

Matthew 6:19-34 – Kingdom Principles – Part 4

Kingdom Principle #1 – Obey God’s Commands

Kingdom Principle #2 – Don’t trust in your righteousness

Kingdom Principle #3 – Have a high regard for life

Kingdom Principle #4 – Have a high regard for marriage

Kingdom Principle #5 – Speak and act with integrity

Kingdom Principle #6 – Respond to evil with good

Kingdom Principle #7 – Love everyone

Kingdom Principle #8 – Be charitable

Kingdom Principle #9 – Be prayerful

Kingdom Principle #10 – Fast spiritually

Kingdom Principle #11 – Store up treasures in heaven

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

Notes: ‘lay up’ can also be translated ‘treasure up.’ So, this could read, ‘Do not treasure up treasures.’

‘moth and rust destroy’ – many of the things we might treasure on this earth will not last. They wear out or become damaged through use or accidentally.

‘thieves’ – things can be taken away from us.

There are rewards for living according to God’s will and Word. Some of them may be temporal, but they might not be material.

“A clear conscience and a free and joyous spirit are present rewards.” Myron S. Augsburger – The Preacher’s Commentary – page 85

The truly valuable rewards are eternal and stored up in heaven.

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Notes: ‘lay up for yourselves...’ – This means that there are things we can do on this earth that will follow us to heaven and be rewarded (Matt. 16:27). Part of growing in our faith is learning what those things are. The Kingdom Principles are a good starting point. For example, Principle #7 is love everyone. As I learn how to love other people in the way God created me to love them and then do it, I am storing up a treasure in heaven. The key is doing it for the right reason, not for the treasure, but because it glorifies God and blesses others. The fact that I will be rewarded in heaven encourages me when I am struggling to do it when it is hard.

Scriptures: Matthew 16:27 (NKJV): For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Notes: Recently, as a protest to raise awareness about “climate change,” activists vandalized precious works of art. The more precious something is to us, the more effort must be exerted to protect it or maintain it. The reason Jesus doesn’t want us to store up treasures on earth is because they will distract us from the good works that will store up treasures in heaven. And in the end, we can’t take those earthly treasures with us to heaven.

“If our treasure is earthly, our heart will be earthly also.” J.C. Ryle

If everything you value is in this world, then your heart is in this world. As Christ-followers, we are sojourners through this world. This world is not our home. We have a home in heaven that is perfect and eternal. That is where our heart should be. And while we wait, we ought to be furnishing it with treasures we will enjoy forever.

When we are in love with someone, they become the objects of our thoughts. We think about what we love. What thoughts fill your mind? That is what you love.

22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

Notes: How you look at things determines the quality of your life. How we look at things is controlled by our knowledge of God and His Word and our yielding of our will to the leading of the Holy Spirit. What is your eye focused on, the things of this world or on the will of God? Social media can be a real danger in this. Social media often focuses on the things of this world and glorifies those who are using or treasuring those things. Social media stimulates and promotes the storing up of earthly treasures.

Treasures aren’t necessarily silver and gold. It can also be more intangible, things like influence, popularity, acceptance, or approval. Science is just now starting to make connections between social media exposure in children and young adults and dramatic increases in depression and suicide. They see people living a life they want to live, but because most of it isn’t real, they can’t and that leads them to depression or negative life choices. Most social media is not evil, but there is a danger of evil, so moderation is wise, especially with children and young adults.

Kelly and I have had Barn Owls nesting in a box in our backyard for several years. A few years ago we installed a camera inside the box, and a couple outside so that we could see what was going on at night. Periodically, I need to clean the lens on the camera, either of dirt, or spider webs. If I don’t do that the image is not clear and we can’t see what we want to see.

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Notes: The Bible uses light and darkness symbolically. Light is used to depict holiness, goodness, and righteousness. Darkness is a picture of evil, wickedness, and sin. We must guard what our eyes are

focused on. If all that is coming into our view is darkness, the result will be darkness in our heart. If what we are focused on is good, pure, holy, and right, the result will be goodness, holiness, and purity.

The darkness has a way of deceiving us into believing that we are in the light. The longer we expose ourselves to the darkness, the less dark it seems. And then, if we are exposed to it long enough, we might even convince ourselves that it isn't dark at all.

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Notes: 'serve' – Can also be translated, 'be a slave.' As Christ-followers, we must not be enslaved by any worldly things. That doesn't mean we can't have worldly things as long as there is not a temptation be enslaved to them. That is the problem with earthly treasures, they must be served to protect and maintain them.

Mammon was the Chaldean god of money or wealth.

Jesus is not calling us to forsake the materialistic world. As Christ-followers we consider the material world as something God created and calls us to care for. Our attitude toward the material world should be as caretakers for God. Nothing in the material world belongs to us, not even ourselves – it is all God's.

That leads into the next principle.

Kingdom Principle #12 – Do not worry

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

Notes: Worry is the result of meditating on the things in life that we cannot control.

