

## **LESSON 10: KINGDOM PRIORITIES, PART 2 (MATTHEW 6:25-34)**

You will not be successful in your life of service in God's kingdom if you are trying to store up two different types of treasure, have two different focuses, or attempt to serve two different masters (Matthew 6:19-24). Instead, you will only be successful if you lay up treasure in Heaven, have a singular focus on spiritual things, and serve God as your only Master! Now, Jesus extends this singular priority to even seeking Him above your own physical needs (Matthew 6:25-34).

### **DON'T BE ANXIOUS ABOUT YOUR LIFE (MATTHEW 6:25)**

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As dual-natured beings (physical and spiritual), there are things about this life that everyone needs to sustain physical life. These items of true necessity are identified as food, drink, and clothing (the same as identified in 1 Timothy 6:6-8). Perhaps housing is not mentioned because having enough clothing would be sufficient for your survival. The challenge Jesus addresses in this section is that an anxious concern over these things can become debilitating to one's faith in that the pursuit of physical things (whether physical needs or desires) can become prioritized above seeking the kingdom of God (Luke 10:38-42). Surely, the anxious pursuit of any amount of earthly things (whether for wealth or mere survival) will distract our focus in life from where it ought to be placed. While there is a proper amount of forethought appropriate for living and surviving on earth (Proverbs 6:6-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8), Jesus forbids the anxiety that would draw our focus in two directions (Matthew 13:22; John 6:27). For, Jesus wants people to recognize that our lives (our existences) are about much more than food and clothing – as spiritual beings headed for eternity in either Heaven or Hell (Luke 12:15-21; Matthew 25:31-46)!

### **REASONS NOT TO BE ANXIOUS ABOUT YOUR LIFE (MATTHEW 6:26-30)**

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Before stating where our focus should be, Jesus gives some practical considerations people should make related to the things needed for life on this earth. First, Jesus points to a consideration of the birds. The birds of the sky don't pursue earthly things so they make their way in life by sowing, reaping, and gathering into barns. Instead, they are entirely dependent on the provisions of God (though they must still be diligent in their efforts). The birds don't fret and become anxious. They simply do their part to gather what God provides. So, every bird you see should be a reminder that God cares and God provides (Psalm 147:9). Then, you should know that God considers you of greater value than the birds (Luke 12:6-7, 22-25) and He will provide for you. Second, Jesus points to a consideration of the uselessness of being anxious over things we can't control. The length of life is impossible to change through being anxious, as one cannot even add a single hour to life by being anxious. Some Greek manuscripts mention the inability to add one cubit to one's height. The obvious point is that being anxious about things in this life does not change anything. In fact, it often makes the situation worse. Third, Jesus points to a consideration of the flowers in the field. The lilies in the field don't labor and spin thread to make their clothes, yet God clothes the mere vegetation of the field in such splendid ways that it surpasses the glory of Solomon (the extremely wealthy king of Israel, 1 Kings 10:14-29). This spectacular demonstration of God's provision for the flowers, though, is for something that is only temporary (1 Peter 1:24). Therefore, you should know that if God takes care of such things in this way, He will take care of you in greater ways. Ultimately, whether you allow the situations of this life to draw your focus away from God and become anxious will demonstrate your faith in God to provide. For, true faith in God's kingdom is not merely an intellectual agreement with certain truths, but a deep life-altering element that impacts everything about your life!

## SEEK GOD'S KINGDOM AND RIGHTEOUSNESS FIRST (MATTHEW 6:31-34)

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The conclusion Jesus draws is that you must not be anxious. Although you need (and God knows that you need) food, drink, and clothing, you must not seek them first in your life. For, those who do not know God ("Gentiles," Ephesians 4:17-19) seek these things as matters of focus and priority in their lives (Luke 12:22, 29-31). While those who do not know God are distracted by seeking the things of this life, Jesus's disciples are to seek first the kingdom of God (living in a way that submits to the reign/rule of God) and His righteousness (living in a way that God considers to be right). Everything else must take a lower priority, less focus, and be of less concern than this! In fact, God promises to provide the necessities of this life to those who prioritize in this way. So, by anxiously seeking first the things of this world and trying to secure stable futures on this earth, you will be both unable to control such and will miss out on what truly matters in Heaven. But, by seeking first God's kingdom and righteousness, you will obtain the eternal inheritance in Heaven and God will provide for your earthly necessities (though not always your desires and comforts, Philippians 4:10-13). Therefore, don't let your anxieties about earthly things in the future control your focus. Instead, seek God first and trust Him to get you through the troubles of each day (James 4:13-17; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11)!

### CONCLUSION

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The things of this life have many ways to appeal to and distract people. This includes the necessities we have in life and anxieties about what the future holds. However, those who want to be part of Jesus's kingdom must keep their focus on the things of His kingdom. For, the things of this earth are only temporary, while the things of God's kingdom are eternal!

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

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What are the true necessities of life?

What is the danger of anxiety over physical necessities?

How do the birds help correct anxiety?

How does recognizing the uselessness of being anxious help correct anxiety?

How do the flowers in the field help correct anxiety?

How should the focus of those who are God's people differ from those who are not?

What does it mean to seek God's kingdom and righteousness first?

What does God promise to those who seek His kingdom and righteousness first?