 8:25-34 and READ Matthew 7:7-12.
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

### **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 7:7-12...

- COPY it.
- HIGHLIGHT the words "much more" in verse 11, to go with your highlight of that word in 6:25-34.
- ADD "loving Father" to your imagery list.
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Your testimonies are my counselors. Psalm 119:24

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

We will focus on just two verses today, but goodness, they are filled with powerful wisdom, providing counsel for every day of life! These two verses are the testimony of Jesus as He walked this earth, so as you survey them, ask the Holy Spirit to counsel you through His testimony as you walk this earth too, praying, *"Lord may your testimony counsel me today."* (Psalm 119:24) See as with the other passages, later in our study, we will definitely dig deeper into these verses, but even just with surveying, they can give each of us great counsel now.

- READ Matthew 7:13-14.
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 7:13-14...

- COPY it.
- MAKE TWO LISTS... showing how Jesus describes the contrasts of "the narrow gate" and "the wide gate."
- ADD "wide gate" and "narrow gate" to your imagery list.

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# 23 STRONG January Day 20 What Jesus said...

"Revive me O Lord according to Your ordinances." Psalm 119:149

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

The words of Jesus in Matthew 7:15-23, where we will focus today, are heavy words, and yet so filled with LIFE! There is much to ponder in what He says... and we'll come back to the depth of His words again in the months to come, but even now as we are surveying, keep your heart tender to something He may have for you, praying, *"Revive Me O Lord according to Your ordinances."* (Psalm 119:149)

- READ Matthew 7:15-23.
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 7:15-23...

- COPY it.
- MAKE TWO LISTS... showing how Jesus describes the contrasts of "the good tree" and "the bad tree."
- ADD "good tree" and "bad tree" to your imagery list.





"Establish my footsteps in Your Word..." Psalm 119:133

## **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

You will probably be familiar with the few verses we will survey today in Matthew 7:24-27, but don't let your familiarity keep you from looking closely. Jesus' words here are about taking all the things He has been saying in this sermon, and building your life upon them. As you do, you will be establishing your life in the security of Him, no matter what may come. So as you take His Words in today, first pray, *"Establish my footsteps in Your Word..."* (Psalm 119:133)

- READ Matthew 7:24-27.
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 7:24-27...

- COPY it.
- MAKE TWO LISTS... describing what Jesus says will happen to the one who "takes His Words and acts upon them" and to the one who "does not take His Words and act upon them."
- ADD "Rock" and "sand" to your imagery list.





# 23 STRONG

🚼 January Day 22 What Jesus said...

"Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law..." Psalm 119:18

# **SPIRITUAL FOOD**

Today we finish our survey of the Sermon on the Mount... but really this survey is just setting us up to really begin feasting on this sermon, so finish your survey well! Actually, the sermon ended in verse 27, and these last 2 verses in chapter 7 for today are Matthew's description of the response of the people listening. Before you take them in, pray, *"Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Thy Law."* (Psalm 119:18)

- READ Matthew 7:28-29.
- JOURNAL anything in this section that specifically stands out to you.
- JOURNAL any questions about this section that arise in your mind.

\*If you have a Bible listening app, listen to these verses several times today too. We recommend Dwell.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

Concerning Matthew 7:28-29...

- COPY it.
- HIGHLIGHT the word "amazed".
- Go back to Day 6 and read your notes.
- WATCH the video again titled <u>Amazed at His Teaching</u>



"Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law..." Psalm 119:18

# SPIRITUAL FOOD

Day 23! We have surveyed Jesus' amazing sermon, and today as we finish out we want to go back through the whole of it one more time with eyes open to His kingdom. See really this sermon is His kind invitation to rescue us from the kingdom of darkness, and establish us in His kingdom of righteousness! How good, kind and faithful He is! So as we finish today, pray with thanksgiving, *"You have dealt well with Your servant O Lord, according to Your Word."* (Psalm 119:65)

- READ Matthew 5-7.
- MAKE NOTE of each time the word, *"kingdom"* is used.

# **SPIRITUAL FITNESS**

- WATCH the video titled, Kingdom Invitation.
- PRAY about your desire to live in His kingdom.

\*Please Note: we will begin Month 2 of our study on February 1<sup>st</sup>. As you catch your breath during the interim, keep your eyes open for encouragements and resources that we will post to help you review and prepare for the next 23 days!