The human heart has a limited amount of space. Things like worry and fear take room in your heart that could be used for God. The more someone worries about their life, the less they are able to love God and others. Worry also inhibits faith. Worry and faith are incompatible.

'worry' occurs six times in verses 25 to 34. It is clear from this that worry in the heart of a believer is out of place. Worry and fear are similar – they eat away at the foundations of our faith. And the only solution to them is an increase of faith.

To worry is to feel or believe that God is not going to take care of you in some way.

The apostle Paul also talks about worry and suggests what we should do when we find ourselves worrying or becoming anxious (Phil. 4:6-7). We don't have to worry because God has promised to care for us (1 Pet. 5:6-7).

Three realities of worry:

1. Worry is irreverent – it is a failure to place our trust fully in God for the things we cannot control, but he can.

2. Worry is irrelevant – it cannot change anything either for the good or for the bad.
3. Worry is irresponsible – it is a waste of energy that could be used to grow God’s kingdom.

Scriptures: Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV): 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:6–7 (NKJV): 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Notes: Yes, we are of more value to God than are the birds of the air. We were made in God’s image, and created to walk in intimate fellowship communion with Him.

The main thought here is, ‘Do you trust God to provide your basic needs or are you trusting money for your provision?’ If you can’t trust God to meet your basic needs, how are you going to trust Him for the big things?

27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

Notes: A cubit is about 18 inches. It was the distance between the elbow and the tip of the fingers. This is obviously a rhetorical question. It is not possible to add 15 inches to your height. Worrying can add nothing good to your life. All worrying can do is steal the good from your life.

28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Notes: Jesus makes worrying a problem of faith. If we are worrying, it is because there is something that we are not trusting God for.

31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

Notes: ‘eat...drink...wear’ – These are the basic necessities of life. If Jesus says we shouldn’t worry about those things, then we also shouldn’t be worried about the things that are not necessities to live.

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Notes: ‘Gentiles’ = nonbelievers. They have to worry about these things because they do not have a heavenly Father who has committed Himself to caring for them. When our children were small, they never worried about getting enough food to eat. They didn’t go to bed worried about whether there would be food the next day. They trusted us to provide for them what they needed. Even when times got really hard for us, they always had food to eat. They may not have had the toys they wanted, but they never had to worry about the basic necessities of life.

Unbelievers don’t have that. They are like orphans on the street. Because they have rejected God as their Father, they must meet all their own needs.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Notes: The kingdom of God is wherever God is King. This begins first within our own heart. If God is King of our lives, then we can place our trust in Him to care for us, provide for us, and protect us. If God is King of your life, He has obligated Himself to do those things.

Once God is King of our lives, we can then turn our attention to expanding His kingdom to those around us. We begin with our closest relationships and expand outward to the limit of the range of influence God has given us.

Not only should we replace worrying with seeking God’s kingdom, we must also seek God’s righteousness. God’s righteousness is that which aligns with God’s Word, will, and ways. It means we are seeking to feel, think, and do what is right in God’s eyes. For example, when we catch ourselves worrying, we must ask ourselves if that is right. Is it right to worry? Based on what we are studying, the answer seems to be no. To seek God’s righteousness in that moment, I must confess to God that worrying is not right and ask God to help me think differently about whatever I am worrying about. I must ask myself, ‘What would I feel, think, and do if I was trusting God in this thing?’ And then I must seek to change the way I am thinking, feeling, or the things I am doing.

If Jesus tells us not to worry and then tells us to do something in place of worrying because it is possible through faith to do so. Jesus would not tell us to do something if it wasn’t possible for us to do it through faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

‘these things shall be added to you’ – What are the ‘these things?’ If we are truly seeking God’s kingdom and His righteousness we do not need an answer to that question. God is faithful to take care of us. He has promised to add something to your life if you seek His kingdom and His righteousness. God is good, holy, pure, loving, kind, gracious, and merciful. Anything He adds to your life is going to come from those realities.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Notes: Many people make themselves miserable by trying to live in a future that may or may not come. This is especially true to those who look to the future and imagine evil coming to them. We are living in uncertain times. The economy is not strong. Inflation is still high. There are warnings about food shortages and higher fuel prices. And then there are the social issues. There are groups who want us to join them as they parade their sin and wickedness for the world to see. There are organizations seeking to indoctrinate our children and grandchildren in perverse ideologies. And there is a growing anti-Christian sentiment in government, the media, and the culture. If we focus too much on that we can easily find ourselves worrying about tomorrow. What are we to do.

Focus on today. That doesn't mean we don't care about the future. We should make plans. And those plans should include all the wisdom God has given you. Those plans should include seeking God's kingdom. Those plans should seek God's righteousness – they should be right. Once we have sought God and made our plans, we should lay those plans at His feet. Go ahead and make plans, but never forget, God's will trumps your plans.

Focus on today. Ask God, 'Lord, what would You have me to do right now?' And the whatever you believe you hear Him say, you do! And then you repeat the question to Him again, 'Lord, what would you have me to do right now.' Not tomorrow, not next week, not next month – right now. If you don't here something from God, follow your plan and do what is right.