**Help! I’ve Fallen & I Can’t Get Up**

**First Things First – Part 2**

September 12, 2021

Rev. Dr. Tony Soldano

**Introduction**

**Illustration**

Have you ever stopped to consider your spiritual coordinates and where you are currently in the things of God?

On a recent fishing trip, I learned two key life lessons. It is easy to drift away and not even realize it if you are not paying attention.

* The drift is easy, focus is the cure
* It is easy to lose your way out in open waters – it is even harder to try and find your way back – landmarks are critical.

**Description**

***If you desire to adjust your current “spiritual coordinates”, consider the things that you need to pursue. Your priorities will always determine the path you are on and the direction you take.***

**Main Passages**

**The Rich Young Man**

**Matthew 19:16-22**

**16**Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3A16-22&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-23779a)] Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” **17**So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is,* God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” **18**He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,’ ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,’ ‘YOU SHALL NOT STEAL,’ ‘YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS,’ **19**‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND *YOUR* MOTHER,’ AND, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ ” **20**The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” **21**Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” **22**But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

**Do Not Be Anxious**

**Matthew 6:25-34**

**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? **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? **27**Which of you by worrying can add one [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3A25-34&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-23310a)]cubit to his stature? **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 [[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3A25-34&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-23312c)]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? **31**“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ **32**For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. **34**Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

**Main Points**

**Central Truth**

***Your priorities will always determine the path of life and the direction you take. If you desire to adjust your current “spiritual coordinates”, consider the things that you need to pursue:***

1. **What is the *one thing* keeping you from Jesus?** 
   1. Life **distractions** will have to be managed because there is always a “pull” to draw us away from God:
      1. Present needs versus eternal rewards will need to be balanced/weighed
      2. The rich young ruler was distracted by the abundance of possessions that he had acquired

* His possessions were counterintuitive and worked against him spiritually.

1. **Christ followers are defined by a different set of priorities and standards**
   1. **PRIORITIES**
      1. “Priorities always determine pursuits”

* When push came to shove, eternal life was not the main priority for the rich young ruler
  + 1. Jesus was saying, “I have given up greater wealth than you – eternal wealth, but you will not give up temporary wealth”
* Treasures in heaven versus treasures on earth – Jesus instructed His followers to store up treasures in heaven.
  + 1. *“Give your absolute best to the things that will last forever”.*

1. **You will have to go beyond “religion” to know Christ and His Kingdom**

*Knowing Christ is more than just keeping rituals or even commandments. At times, even religious activity can obscure our vision of Christ and our relationship with Him.*

1. **THE PURSUIT – Life pursuits must be managed**

* The greatest pursuit must be Christ Himself – He is the greatest of all riches
* Everyone is pursuing something
* Pursuits will require your time, your energy, your resources, and your loyalty

1. Christ followers must live very differently in this present world
2. As Christ followers we must exceed the leaven of the Pharisees, in other words, religious activity is simply not enough.
3. **Your pursuit will require faith, obedience, and trust** 
   1. **TRUST** *– Riches, in particular, have a way of competing for our loyalty and trust* 
      1. The life of Christ requires **commitment,** faithfulness and loyalty
      2. *“Stress is misplaced energy”*
      3. *“We can only truly obey God if we fully trust Him”.*

**Conclusion**

Do not worry, God’s heart is to add things to you:

1. When we are convinced that God actually wants to add things to us our focus is re-prioritized in the right places
2. We must be convinced that God actually knows our needs and is willing to fulfil them; therefore, we do not have to worry or be stressed out about life issues.

**Matthew 6:33-34**

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

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

**Group Questions & Discussion**

1. How is stress misplaced energy? Give real life examples.
2. When Jesus said we should not worry about tomorrow, was He saying that we should not pre-plan or make decisions for the future?
3. Explain how the rich young ruler had trust issues. Why was hr not able to just do what Jesus asked?
4. What is meant by the deceitfulness of riches?
5. If pursuits are determined by priorities, what are priorities based on?
6. Are pursuits in and of themselves evil?
7. Is it possible to replace Jesus with religious activities and still think we are good with God?