

The Young Ministers' Forum

FIRST THINGS FIRST !

Ordering Your Life
and Ministry Around
Christ.

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Issue Paper: First Things First

Introduction:

Matthew 6:33: *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

“To have a great many aims and objects is much the same thing as having no aim at all; for if a man shoots at many things he will hit none, or none worth the hitting. It is a grand thing to know what we are living for, and to live for a worthy object with the undivided energy of our being.” — Charles Spurgeon

We have often had the phrase **“First things first.”** We use it when we speak of priorities and decisions. I remember, when still a kid, I (and my siblings) would love to watch TV early in the morning, but my dad's voice would echo. Let me paraphrase what it sounded like then: *“Early in the morning! Is that the first thing you would do? First things first!”* This happened in my house, whether during school hours or the holidays. Or coming back from school and seeing my friends playing football, I would want to join them without first putting off my school uniform, eating, or doing my homework—my mom's voice would echo, *“Why are you so playful? (I really was) Is that the first thing to do after school?”* The phrase first thing is used to teach **priority of importance**. It is a call to keep the **main thing the main thing**.

Kingdom Priority

Our Lord Jesus Christ used a similar phrase in the Sermon on the Mount. He said to his disciples, *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”*. Obviously, there are many other things that compete with our seeking first. If He says *seek ye first*, He knows we seek many things. Yet a man who seeks many things ends up missing all things. Christ, wanting our lives to be ordered and fruitful for Himself, calls our attention to seek that which lasts forever.

The Greek word translated “**first**” in Matthew 6:33 is transliterated **prōtos**. It means “first in a line of more than one option,” i.e., Jesus knows that the world is full of options, yet He says, *seek first*.

Now, **prōton** does not merely mean first in a list, as in “do this, then move on to something else.” It carries the sense of **priority, preeminence, and governing order**. It speaks of what is chief and controlling.

So Jesus is not saying: “*Seek the kingdom, then go and seek other things later.*” Rather, He is saying: “*Let the kingdom of God be the supreme ordering reality of your life.*” This does not mean that a person stops doing other things—working, learning, planning, building skills, marrying or pursuing a vocation. Jesus Himself worked, learned, socialized, grew, and functioned within society.

What “seek first” means is this: the kingdom is not one pursuit among many. It is the lens through which all other pursuits are interpreted. It is what gives meaning to everything else. You seek the kingdom—and everything else finds its place inside that pursuit. “*Seek*” itself is ongoing, but not fragmented. The verb used for the word seek is **zēteite**, which is present and continuous—it implies ongoing desire, pursuit, or orientation. But that does not mean scattered attention. It means passion in a sustained direction.

This is important: a continuous verb does not imply many objects of seeking, but **one enduring object**. What was Jesus saying? “*Keep seeking the kingdom first, keep pursuing, never stop at any point.*” This seeking is a **long obedience in the same direction**. It's a long race with a single goal. It is to keep the goal before us each day as we run! It is a pursuit that never ends! He is calling us into a lifelong **single-hearted devotion to His course**.

So “*seek first*” is Jesus’ way of saying: “*Let your life have one center.*”

To think of the force of the word **prōton** is to say: “*Let the kingdom of God be the overarching goal of your life.*”

What does this mean in practice? In practice, this means:

- Every decision is filtered through kingdom values.
- Every ambition is judged by eternal relevance.
- Everyday life pursuit is ordered by kingdom purpose, not abandoned.

It is to know that my primary identity is one who belongs to the reign of God. So I don't ask first: "What will benefit me?" "What will secure me?" "What will advance me?" It is no longer "ME." I ask instead: "How does this align with God's reign?" "How does this reflect God's righteousness?" "How does this serve eternal purposes?"

You may have your daily engagements, but now you do all of this as a kingdom person, for kingdom ends, under kingdom authority. The "other things" are not rivals to the kingdom—they become servants of it.

Let me share with you two stories that you should think about:

"In the late 19th century, John Wanamaker opened a department store in Philadelphia. Within a few years, that enterprise had become one of the most successful businesses in the country. But operating his store wasn't Wanamaker's only responsibility. He was also named Postmaster General of the United States, and he served as superintendent for what was then the largest Sunday school in the world at Bethany Presbyterian Church. When someone asked him how he could hold all those positions at once, he explained: 'Early in life I read, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' The Sunday school is my business; all the rest are the things.'" (Culled From Precept Austin Commentary¹)

Charles Spurgeon also once told a story as follows:

A venerable man once said to his son, "William, I am pleased to see you incline towards religion. But take my advice and be reasonable. I have been in business now for forty years, and my advice is—stick to trade and make money, and then attend to

¹ https://www.preceptaustin.org/matthew_633-34

religion.” Now, the young man, as young men are apt to do, had begun to think for himself; and, for a wonder, his thoughts ran in the right groove. Therefore he replied:

“Father, I am always grateful to you for your good advice; but this time you must excuse me if I differ from you, for the Scripture says, ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness,’ and therefore I cannot go in for making money first, but I must at once serve God. Yet I hope I may be none the less attentive to business.”

It is a good rule to begin as you mean to go on. That son was wiser than his counsellor.

The world will admonish you: “Seek first your own,” but Jesus says to His disciples then and now: “Seek first My Kingdom.” This is what made the early disciples turn the world upside down—they lived solely for Christ and His Kingdom.

Would you say: “I cannot go in to make a name first. I cannot go in to make a fortune first. I cannot go in to build my empire first. I must at once serve God—not later, not in the future, but now, at once.”

Would this be your life golden rule?

Broader Context of the Thematic Text

Let’s study this verse in the broader context of Jesus’ ministry and this chapter. This part matters—so lean in. Still with me, or is your mind drifting? If it drifted, come back. Let’s go on the odyssey together.

Jesus’ teaching in **Matthew 6:19–34** came from the context of the sermon on the Mount. It was meant for the disciples as Jesus prepares them to live a life of the Kingdom He has come to culminate.

Matthew 5:1: *And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:*

Jesus had taught the disciples that He is Christ, the one who will sit on David’s throne to usher in the reign of God. God’s rule and reign has been an expectation in the heart of the people of Israel:

Isaiah 9:6–7: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder... Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.”

