

## THE HEART OF THE MATTER (vv. 34-35)

*<sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

*<sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

1. What do you think Jesus has in mind when he talks about “God’s kingdom and his righteousness?”
2. What do you think it means to “seek first” his kingdom and his righteousness?
3. What are some of the things that tend to compete with our active pursuit of the things of God?
4. What are some practical steps we can take to keep “first things first?”
5. Jesus taught us to seek God’s provision for each day (give us this day our daily bread). Here he encourages us to trust God with the pressing concerns of each day.
  - a. Why is it essential for us to take one day at a time?
  - b. How does our confidence in the heavenly Father free us up to live our lives one day at a time?



Several years ago, Bobby Ferrin recorded a light-hearted little tune entitled, “Don’t worry, be happy.” The opening line goes something like this, “Here’s a little song I wrote, you might want to sing it note for note, ‘Don’t worry, be happy.’”

It’s a feel-good song. You smile when you hear the song, and you can feel the tension slowly easing out of your neck and shoulders as you listen. But as soon as the song is over, you find yourself back in the real world, and your anxiety levels go right back to where they were. They might even soar a little higher, because now, on top of everything else, you are worrying about why you can’t stop worrying and be happy.

I suppose you could sit there and play the song over and over, but that would get old pretty fast. No one has that kind of time on their hands anyway. Feel-good songs are lovely, but they are far from a real solution. We need something richer, deeper, and far more comprehensive.

Of course, that is what Jesus offers us in the Sermon on the Mount. He encourages us to trade our anxieties for abiding confidence in our Heavenly Father—a Father who knows exactly what we need, knows how to meet our needs, and is far more willing to meet our needs than we could possibly imagine. We are not only invited to seek God’s provision for “daily bread,” and we are invited to trust him with the pressing issues of each day.

Peter encourages us, “Cast all of your anxieties on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

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## THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE (vv. 25)

<sup>25</sup> “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?”

1. How would you describe the difference between healthy concern and worry?
2. What are some things for which we should have a healthy concern?
3. What happens when healthy concern gives way to anxiety?
4. What are some of the tell-tale signs that concern has given way to anxiety?
5. Jesus’ audience would have been preoccupied with food and clothing out of sheer necessity. We are often preoccupied with the same things, but for entirely different reasons.
  - a. How would you describe the difference?
  - b. What does that say about us?
6. Jesus asks us, “Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?”
  - a. From a biblical perspective, what is life really all about?
  - b. What happens when we get so caught up in our daily routines that we fail to pursue what life is really all about?

## TWO VIVID ILLUSTRATIONS (vv. 26-30)

<sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

<sup>28</sup> “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?”

1. While it is true that God feeds the birds, he does not do so without quite a bit of industry on their part. The point is not that they do not work for their food. The point is, they do not worry about their food.
  - a. How would you describe the balance between hard work and trusting God?
  - b. How does trusting God bring meaning and balance to our work?
2. One of the surprising truths of this passage is that God cares about beauty and adornment. But there is a huge difference between the way we adorn ourselves and the way God adorns us (see 1 Peter 3:3-4).
  - a. How would you describe the difference?
  - b. What do we emphasize?
  - c. What does God emphasize?
  - d. How should trusting God impact our sense of style and fashion?

## AN IMPORTANT CONTRAST (vv. 31-32)

<sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

1. How does Jesus describe the obsession that people, who do not know God, have with food, drink, and clothing?
2. What are some of the things that your friends, who do not know Christ, tend to “run after?”
3. How and why should we be different?