

THE MESSENGER



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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It's Simple – God Above “Things”

by Ken Green

Jesus said the truth will set us free (John 8:31-32). There are a host of slave masters that take men captive – not the least of these is things. We live in a world of things. Jesus deals with this in Matthew 6:25-34 where we are told not to worry about things, even necessary things, such as food, drink and clothing (v. 25).

The lexicons and commentaries tell us that the word translated “worry; anxious; or troubled” literally means to be pulled apart. And our English word “worry” is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word that means to strangle. All this suggests that worry is a dangerous enterprise. It can pull our lives apart and strangle us.

A major cause of worry is our concern about things. Consider some truths from Scripture that will help us enjoy freedom from the tyranny of things:

It's Not Wrong to Own Things

Some of the Greek philosophers taught that all matter is evil. The Bible does not support this view. The Creator described all the things He made as “very good” (Gen. 1:31). God made things and people. Things are not to be worshipped. People are not to be worshipped. God is to be worshipped. Things are not to be loved; God is to be loved supremely. People, made in God's image, are to be loved. Things are to be used. Disaster befalls us when we confuse these basic rules of our existence. Most people, it seems, use other people. Ignore God and love and worship things.

God did not make anything that is wrong although evil men devise and produce things from God's basic materials for wicked ends. But nothing that God made is inherently wrong.

God knows we need things (6:32). We don't need everything and we don't need many things, but we do need some things. But we must learn this – things do not measure our lives: “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15). Mark Twain said, “Civilization is an endless multiplication of unnecessary necessities.”

God wants us to enjoy things. He “gives us richly all things to enjoy” (I Tim. 6:17). He wants us to use things for our good, the good of others, and the glory of God: “Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (v. 18). This is one way we can lay up treasures in Heaven: “storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (v. 19).

It is Wrong for Things to Own Us

While things are marvelous servants, they are terrible masters. When we are constantly wanting more things; bigger things; greater things; more expensive things; and we measure our value by the things we have heaped up, this is covetousness and idolatry (Col. 3:5). We cannot serve both God and wealth (Matt. 6:24).

It is not wrong to possess things, but it is wrong for things to possess us. An old Quaker watched a new neighbor moving in. It took most of the day to carry in all the furniture, appliances, and toys. He met him with a pitcher of lemonade and said, “Neighbor, if ever thou dost think thou dost need something, come to see me, and I’ll tell thee how to get along without it.”

God Must be the Master of Everything

The secret is given in v. 33: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” If we are to be liberated from the bondage of things, the Lord must occupy the throne within our hearts. When things become our master, life becomes cheap and life becomes divided. When Christ is our Master, everything else finds its proper place.

The word “seek” means to actively pursue. It does not mean to passively accept. The present tense of the verb indicates that this is to be a constant pursuit. We are to seek the kingdom of God. This speaks of the reign or rule of God. It is to pursue God’s rule over every aspect of our lives. If we seek, we will find (Matt. 7:7; Jer. 29:13; James 4:8). We are to see His righteousness. We must not only submit to His control over us but also crave His character within us (Matt. 6:6).

God will not accept first runner-up, the vice-presidency, or the place of co-partner in our lives. He does not want a place there or even prominence. He demands the preeminence in all things (Col. 1:18). Let us survey the things we possess and understand that one day they shall all be thrown on the big fire. But if He is Master of our lives, “all these things shall be added to us.”

NOTES & NEWS:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

*“...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
James 5:16*