Jeremiah 23:5–6: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” The Jews anticipated a reign that would subdue all their enemies totally and bring them complete salvation.

The Framework of Jesus Ministry

So, Jesus message came saying: **Mark 1:15:** “And saying, *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*”

Note a few things:

1. **The time is fulfilled:** What time? This phrase implies that the prophetic Scriptures for the launch of God’s Kingdom **began** fulfillment when Jesus came. He meant that the time they have been waiting for, the expectation of God’s people to see the rule and reign of God, has come.

Luke 4:21: And he began to say unto them, ***This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.***

2. **The Kingdom is at hand:** This meant the kingdom of God has come to their neighborhood; the agenda of God to bring His Kingdom on earth has come to its fulfillment.

Mark 1:15 DARBY: *and saying, The time is fulfilled and the **kingdom of God has drawn nigh**; repent and believe in the glad tidings.*

So, Jesus was saying God’s Kingdom has come to your neighborhood, it has drawn near. He told them that the Kingdom of God was already in their

midst even when they were still anticipating it's coming: *Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." And he said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. Luke 17:20-22*

- 3. Repent and believe the gospel:** What is the gospel? Jesus showed clearly here that the coming of the Messiah is good news for all, as the prophet said:

Matthew 4:16: *"The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."*

Jesus' ministry was about calling people to believe in Him as the promised King now in their midst. The whole nation of Israel needed to turn from sin, traditions, and unbiblical expectations of the Messiah and turn to Him and believe. This was what Jesus' ministry was about: He was going around preaching, teaching the Kingdom, and healing.

Matthew 4:23: *And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.*

The Prophets prophesied about the day of this good news of God's Kingdom:

Isaiah 52:7-8 GNT: How wonderful it is to see messenger coming across the mountains, bringing good news, the news of peace! He announces victory and says to Zion, "Your God is king!". Those who guard the city are shouting, shouting together for joy. They can see with their own eyes the return of the Lord to Zion.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King is coming to you. He is just and has salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9

Jesus preached the Kingdom and demonstrated the Kingdom's authority to bring Justice, order and peace, saying: Matthew 12:28: *"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."*

And to John the Baptist's disciples, He said: Matthew 11:4–5: *"...Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."*

Miracles, healing, exorcism and all he did were displays of God's Invasion of the nation in restoring the theocratic intention of God, manifesting what happens when God is King.

His ministry was centered on the good news of God's Kingdom among His people.

His Disciples Within the Broader Context

Are you still with me, or did you slip away for a second? Please stay here. I'm getting to the point where you'll see yourself in this broader context. Don't miss this moment here!

Jesus called disciples into this Kingdom, which you are now one by extension. He wanted his disciples not just to follow Him as a teacher, but to submit and participate in the rule and reign of God. He spoke of this Kingdom clearly in the Sermon on the Mount to them (beginning in Matthew 5). This teaching of Jesus was not written for the first disciples that heard it but for us – you and me. We are to see ourselves from the mirror our Lord gave.

He spoke of this Kingdom clearly in the Sermon on the Mount (beginning in Matthew 5):

Matthew 5:3–12 (KJV): *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the*

peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you... Rejoice, and be exceeding glad...

Notice the repeated phrase, “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” These are Kingdom characteristics—a Kingdom people shaped by God’s rule. Here is the lifestyle of the Kingdom possessors and envoys; it’s a countercultural ethos. In the kingdom of the world, the words; poor, meek, mourn, hunger, merciful, peacemakers, and persecuted do not receive the pronouncement of greatness. But there is another Kingdom where the participants live against the tide. They are called to be poor in spirit, a mark of dependency; to be meek, they don’t take over the earth by force or sword but by humility and controlled strength, waiting on God for vindication. They have the attitude to mourn for the ills of the nations in intercessions; to hunger for God’s standard of righteousness over the corruption and evil of their day; to be merciful to others in need, pain, and sorrow when society represents cruelty.

He taught them to be peacemakers, agents of peace in the midst of fears and wars, and encouraged them, when living counter-culturally, they are to expect persecutions, hatred and violence from the other Kingdom, yet, they are to stand true to their conviction, because that is participating in the Kingdom and that they have a great reward in heaven.

Immediately after the Beatitudes, Jesus identifies the **identity** and **mission** of Kingdom people, His disciples:

Matthew 5:13–16 (KJV); “Ye are the salt of the earth... Ye are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

This is the call of the disciples. His teachings show the lifestyle, principles, and ethics of this Kingdom. It is the lifestyle of those whose “is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3,10). If we embrace these values we will be light in the darkness of the earth and salt bringing preservation and restoration to a dying and decaying world.

Thy Kingdom Come

Matthew 6:9-10: *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

He taught them a Kingdom-centered praying. They were to pray that the Kingdom they were to preach would reach the ends of the earth. It will come on earth (Mat 6:7), all the earth will come under His rule and His will, decree, plans, and purposes alone will take over the whole earth. If I am a participant in this Kingdom, then I must partner with God in prayer. All those who have tasted this Kingdom cannot help but want it to invade the earth. Jesus poured out his soul, his mission, his passion into those disciples, and they took the torch and lit their world. The teachings they received influenced what they became. Spineless Christianity is a result of consumers' mentality in our discipleship. We need to get back into the Jesus curriculum and the Apostolic Course outline to live out who we are called to be.

The Disciples convictions

They had repented and believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Mat 16:15). They believed His testimony of Himself. They saw Him as the one whom the prophets had been speaking about, as the promised Messiah. They said, "...*We have found him, of whom Moses in the law wrote, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*" the one of whom the prophets spoke, Christ...*thou art the son of Gog, thou art the King of Israel*"(John 1:45,49).

Matthew 16:16–17: *"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon... for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."*

Jesus gave them **the keys of the kingdom:** Matthew 16:18–19: *"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven..."*. It is the authority to proclaim and extend the Kingdom in Christ exalting power: Matthew 10:7–8: *"And as ye go, preach, saying, The*

kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils..."

Upon their understanding of Him as the Messiah, He would build the Church — Ekklesia — the assembly called out for a purpose. Christ calls it "my ekklesia": the people gathered to represent Christ, who have embraced His rule and are of His colony. They are of the Kingdom and envoys of that Kingdom. The gates of hell shall not prevail against this assembly. This speaks of the ongoing satanic wiles and wars against the Kingdom people, yet the Church is victorious.

