

Seek First the Kingdom of God

***Key Verse: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
—Matthew 6:33***

***Selected Scripture:
Matthew 6:25-34***

AS WE CONSIDER TODAY’S

lesson, we note that these words of Jesus were directed to his disciples, and not to the multitudes. Hence, they are especially for those who are striving to be followers of the Master. These have been called by the Heavenly Father, in harmony with the words found in Proverbs 23:26: “My son, give me thine heart, and

let thine eyes observe my ways.” Having made a vow of consecration, these called ones are instructed to daily seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, in response to his words, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”—Matt. 16:24

If we are striving to walk in the “narrow way” established by Jesus, following his example, it is of utmost importance that, as fully as possible, we realize what is implied in the words of our Key Verse, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.” Here it is clearly indicated that by following the Master, we are also seeking to share with him in the glory, honor, and work of the coming kingdom of God, through which all mankind will be blessed and be given an opportunity to be recovered back to divine favor.

We seek “first” the kingdom of God by setting our primary

goals in life on eternal, heavenly things, and by putting aside to the greatest extent possible those of earthly matters. Paul states, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Col. 3:2) The phrase “set your affection” in the original Greek text means to “exercise the mind.” Our minds, aims, and activities are to be transformed and set toward heavenly things, and “his righteousness.” “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”—Rom. 12:2

To set our affections chiefly upon earthly things, we may find great difficulty in avoiding the snares that go with them. However, this is not to be the mindset of those who desire with their whole heart to seek the Lord and his perfect will. This does not mean that we are not to love our spouse or children, or to appreciate the beauties of nature, but these can no longer be our chief treasure, and thus be in competition with our heavenly goals.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures on treasures upon earth, ... But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Matt. 6:19,20) Delight, joy and comfort are all suggested by the thought of treasure. Our thoughts, hopes and plans will be centered to a large extent on where our “treasure” is. If centered in our Lord, our treasured joys and delights will be the incentive to energy, activity and perseverance in his service, and will inspire us to a daily way of life which is pleasing in his sight. As Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”—vs. 21

All who desire to seek God first in their lives do well to bear in mind that heavenly interests are to be given first priority; and that earthly matters, though certainly not to be ignored, are to be managed and controlled from the standpoint of one’s eternal spiritual welfare. May all such take to heart Jesus’ prayer on behalf of all his faithful followers: “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”—John 17:15,16 ■