

Ninth Invitation from Our Savior



FOCUS *on the* KINGDOM of GOD WHILE WORKING THROUGH TODAY'S PROBLEMS

- 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
- 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matthew 6:33-34

Just as in the eighth invitation where Jesus tells us, “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ... for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things” (Matthew 6:31-32).

In this ninth invitation, He is inviting us to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

This invitation has a promise – “and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). If we put aside the things of the world that turn our loyalty and service away from God and seek first the Kingdom of God, we are blessed with the quality of righteousness – “being just, holy, virtuous, upright; acting in obedience to God’s commands; avoiding sin.”¹

In May of 1829, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, a revelation was given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to his brother Hyrum Smith that applies to us, “Seek not for riches but for wisdom; and, behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich” (Doctrine and Covenants 11:7).

When we have righteous desires and seek for the wisdom of God, we are seeking for the Kingdom of God. This is how the promise to the ninth invitation is fulfilled.

The second part of this invitation is, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34).

For me, "evil" is such a loaded word that connotes in my mind horrible things. Because of this limited view, this verse hasn't had the meaning it should have for me since I don't worry about evil things happening to me, yet when you consider that the Greek translation of the word evil can also mean problems or troubles this verse has new meaning for me.

Read Matthew 6:34, with the alternate translation for the word evil. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the problem or troubles thereof."

While I don't worry about evil for the morrow, I do face problems that weigh me down and experience potential troubles that I fret over before they happen. The invitation is to deal with the problems or troubles of the day and not occupy our minds with the possibility of a problem or trouble that may happen in the future.

Our Heavenly Father wants us to have faith in Him. "To have faith is to have confidence in something or someone. ... Faith is a principle of action and power, and by it, one can command the elements, heal the sick, and influence any number of circumstances when occasion warrants. ... All true faith must be based upon correct knowledge, or it cannot produce the desired results. Faith in Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel and is more than belief since true faith always moves its possessor to some physical and mental action; it carries an assurance of the fulfillment of the things hoped for. A lack of faith leads one to despair." ²

When we have faith, we have confidence. When we are confident, we are less likely to worry about tomorrow. Why is this true? It is true because we have faith in ourselves. It is even truer when we have faith in the Lord and the belief that with His help we can make it through whatever comes our way.

It is when we worry about the things that may happen on the morrow is when we lose faith which leads to despair. By focusing in the moment on the problems of today and taking "no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself" (Matthew 6:34) we free ourselves from burdens our Heavenly Father doesn't want us to carry.

Application Exercise

How you spend your time relative to your priorities and what you worry about is the key to unlocking the promise associated with this ninth invitation from the Savior's Sermon on the Mount. Remember the promise is that "... all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

For us to receive the promise, we must first seek the Kingdom of God. What we seek for in our lives is reflected back to us from what and where we spend our time.

The second part of the ninth invitation is to take "... no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil (problems or troubles) thereof" (Matthew 6:34). Here we are being invited to deal with the problems or troubles of the day and not occupy our minds with the possibility of a problem or trouble that may happen in the future.

In the book “First Things First” by Stephen Covey he talks about the importance of prioritizing your tasks through the following time management matrix:

IMPORTANCE	High	<p>Prosperity = Plan (Quad II)</p> <p>In Quad II you are planning, preparing, and doing what needs to get done before it becomes a problem or crisis.</p>	<p>Survival = Manage (Quad I)</p> <p>In Quad I you are reacting to demands or problems that have escalated into a crisis.</p>
	Low	<p>Waste = Eliminate (Quad IV)</p> <p>In Quad IV you are spending your time on busy work, trivia, time wasters and escape activities.</p>	<p>Inefficiency = Minimize (Quad III)</p> <p>In Quad III you are not at your best because of unnecessary or unimportant activities and interruptions.</p>
		Low	High
		URGENCY	

The goal for this time management matrix is to think about where you spend most of your day. Covey encourages you to spend more time in the planning quadrant or what he refers to as Quadrant 2 the prosperity quadrant.

On a piece of paper list out your top ten worries. *I.e* document up to ten items or areas that you are most concerned about. Your goal is to create a list of the problems or troubles that most concern you at this particular time.

Next to each worry you listed above determine if this is a major or minor worry? *I.e* is the importance level for your problem or trouble high or low? Cross out those worries that upon further reflection you now see as minor even though you have been treating them as a major worry.

Once you have confirmed the accuracy of your assigned importance level identify if the worry is urgent or not. *I.e* is this a problem or trouble you have to deal with today, this week, next week, this month, this year or in a few years from now?

Now plot your worries by quadrant based on the following guidelines:

IMPORTANCE	High	<p>Major Worry</p> <p>Needs to be resolved next week or month (Quad II)</p> <p>Pray to confirm the next step then plan to carry that step out.</p>	<p>Major Worry</p> <p>Needs to be dealt with today (Quad I)</p> <p>Pray to know your resolution represents the correct course.</p>
	Low	<p>Minor Worry</p> <p>Doesn't mean anything to anyone (Quad IV)</p> <p>Allow yourself to let go by exercising your agency not to worry anymore on this minor issue.</p>	<p>Minor Worry</p> <p>Isn't a problem or trouble yet pressure to deal with is felt (Quad III)</p> <p>Pray to confirm this is not a priority to worry about. If it isn't, then let it go.</p>
		Low	High
		URGENCY	

Our Heavenly Father expects us to use our agency to make wise decisions. These decisions manifest themselves in the actions we take and how we use our time. In this ninth invitation, we are being invited to focus on the Kingdom of God while working through today's problems not worrying about what might happen in the future.

This is hard to do if we are spending an inordinate amount of time working on and worrying about the wrong things. Particularly those things that are outside of our control where there isn't anything we can do to fix or resolve.

Prayer coupled with the wise use of your agency will help you focus on the major things our Heavenly Father expects from us while freeing you from the minor things that worry and distract us. Satan wants us distracted. God wants us focused on His Plan of Happiness.

If you find yourself continuously worried, anxious, and easily distracted than seek out help. *I.e* ask a friend or a professional to help you see what you are missing.

¹ Guide to the Scriptures, "Righteousness"; scriptures.lds.org

² Bible Dictionary, "Faith"; scriptures.lds.org)

³ "First Things First" by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger and Rebecca R. Merrill, 1996