Christ has given the Church the authority to extend His rule and reign on the earth. He also gave them the privilege to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom:

The Mysteries of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:11: *"...Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."*

Throughout Matthew 13 Jesus explains many Kingdom parables, such as the sower, the mustard seed, and the leaven — all showing the spread of Kingdom rule by the word and the increase of the Kingdom, beginning small but growing expansively until the consummation at the end of the age.

Matthew 13:31–32: *"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed... which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs..."*

This shows that though the Kingdom has culminated at the first coming of Christ, it is still going to be consummated at His second coming and those who repent and believe now have a foretaste of that Kingdom by the Spirit's presence.

Political Kingdom?

Jesus taught that entering and living in the Kingdom is not about political power or earthly dominion but about spiritual transformation through the Holy Spirit.

Though they were slow to understand, they expected a physical kingdom first, but Jesus said what He brought first was a spiritual Kingdom that only those whom the Spirit works upon, the regenerated ones, will enter:

John 3:3&5: *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*

He had said His Kingdom was not of this world and therefore he would not take it by physical force: *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.* (John 18-36-37)

So when He rose again they asked when He would restore the Kingdom, and He told them the Spirit would start the work in and through them, and, like a flood, it would spread across the earth through them as they witness Christ, the King:

Acts 1:6–8: *“...Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said... But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...”*

This lifestyle and ethics of the Kingdom, therefore, must not be read legalistically but as the work of the Spirit in our hearts. As we lay hold of the Spirit, the teachings of Christ become a daily reality of faith. You must keep this doctrinal reality in your heart; this is the basis of applying and living out the Sermon on the Mount. It takes a heart indwelt by God’s Spirit

to seek first the Kingdom with intense devotion. This was your reality when you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph 1:13). That is the fuel of your long directional passion and pursuit. Paul later called this “life and walk in the Spirit” (Gal 5:16). The indwelling and influence of the Spirit in the heart of God’s people is what makes them live out the righteousness of the law (Romans 8:1-9) — a righteousness greater than that of the Pharisees:

Matthew 5:20: *‘For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.’*

Here, Paul says the Kingdom is not about external rituals; it is about inner reality — righteousness (right relationship with God), peace, and joy through the Spirit.

Romans 14:17: *‘For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.’*

Why have I taken the time to explain this? You need to see what you are to seek clearly, if you would seek according to the desire of the King Himself. Too often, we let what ought to have a profound effect on our lives pass through our lips as empty clichés.

Immediate Context

Now, let’s look at the immediate context of our main text to see what was in the Master’s heart when he summoned us to seek first His Kingdom.

Matthew 6:19-25: *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters:*

for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

These verses unlock the treasures in our main text. If we would pay attention to these verses, we would have not just knowledge, but hands-on insight and a skillful approach to wholesome kingdom-living. Now take on your student cap, with the mind of practising the rich insights here. To understand these verses, I would like us to consider together the emphasis of Jesus by paying attention to certain words and symbolic expressions our Lord used to give us sight into the dilemma of the heart condition of those who have embraced His rule. You may want to note these in the text yourself.

The Greek word for treasure refers to money or valuable possessions—stored value, accumulated wealth, whatever a person considers precious. It is not limited to money alone. Your treasure would then include anything you count as valuable—your skills, talents, opportunities, family, platform, and work. Whatever you treat as stored value, whatever your heart prizes, that is your treasure.

Jesus repeated the phrase “lay up”: “Lay not up... lay up...” This repetition is significant. What does it mean to lay up? It is to amass wealth, to reserve, to store for future use. Jesus understands man; He does not need a tutorial to know how we feel, think, or make decisions. He knows that the disciples, like everyone else, are concerned about their security: “What will my tomorrow be like? Let me lay up for tomorrow!”

The “up” here is not above the skies, but forward—into the future. It is against the next day. It is that feeling we all have: “Let me secure my tomorrow today.” Come to think of it, do you know that’s a major reason why we are stingy, and why generosity becomes burdensome? It takes a heart secured in God to be truly generous. Lack of generosity is rooted in insecurity.

Have you kept your food from someone you know might eat it because you planned to eat it the next day or later? Unfortunately, sometimes you don’t

need it anymore, and you waste it. But Jesus said, “Lay not up!” Should we now lay down? No. He was not teaching a literal opposite; He was teaching about Kingdom deposit.

The emphasis is on “Where”

Observe the phrase, “for yourselves treasures upon earth.” That is the problem Jesus wanted to address. Don’t live for yourselves on this earth. Don’t gather just for your own earthly gain in this temporal world that passes away, and all that is within it.

He told them that the earth is not secured, not safe. It has elements that cause decay, and demons in flesh that plunder. Jesus was not only warning about insects, weather, and thieves; He was making a logical point: all that you gather for yourself is uncertain—it would soon fade. It is not secure; we cannot have it forever, nor trust its earthly permanence.

He told them to lay up, gather, store, deposit in heaven, where treasures are eternally secured and kept. The treasures laid up in heaven are eternal. They do not decay. Nobody lives without laying up treasure. The question is not whether you have treasure, but where you are making your deposit.

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

Your treasure and your heart are inseparable. There was a time when lovers would save their names on their phone book as, ‘My treasure.’ It sounds a bit old-school now. Today, you’re more likely to hear, ‘Babe,’ ‘Champ,’ ‘My heartthrob,’ etc. But whether we still use the word *treasure* or not, whoever we treat as our treasure occupies our heart like no other.

The direction of a man in love is in the direction of whom he loves. If my heart is set on the Kingdom of heaven, my treasure is there already. Or should I say it this way: the bank, the place, the “account” where my largest investment is—that is where my mind will be. If my heart is set on earth, my investment is on the earth. So the first issue is the orientation of the heart. Where are you investing your treasures?

