

# Seek First the Kingdom of God

## Matthew 6:33

People seek many things within a lifetime. Some seek careers, some seek nice homes, some just want to be comfortable, some seek families, and most people seek happiness. This is not a strange principle because everybody seeks these things. In fact, God says that everybody seeks and even needs some physical things. In [Matthew 6:32](#) it is written, *“For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”* But let us consider, for a moment, what Jesus meant when He said, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”* Was Jesus saying that we should not work to have food? Was He saying that we should not have any other interests in this life besides the kingdom? That was not His point. What He was saying, however, was that after a person has obeyed the gospel he is called upon by God to put the most important things first in his life. In this article we are going to consider how, exactly, one seeks first the kingdom

### What It Means to Seek First

In order for us to seek something it is necessary for us to place value in that thing. For the sportsman, the outdoors and the thrill of the hunt are very valuable, so he makes sure to leave time in his schedule to seek those things. In the recent Olympics there were young high school students, college students, and parents taking much time out of their schedules because they valued the prize of being the best. They were seeking the gold medal. But what do you seek? What do you value enough in your life that you are willing to sacrifice other things in order to achieve or care for? There may be several things that fit into that category for all of us. Fathers and mothers seek the wellbeing of their families. Husbands value their wives and wives value their husbands. These are all things that are important. But Jesus shows us that there is something that must rise far above all else in our hearts. He shows us what must be at the very top of our list.

To *seek first* means to value something far above all else in this life. Therefore we have passages such as [2 Corinthians 9:24](#) in which Paul tells us, *“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”* In [Hebrews 12:1-2](#) we are told, *“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* If you watched the Olympics you will know that each of those athletes gave up many things in order to compete. They focused all their attentions to achieving their goal. People who value something that much do not allow little things to get in the way of their goal. Everything they do is determined by what they seek. Their schedule, what they fill their time with and what they give up. This is the picture Paul is trying to help us paint in our minds. This is the principle Jesus was referring to when He said, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”*

### Laying Aside Every Weight

In [Hebrews 12:2](#) the Hebrew writer tells to lay aside every weight that hinders us from being faithful to God. Let us consider a few of God’s servants who have done these very things. In [Hebrews 11:8-10](#) it describes Abraham as a man who left his home and followed God’s direction, not knowing where he was going because he looked for a city that was not made with hands. This is the man who was also willing to sacrifice his son in obedience to the will of God. What weights did Abraham have to lay aside in order seek God this earnestly? Many of us are attached to home and to family, but God shows us through the

life of Abraham that we must be willing to lay those things aside in order to seek first His kingdom. Jesus also tells us this in Matthew 10:37-39. In Daniel 3:13-23 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were willing to give up their very lives because they sought the righteousness of God so much. What did they have to lay aside in order to do this? Love for their own life, a desire to be liked by others, fear of persecution. These men sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and they showed it in their devotion. Finally, let us look at John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1, 4). Here was a man who was willing to give up all the pleasures and comforts of this life so he could faithfully serve God. Now, God does not command us to do the same, but we see in John the willingness to lay those things aside in order to be faithful to God. He sought first the kingdom of God. What about you? Can you confidently say that you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? What are you willing to lay aside in order to enter into the kingdom of God?

The reason it is so important that we ask ourselves this is because men in our generation have become very adept at excusing themselves when they do not match up to God's standard. Many times the excuse has been made, "I can't go to church, I have to work. A man (woman) has to eat you know." In the greatness of human wisdom this excuse is given, in spite of the wisdom of God which says, "*Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*" (Matt. 6:30-33). We have also heard the excuse of "I'm just too busy." Brethren, we can be too busy to wash the dishes, we can be too busy to eat, we can be too busy to wash the car, but if we are truly seeking first the kingdom of God then we must never be too busy for spiritual matters; whether it be a Bible study, assembling with the saints, praying, or reading the Bible on our own. If there are things that hinder us from fulfilling these tasks, then let us consider them as weights that need to be cast off so that we can continue running our race. If we can only understand one thing from the Bible, let it be this: **God always comes first.**

### **First Things First**

With these principles fresh in our minds let us now see how to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness today.

**First Give ourselves to the Lord.** In 2 Corinthians 8:5 Paul commends the churches of Macedonia because they were not only willing to give of their money to help the churches of Judea, but they were first willing to give themselves to the Lord. "*And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.*" We too must give ourselves first to the Lord; before our work, before our recreation, before our hobbies, and as much as this society may hate to hear it we must give ourselves to the Lord before our own families (if we love the Lord as we should, then we will also care for our families as we should). There are many Christians willing to condemn others who do not give on the first day and who do not assemble regularly. Even though these things are important they are useless if we have not first given ourselves to the Lord. Therefore we must understand that as Christians we are here for God's service.

**Clean first the inside** (Matt. 23:26; 7:3-5). The scribes and Pharisees were sharply rebuked because though they demanded strict obedience to the Law their hearts were far from God and from seeking His righteousness. Babies in Christ must see in this the need to cleanse themselves of sinfulness. Make your heart right with God. As older Christians we must see in this the need to be examples of righteousness before rebuking others. It is very easy for us to become angry at our brethren for doing something wrong or for not doing something at all without realizing that we are in a worse spiritual state than they. Let us seek first the kingdom of God by making ourselves right first.

**Zeal for the right Standard.** For our final point let us understand that if we are seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness then we will have a great zeal for every good work. If being righteous is my top priority then I will not allow my fears hinder me from doing what I need to do. I will not make

excuses or find ways to get out of doing some sort of service. If the kingdom of God is my top priority then I will be zealous to study the bible as much as I can. Instead of complaining about having to read two or three chapters per day we will be striving to read five or six. Instead of being too busy to go to bible study we would rather be too busy with bible studies to do other things. Let us continue to ponder these things and what is requires of us.

### **Conclusion**

In this day and age membership in a church has become more of an obligation we fulfill because it is good rather than a way of life. Churches today have become clubs that gather on a weekly basis; groups of people that smile and greet each other a couple times a week and ignore each other the rest of the time. Brethren, this is not the New Testament Church. If you are a Christian then know that seeking first the kingdom of God means devoting your life to it. If you are not a Christian, then understand that you can never be saved until you do devote your life to the kingdom of God. If you desire the salvation of Jesus Christ then will you come to Him on His terms: be baptized and live faithfully to Him?