

# First

## Part 1

### Opening Text: Mt. 6:25, 31-33

*“But seek FIRST the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (verse 33).*

### Introduction

How to do life well? Is there a clear way to make life really work and be meaningful, happy and fulfilling?

To some, their philosophy of life is perhaps best described in the words of Forrest Gump: *“My mom used to say that life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.”*

Is life really like that: random and unpredictable? Or could it be that life is not so much like a box of chocolates but more like a box from IKEA? – something conceived for a defined purpose, masterfully designed (piece by piece) but for you and I to unpack?

Regardless of your opinion about IKEA, you have to agree that nothing is left to chance when it comes to how their products are designed and the thought that goes into every detail. If you do it right, if you follow the instruction booklet step by step, you will end up with something exactly like you saw in the catalogue.

Now I have to concede: I have had bad experiences with IKEA. I have experienced chaos, frustration and have ended up assembling something that in the end looked more like a Picasso sculpture than the chest of drawers I needed.

What went wrong? Was it a manufacturer’s fault, poor design... or perhaps that I didn’t even check the instruction booklet? Each pack comes with a booklet from the manufacturer, describing an orderly, step-by-step plan to achieve the desired result.

God has a plan for our lives, masterfully designed and He has given us His Life Manual. Often we disregard the Manual and we ignore the steps: First, Second, Third.

#### 1. Uncomfortable with life

Our opening text, shows Jesus addressing the stress, worry and general discomfort sometimes we experience in life. Jesus is aware of our frustrations when life doesn’t look like anything we saw in the catalogue and that is why He says: FIRST...

*“But seek FIRST the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you”*

When you know what comes first then you can assemble life properly.

Here’s a few reasons that lead to discomfort, stress and worry in life:

- a) Ignoring the Manufacturer – He is the Author of Life (Acts 3:15 NIV)
- b) Ignoring the Manual – God’s word.
- c) Ignoring what should come first – nothing will fit if you don’t know where to start.

Is there perhaps a divine order to things that make life work? Yes! That is exactly what Jesus is saying.

#### 2. We need to understand the divine order of life

Often, many of our problems come from the fact that we are building our lives in the wrong order, having wrong priorities just to experience wrong outcomes and chaos. When we follow the right order: first, second, third... life stops being full of uncertainty, stress, frustration and chaos.

The Bible says that God is a God of order and this order is even seen in nature itself:

**Mark 4:28-29** - *“For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. 29 But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”*

#### 3. First things first!

We always need to start with what comes first. We should pay attention and underline every passage in the Bible where the word FIRST is. I am amazed at how many times the Scriptures speak about what is FIRST and all that should come after that.

We should stop being stubborn and ignore what the Divine Manufacturer said should come first, second and third, instead of stubbornly trying to wing it and thinking we know better.

We will continue this topic over the following weeks but let us just say that God has to come FIRST if we want everything else about life to work.

#### 4. God FIRST

- a) *“In the beginning God”* – That is how the Bible starts and that is where we need to start.
- b) *“In the beginning was the word”* – that is how John started his Gospel.

God and His word (the Manufacturer’s Manual) are crucial to building the right life.

- c) **Revelation 1:11** - *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the FIRST and the Last,*
- d) **Isaiah 41:4** - *Who has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, am the first; and with the last I am He.*
- e) **Isaiah 44:6** - *“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God.*
- f) **Isaiah 48:12** - *“Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last*

g) **Colossians 1:18** *“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

**The Passion Translation:** ...” holding first place in everything”.

**The Amplified Bible (AMPC):** *“He also is the Head of [His] body, the church; seeing He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, so that He alone in everything and in every respect might occupy the chief place [stand first and be preeminent].*

**The Message:** *“<sup>18-20</sup> He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he’s there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross.*

**Life works when Jesus is in the place He deserves: FIRST.**

5. A test to see who’s first

**Luke 9:59** - *Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me **first** go and bury my father.”*

**Verse 61 -62** *“<sup>61</sup> And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me **first** go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” <sup>62</sup> But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

Jesus was simply establishing who really was first in those situations and how we set our priorities (although we may say that Jesus is number one).

### **Conclusion**

I just want to end by saying that every passage where we are told to put God first, there is a promise attached with it. In our opening text Jesus said that *“all these other things will be added unto you”*.