Two Parables: Focus and Mastery

After speaking about treasure, Jesus gives two parables to give further light and understanding in Matthew 6:22–24. The first is the parable of the eye: *“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”* (Matthew 6:22–23, KJV)

The eye represents vision. If the eye is single—that is, focused—the whole body is full of light. But if the eye is evil or bad, the whole body is full of darkness. There cannot be focused vision. If something is wrong with the eye, vision is distorted. If focus is lost, the entire life is affected. So Jesus is again reinforcing the idea of divided attention and misplaced desire.

The point is clear: you cannot live in this Kingdom with a divided focus. You cannot look at heaven and earth, Christ and the waves, the Tree of Life and the knowledge of good and evil, the Church and the world, the eternal and the temporal at the same time. We often want to see Sodom’s glory and God’s Mount together. Jesus taught that this leads to complete darkness.

The second parable: *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”* (Matthew 6:24, KJV)

This explains the first illustration. You cannot be here and there at the same time. And as your servant was busy here and there, he was gone. There was a parable by a prophet to Ahab of a servant told to keep a captive from war, and the servant said: “And as your servant was busy here and there, he was gone.” The king of Israel said to him, “So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it.” (1Kings 20:40). While he was distracted, he lost what he should have kept. It is dangerous to be distracted. A divided heart is unfit for Kingdom purposes.

You cannot serve God and serve mammon. Mammon is from the Aramaic mamona, which represents wealth, gain, or possession—money elevated to mastery. More deeply, it refers to that in which one places ultimate trust. The word serve means to be enslaved, to belong to a master, to be under

authority, to live in compulsory submission, and to have one's will directed by another.

Dear reader, if you want to serve God's kingdom, you cannot focus your life around life's gains and grandeur. Your goal in life must be overturned from yourself to His Kingdom. You cannot live primarily for acquisition, ambition, and still claim to serve God. Slavery is submission to the authority of a master.

Slavery implies:

- Ownership
- Authority
- Undivided loyalty
- Obedience
- Dependence

So Jesus is saying something we should pay attention to as young ministers, as those who have been saved to serve God's purposes: it is possible to be enslaved to wealth. We often say, "That man has money," but many times it is otherwise—money has them. Not just to have money, but to be owned by it.

How does this happen?

Your peace rises and falls with your bank account. Your identity is tied to what you possess. Your decisions are governed primarily by financial gain or its absence. Your sense of security rests on material accumulation. Your purpose is centered around acquiring and preserving wealth. That is slavery to mammon. And Jesus says you cannot be enslaved to money and to God at the same time, because slavery demands exclusive loyalty.

Paul later calls himself a slave of Christ (Rom 1:1): Paul's slavery was voluntary devotion—a willing submission to the One who redeemed him. It was not fear-driven insecurity but loyal trust in a good Master. This is not just Paul's designation; it applies to all believers. We are owned by Jesus, and we have been redeemed to serve Him all the days of our lives (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Titus 2:14). "We are saved and sanctified to be exhausted for Him." Hallelujah!

To serve God is:

- To trust Him for provision.
- To obey Him even when obedience costs financially.
- To define identity by relationship, not possession.
- To store treasure in heaven, not merely on earth.
- To depend on Him for supply.
- To be independent of circumstances

Jesus is not condemning wealth itself. He is exposing divided allegiance. He calls us into the blessedness of possessing nothing. As He says elsewhere: *“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” (Luke 12:15)*

So the real question becomes: Who defines your life? Who governs your choices? Who determines your emotional stability? Is your Joy like some nations power supply, unstable and unreliable?

Anxiety and the “Therefore”

After this comes the issue of **anxiety**, and it is connected by a very important word: **therefore**. Anxiety is not from the skies; it flows from misplaced treasure and mammon mastery.

In **Matthew 6:25**, Jesus says: *“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” (Matthew 6:25, KJV)*

The phrase *take no thought* is translated from the Greek **mē merimnate**, which means *do not be anxious*. It is a call not to divide your heart with fears or worry. This word comes from the root **merizō**, meaning “to divide” or “to portion out.” Anxiety, then, is a **divided mind**, a mind pulled in different directions, concerned with many things at once. It is the state of being unsettled, disquieted in the soul, and lacking peace or trust. It is inner turmoil that drives humans rat race.

Jesus connects this directly to **serving God and mammon**. A person cannot serve both God and mammon because serving mammon leads to anxiety, while serving God is life and peace. The servant of mammon focuses on securing wealth and possessions, carrying multiple cares and divided concerns. Serving God, however, requires **loyalty and undivided devotion** to God alone. Therefore, a person who is truly committed to God would not live a life of anxiety, because trusting and submitting fully to Him brings peace and a single-minded heart.

Expressions of Anxiety

Anxiety manifests in thoughts like:

- "What will I eat?"
- "What will I drink?"
- "What will I wear?"
- "How will my tomorrow be?"

These represent the pursuit of what is necessary for **biological life**. Yet, when a person whose life is intended to serve the Kingdom focuses entirely on securing these temporal needs, anxiety floods the imagination with bad outcomes of full allegiance to God (which are lies and deceptions) and an uncertain future. Hence, it robs him/her peace, turning the heart restless.

Anxious people are like Esau the hunter, venturing for venison but missing **the blessing**. Only a fool would allow his entire existence to revolve around securing life's daily necessities expense. In such a life:

- **Peace for today** is stolen
- **Hope for tomorrow** becomes torment
- **The present concerns** become a source of trouble

And this is how many believers live all their life.

Jesus redirects His disciples to the reality of **God's provision**:

“Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?” (Luke 12:24)

“And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” (Matthew 6:28–29, KJV)

He tells them to look at the **birds**, to consider their own **prosperity without anxiety**, and to reflect on the **lilies of the field**. They are to consider their **beauty without a single penny**. Seeing these lesser things as ultimate is a sign of **faithlessness**. As He warns:

“For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” (Matthew 6:32, KJV)

This is the mentality of those who do not know the Father. True disciples orient their **hearts and minds** toward the Kingdom, trusting God for provision and focusing on eternal priorities rather than being enslaved to temporal concerns.

The Other Face of Anxiety: Busy Service

The story of Mary and Martha reveals another side of anxiety—one that often clothes itself in service, active service to God. It can look like religion. It can look like action, business, and responsibility. It can look like pursuing a noble task. Yet it is still anxiety.

Jesus visited two sisters, Mary and Martha, and the Bible says Martha “was cumbered about much serving” (Luke 10:40). The word translated “cumbered” comes from the Greek *periespato* which literally carries the sense “to drag around,” and figuratively “to be distracted, over-occupied, driven about mentally.” Sometimes we live in a world where our esteem is built on busyness: busy on social media, busy on LinkedIn, busy on Instagram, busy in projects, busy in ministry, busy at work—busy, busy, busy. Busyness is

not automatically wrong. But there is a kind of busyness that is anxious. There is a kind of service that is a troubled service.

Notice the phrase: **“much serving”** (Luke 10:40). Plenty activities. Plenty attendance. Plenty projects. Plenty demands. And Martha was so involved in the many things that she came to Jesus with complaint: “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?” (Luke 10:40). Service had become pressure. Pressure had become comparison. Comparison had become accusation. She thought she was doing the right thing, but she had lost the one thing.

Now consider Mary. “Mary sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word” (Luke 10:39). She chose relationship over “Marthaship”. And Jesus answered Martha with a double call—“Martha, Martha”—as though calling her attention to a lifetime lesson. Then He exposed the root: “thou art careful and troubled about many things” (Luke 10:41). That word *careful* is the word “merimnao”. You remember? That’s still anxiety. It speaks of anxious distraction—troubled thoughts, divided thoughts, a mind pulled in pieces. The problem was not serving; the problem was **many things**. Many things had become the master.

Then Jesus gave the cure: “But one thing is needful” (Luke 10:42). The word “needful” is the Greek *chreia*, which means “employment/necessity,” and can also carry the sense of “business, duty, an affair”—that is, the one necessary *occupation* or *employment* of the soul. One thing is necessary. One thing must be foremost. One thing must be the employment of the heart. And Jesus said Mary had chosen that “good part,” and it would not be taken from her (Luke 10:42). Jesus was not against service. He was correcting the priority. My relationship with God must come before my activity for God. My service must spring from communion. My inner world must be ordered. Dear friend, if your public engagement will not turn on anxious toil and pressure you must build your life on intimacy with God.

We see Mary again later in worship—breaking costly ointment upon Jesus (John 12:3; cf. Matthew 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9). Others called it waste, but Jesus defended her. This kind of worship does not grow out of frantic striving; it grows out of seeing. Sitting at Jesus’ feet produces spiritual sight, and sight produces acceptable worship.

This is also the issue beneath anxious service: insecurity in love. A man not settled in what God has done in Christ will often labor to earn what has already been given—favor, acceptance, security. But the mind established in love is different: “we have known and believed the love that God hath to us” (1 John 4:16). Service then becomes rooted, not in fear, but in love; not in anxious many things, but in single-minded devotion to Christ.

So yes, a believer may be doing many duties. But he is still a man of one thing. His life has one center, one passion, one governing vision. His outward labor is many, but his inward focus and motivation is one: Christ.

The Fatherhood of God in the Sermon on the Mount

Jesus’ call to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” is not a call to a joyless pursuit. It is a call to pursue the Kingdom **with the consciousness of God’s Fatherhood**. In the same sermon, Jesus repeatedly names God as **“your heavenly Father”** (Matthew 6:26, 6:32). He says, **“your heavenly Father feedeth them”** (Matthew 6:26), and again, **“your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things”** (Matthew 6:32). In other words, He is not saying, “Seek the Kingdom and God will ignore your needs.” He is saying the exact opposite: **seek the Kingdom knowing it is the Kingdom of your Father, and your Father cares for you** (Matthew 6:33).

Jesus presses the logic of covenant care: if God feeds the fowls of the air—creatures who do not have the covenantal, personal relationship the disciples have—**“are ye not much better than they?”** (Matthew 6:26). If God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and gone tomorrow, **“shall he not much more clothe you?”** (Matthew 6:30). Then He exposes the root problem behind anxiety: **“O ye of little faith”** (Matthew 6:30). What makes us live like the Gentiles is not merely poverty of resources—it is **poverty of trust**. Anxiety thrives where there is lack of trust in God’s Fatherhood. (Matthew 6:31–32).

This is why Jesus’ teaching harmonizes with the great biblical witness to God’s providence. Psalm 104 paints a sweeping picture of God sustaining His creation: He gives drink to the beasts, provides habitation for the birds, causes grass to grow, and even the young lions “seek their meat from God” (Psalm 104:10–15, 104:21). The Psalm ends in wonder: “O LORD, how

manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all” (Psalm 104:24). Job also points to this same reality—God’s governance and provision reaching even to the animals and the wild places (Job 38:39–41; 39:1–4).

So what is the lesson? **A man who will seek the Kingdom must have seen the Father.** The ability to seek first the Kingdom is sustained by faith—trust in God and a settled confidence—in the Father who rules the universe and cares for His children (Matthew 6:30–33). And that faith can speak boldly: if I seek first the Kingdom of God, my Father will not abandon me—He will be with me (Hebrews 13:5).

Jesus grounds this entire teaching in a relationship. Children depend on their parents’ strength, resources, and wisdom. They allow their parents to plan their lives for them. Would you allow God to plan your life? You are not that smart. Sometimes, the reason you do many things like Martha is that you don’t trust him. Rest! Don’t be busy and still be guilty.

Without the fatherhood of God, this teaching becomes legalistic pressure and another struggle. With the fatherhood of God, it becomes easy and light. **The revelation of the Fatherhood of God is the antidote to your anxiety and the key to pursuing the kingdom.** God is my Father. He cares for me. He knows what I need. He has plans for me. He will never give me a stone when I ask for bread. He is my security, not things. (Matthew 6:32–33; 7:9–11; 11:28–30; Jeremiah 29:11).

What It Means to Seek First the Kingdom

So what does it mean to seek first the Kingdom? It would be strange to define “seek first the kingdom of God” by isolating one verse and treating it like a slogan. So, we have had to go this long route. In this issue, the meaning has been drawn from Jesus’ own framework—His idea of the Kingdom, the broader context of the Sermon on the Mount, and the immediate context of Matthew 6.

To **seek** the Kingdom is not a momentary decision; it is a sustained orientation. It is the posture of a disciple whose life is governed by one pursuit, not scattered across competing desires. And to seek it **first** is not merely to place God at the top of a list; it is to let the Kingdom become the

ordering center—the lens through which every other pursuit is interpreted and judged.

In the broader context of Matthew 5–7, seeking first means embracing the Kingdom reality Jesus teaches: the Beatitudes as Kingdom character; the ethics and lifestyle of a people shaped by God’s rule; the mission of salt and light; and the prayer that begins with “Our Father” and aims at “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.” It is learning the language of the Kingdom, receiving its values, and consenting to and enforcing its governance.

Then Matthew 6 makes the meaning practical. Seeking first the Kingdom means relocating treasure from earth to heaven. It means refusing divided vision and divided desire. It means choosing one Master—God, not mammon. It means answering anxiety with the consciousness of the Fatherhood of God, His Loving heart, and responding to that Fatherhood with faith and trust rather than “Gentile” striving. In this light, seeking first is not the denial of human needs; it is the refusal to make needs our god. The Father knows what we need, and the disciple is called to trust Him while pursuing His reign.

So, in the fullest sense developed here, to seek first the Kingdom of God is to live with one governing center: to embrace the Kingdom life Jesus taught, to adopt the Kingdom’s ethics and mission, to pray the Kingdom’s priorities, and to reorder treasure, vision, mastery, and security under the Father’s rule. Seeking first is not a slogan. It is a whole-life orientation under the reign of God.

"Seek Ye First, Not Earthly Pleasure"

~G.M.Taylor~

Seek ye first, not earthly pleasure,
Fading joy and failing treasure,
But the love that knows no measure
Seek ye first.

Seek ye first, not earth’s aspirings,
Ceaseless longings, vain desirings,
But your precious soul’s requirings
Seek ye first.

Seek ye first God's peace and blessing;
Ye have all if this possessing;
Come, your need and sin confessing,
Seek Him first.

Seek Him first, then when forgiven,
Pardoned, with the peace of heaven,
Let your life to Him be given:
Seek this first.

Seek this first—Be pure and holy;
Like the Master, meek and lowly;
Yielded to His service wholly:
Seek this first.

Seek the coming of His kingdom;
Seek the souls around to win them,
Seek to Jesus Christ to bring them:
Seek this first.

Seek this first, His promise trying;
It is sure, all need supplying.
Heavenly things, on Him relying,
Seek ye first

Why “Righteousness” Matters in the Kingdom of God

When Jesus says, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” *righteousness* is not an extra add-on; it is the **righteousness of that Kingdom**—conformity to the King's standard (Matthew 6:33). This matters because in Scripture, the Kingdom of God is not merely God's power, but God's rule—His reign expressed as order, justice, and alignment with His will, and God's rule is consistently described as being founded on righteousness and justice (Psalm 89:14; Psalm 97:2).

This is also why the Messiah's Kingdom is portrayed as a Kingdom established and upheld *by righteousness*. Isaiah speaks of the Davidic King whose government will be sustained “with justice and righteousness... for ever” (Isaiah 9:7). In other words, righteousness is not only personal

morality; it is the **ordering standard** of the King's reign—His justice, His rightness, His ways made visible in the earth -- that is out of His order. Matthew's Gospel reinforces this theme by placing *righteousness* at the heart of Jesus' mission and discipleship:

- Jesus begins His public path with the language of righteousness: “thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). This is to mean all that is required of Him to fulfill God's pleasure.
- In the Beatitudes, the Kingdom people hunger and thirst “after righteousness” (Matthew 5:6), and are even persecuted “for righteousness' sake” (Matthew 5:10)—showing righteousness as a standard foreign to the world. Hence, they oppose and resist it. (Matthew 5:6, 5:10).
- Jesus says entry into the Kingdom requires a righteousness that exceeds external religion — “except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees...” (Matthew 5:20).
- And in Matthew 6, “righteousness” is applied to the disciple's whole way of living before the Father—not performance before men (Matthew 6:1), and not anxious striving like the Gentiles (Matthew 6:31–33).

So, when you define “the righteousness of the Kingdom,” you are standing on the Bible's own logic: **The Kingdom is God's reign**, and **righteousness is the standard of that reign**—the King's order, justice, and will taking form in the disciple's motives, practices, relationships, and trust in the Father (Matthew 6:33; 6:1; 5:20).

In the Sermon on the Mount, righteousness is holistic. It includes moral purity, but it is more than private morality. It is the rightness that God requires—right worship, right motives, right relationships, right speech, right generosity, right prayer, right handling of possessions, and right trust in the Father (Matthew 5:21–48; 6:1–34; 7:1–12). This “rightness” is a life ordered by God's Word—God's revealed will (Matthew 7:24–27).

It stands against the tradition of the Pharisees—the do's and don'ts that can hide self-centeredness even in worship: in giving, praying, and fasting (Matthew 6:1–18). It also stands against the Gentile pattern of life: anxious striving and unbelieving prayer— “vain repetitions”— and a pursuit that looks no different from those who do not know the Father (Matthew 6:7–8, 6:31–32). And it stands against the tax collector pattern of love, where

love is limited to those who love you back. Jesus said, “If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?” (Matthew 5:46; cf. Matthew 5:47). Kingdom righteousness is therefore a life of love and conformity to God—love that reflects the Father and surpasses the ordinary standards of men (Matthew 5:44–45, 5:48).

***Righteousness** is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through faith in Christ. (Precept Austin Commentary)*

It refuses to make life purpose-centered on greed and materialism; it relocates treasure, purifies desire, and rejects mammon as master (Matthew 6:19–24). This is God’s order pressing into the earth—correcting disorder of immoralities, vain worship, self-centredness, hatred, curing anxiety, and delivering us from the Gentile way of living, where survival becomes god and mammon becomes master (Matthew 6:25–34). To “seek first” the Kingdom and its righteousness is therefore to pursue the reign of God as the governing center of life, and to pursue the standard of that reign until the King’s will becomes the disciple’s way. It is living by the word of God. (Matthew 6:33; 7:21; 7:24–27).

***Be first a man of God (A woman of God):** after that, a banker, or a merchant, or a working-man. I like to see our public men first Christians, then Englishmen, then Conservatives, or Liberals, or Radicals, as their convictions sway them, but in any case, let a man be first a man of God. I would to God that our politics, our merchandise, our literature, our art, were all saturated with this idea—**“First a Christian.”** Then the secondary character would rise in excellence and nobility. Science, social laws, trade usages, domestic life, would all be the better for coming under the supremacy of living religion. The fear of God should be the foundation and the topstone of the social edifice. “Christ first,” and other things in their due order. Over and above all, let consecration to God shine forth even as the pillar of fire in the wilderness covered and illuminated the entire camp of Israel. Charles Spurgeon*

Seeking First is Forsaking All

A major aspect of discipleship is understanding what it means to truly seek first the kingdom of God. The disciples initially thought that following Jesus

meant participating in a literal, earthly kingdom. This is why John and James approached their mother, asking that they might sit at Jesus' right and left hand in the kingdom (Matthew 20:20–21). They understood following Jesus as a way to embrace the kingdom and participate in His reign.

However, to be part of the kingdom, they needed to forsake all. The call to follow Christ was not casual; it required total surrender. As they said: **“We have left all to follow you.” (Luke 18:28)**. Jesus made it clear: to extend His kingdom and participate in His righteousness, one must forsake all worldly attachments. Seeking first the kingdom is not merely a cliché—it is an act of total priority, where nothing else comes before the reign of God.

He emphasized the cost of discipleship: *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?” (Luke 14:26-31)*

Jesus used these illustrations to teach that following Him and embracing His kingdom requires counting the cost—a cost that involves denying self, forsaking possessions, and reordering priorities. The kingdom must come first in life, above family, wealth, and personal ambitions.

The disciples responded: *“We have forsaken all, and followed thee.” (Mark 10:28)*

Jesus promised that the cost of forsaking all would not go unrewarded: *“Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.” (Mark 10:29–30)*

The promise is both partly present and fully eternal: *1Ti 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, **having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.***

In this life, God provides His Presence, fruitfulness in His kingdom, and His Fatherly provision as we extend the Kingdom amid hostility and persecution, as we see in the book of Acts. In the age to come, the fullness of the kingdom awaits the faithful. Jesus also illustrated this principle in Matthew 13: *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” (Matthew 13:44, KJV)*

To gain the kingdom, one must forsake everything for its value. As Jim Elliot famously put it: *“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”* The process begins with a revelation of the kingdom—to truly see its surpassing glory—and then to make it the priority in life, allowing all else to align under its preeminence.

Have you forsaken all to follow? Is your Isaac still on the tent or on the altar? Would you keep your five loaves and eat them or give to Him to bless them? Would you give your utmost to the Highest?

Let’s end with the words of Spurgeon:

“O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him, there is no want. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing... (Ps 34:9,10, 18,19,25)

"Jehovah will not allow his faithful servants to starve. He may not give luxuries, but the promise binds him to supply necessities, and he will not run back from his word. Many whims and wishes may remain ungratified, but real wants the Lord will supply. The fear of the Lord or true piety is not only the duty of those who avow themselves to be saints, that is, persons set apart and consecrated for holy duties, but it is also their path of safety and comfort. Men seek a patron and hope to prosper; he who has the Lord of Hosts to be his friend and defender prospers surely. They are fierce, cunning, strong, in all the vigor of youth, and yet they sometimes howl in their ravenous hunger, and even so crafty, designing, and oppressing men, with all their sagacity and unscrupulousness, often

come to want; yet simple-minded believers, who dare not act as the greedy lions of earth, are fed with food convenient for them. No really good thing will be denied to those whose first and main end in life is to seek the Lord... None can deprive them of it, and none shall destroy it. What they have on earth is safe enough, but what they shall have in heaven is theirs without end... Their bread will be given them. Our Lord stayed himself on this when he hungered in the wilderness, and by faith he repelled the tempter. If God's providence is our inheritance, we need not worry about the price of wheat. Faith, if it do not preserve the crop, can do what is better, namely, preserve our joy in the Lord."

A Framework for Christian Productivity

We live in a generation saturated with self-help—systems, habits, planners, and productivity tools. Many of those things are useful, but they are not foundational for a believer. The first order you need is not system; it is **Kingdom-centeredness**. A believer does not merely want an organized life; he wants a **rightly arranged life**—one ordered under Christ. It means that my entire life must have a governing center, a central pursuit—so that my systems serve the Kingdom, and not the other way around. This framework is therefore built for **learning and action**: it gives you a Kingdom lens for understanding your life, and it gives you practical steps for living it with focus, usefulness, and eternal relevance.

Pillar 1: Kingdom First (Direction)

The Hub of Life

The first issue is the orientation of the heart. Seeking first means the Kingdom is the **hub**—like the center of a bicycle wheel. Everything else (career, education, relationships, habits, finances, ministry, plans) becomes spokes connected to one center. This is why the first step is not time management. The first step is a **Kingdom vision**—a written “covenantal” “why” that governs your “what.”

A simple Kingdom Vision Statement (examples)

Note for your readers: You can call these a *vision statement* or a *mission statement*. The point is that it becomes the **overarching pursuit** that organizes everything else—habits, goals, money, time, relationships, and service.

- 1) Tim Tebow Foundation (Nonprofit / Mercy & Advocacy): *“Our mission is to bring Faith, Hope and Love to those needing a brighter day in their darkest hour of need.”*
- 2) Chick-fil-A (Business / Marketplace Stewardship): *“To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us. To have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A.”*

3) Joni and Friends (Disability Ministry / Global Church Mobilization): *“To glorify God as we communicate the Gospel and mobilize the global church to evangelize, disciple, and serve people living with disability.”*

4) Compassion International (Child Development/Poverty Alleviation): *“Releasing children from poverty in Jesus’ name.”*

5) Celebrate Recovery (Recovery Ministry / Discipleship): *“Celebrate Recovery (CR) exists to help people find freedom and healing from their hurts, hang-ups and habits through a relationship with Jesus Christ.”*

6) Hobby Lobby (Business / Biblical Principles in Operations): *“Honoring the Lord in all we do by operating the company in a manner consistent with Biblical principles.”*

7) The Gideon’s Bible International: *“to win others for the Lord Jesus Christ by strengthening one another, sharing the Gospel message, and distributing copies of God’s Word in hotels, hospitals, shelters, and other places where people often seek hope.”*

Action: Write your own 1–3 sentence Kingdom Vision Statement and keep it where you can see it daily.

These are samples from some Christian organizations.²

Pillar 2: Treasure Storage (Deposit)

Building Value for Eternal Contribution

This brings us to treasure. Jesus is not saying, “Do not have treasures.” That is not the point. The issue is location and orientation. I need treasure—but

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- ² Celebrate Recovery(2026). *About us (Our mission)*. ([Celebrate Recovery](#))Chick-fil-A. (2026.). *What is Chick-fil-A’s corporate purpose?* ([chick-fil-a.com](#))
 - Compassion International. (2026.). *Compassion International (homepage / mission statement)*. ([Compassion International](#))
 - Hobby Lobby. (2026). *Corporate background (values / purpose)*. ([Hobby Lobby Newsroom](#))
 - Joni and Friends. (2026). *About (Our mission)*. ([joniandfriends.org](#))
 - Tim Tebow Foundation. (2026). *Mission*. ([timtebowfoundation.org](#))
 - Gideon’s Bible.(2026) <https://gideons.org/about>

I must locate my treasure properly, and I must also locate the treasures within me: my gifts, my talents, my opportunities, my mind, my capacity, my health, my influence.

If I do not store value, I cannot contribute value. The degree to which I am able to serve the Kingdom is connected to the degree of value I have cultivated. So I think in terms of storing value: sharpening my skills, honing my gifts, developing my mind, disciplining my body, training my spirit. But my value storage is Kingdom-oriented. I am not increasing capacity merely to satisfy myself or to impress men. I am increasing capacity so that I can be useful in fulfilling the first thing—seeking the Kingdom and His righteousness.

Action: Choose one “growth track” for this season (skill, mind, body, spirit) and make a daily deposit.

Pillar 3: Treasure Deployment (Deployment)

Laying Up Treasure Through People, Platforms, and Places

Nobody lives without laying up treasure. The question is not whether you have treasure, but where you are storing it—and how you are deploying it. Treasure becomes “laid up in heaven” through Kingdom channels: serving people, bearing witness to Christ, supporting Gospel causes, meeting needs in love, strengthening the Church, and representing the Kingdom in the world.

Here is a simple way to make this practical: choose your **3 Ps—People, Platforms, Places**.

- **People:** Who is God calling you to serve, bless, build, disciple, or help?
- **Platforms:** What channels has God given you (church, workplace, online, campus, skills, influence)?
- **Places:** Where has God planted you to represent the Kingdom (your home, city, church community, school, office, neighborhood)?

Action: Write down one person, one platform, and one place for the next 30–90 days, and ask: *How will my treasure touch them for Christ?*

Pillar 4: Daily Faithfulness (Discipline)

Today Is a Unit of Stewardship

Jesus says there is sufficient for today. “Do not worry about tomorrow.” This is not a call to irresponsibility; it is a call to focus. Do not sacrifice present obedience because of future anxiety. Today is a unit of stewardship. Today is an opportunity to embody righteousness. A Christian who will be productive and Kingdom-oriented must live intentionally: not plagued by tomorrow so that he wastes today.

A well-ordered life is not merely a well-planned future; it is a well-lived present. Each day becomes an offering. Each day becomes an investment in eternity. So I ask myself: **How does today count for the Kingdom of God?** I labor while it is day, because the night comes when no man can work.

Action: Each morning, choose the “Top 3” assignments that make today count, and do them as worship.

Pillar 5: Faith Life (Devotion)

The Supernatural Power for Visible Living

Under all of this is faith life—my relationship with God. Faith connects me to the Father. It takes faith to live with the consciousness of the Father each day. It takes faith to believe that seeking first the Kingdom is not loss but the highest wisdom. So I build my faith through the Word, through prayer, through communion with God—and not by meditation alone, but by action: daring to obey God in real life, under pressure, in trials, in decisions, in generosity, in service. The inner life must be strong enough to govern the outer life. I must learn to live from the invisible into the visible.

This is not imagination. It is alignment. It is ordering my life around Christ.

Action: Guard a daily “altar” (Word + Prayer + Obedience).

The 5D Scorecard

A daily tool for Kingdom productivity

- **D1 — Direction (Kingdom First):** Did I align my day with my Kingdom vision? (Yes/No)
- **D2 — Deposit (Treasure Storage):** What value did I build in me today for Kingdom use? (Write it)
- **D3 — Deployment (Treasure Laid Up):** Who did my treasure bless today—what person/platform/place did it touch? (Write it)
- **D4 — Discipline (Daily Faithfulness):** Did I finish today’s “Top 3” stewardship tasks? (0–3)
- **D5 — Devotion (Faith Life):** Did I meet God and obey Him today? (Yes/No)

ABOUT THE YOUNG MINISTERS' FORUM

The Young Ministers' Forum (YMF) is a Gospel-centered parachurch movement committed to strengthening and equipping young ministers to faithfully serve God's purpose across churches, communities, and nations.

As a parachurch platform, we exist to complement and support the local church by cultivating ministers who are spiritually grounded, doctrinally sound, missionally active, and formed in Christlike character. Through intentional fellowship, mentorship, resource development, and structured education, we provide an environment where emerging leaders can grow in clarity, conviction, and competence for lifelong ministry.

Our Vision

To strengthen and equip young ministers to serve God's purpose with clarity, conviction, and competence.

Our Mission

We fulfill our mission through the FORGE framework:

F - Fellowship

Cultivating authentic community where iron sharpens iron and ministers grow in unity, accountability, and shared purpose.

O - Outreach & Missions

Advancing the Gospel through evangelism, public engagement, and cross-cultural mission initiatives.

R - Resource Building

Developing and distributing biblically faithful and intellectually sound resources to serve ministers and local churches.

G - Grooming & Mentorship

Providing intentional spiritual formation, leadership development, and personal guidance for sustainable ministry impact.

E - Education

Equipping the mind and ministry through structured theological training, practical workshops, and disciplined study.

YMF invites young believers seeking growth, camaraderie, alignment with God's plan and faithful service to join a community committed to excellence in Christ and impact for His Kingdom.