

INTRODUCTION 引言

Our focus will determine the outcome. The story of Matthew Emmons illustrates this principle. Emmons is an American rifle-shooting athlete who won multiple medals in four Olympic games. He got his first gold medal in 2004. Two days after winning the honor, Emmons competed in another event. He was leading his opponents in scores. The unthinkable happened in his last shot. Emmons stayed focus and fired – bullseye! Unfortunately, it was another person’s target! The error costed him his medal. He made similar major mistakes at the 2008 and 2012 games. Emmon looked back at his career after he retired. He realized that those setbacks actually made his life more fulfilling. There was a happy ending to his story. After the first error in 2004, a female shooting contestant encouraged Emmon. She became his future wife and the mom of their four children. Life is similar to sports. Our focus will affect our direction. Jesus tells us the importance of focusing on God in Mathew 6. The passage today is about worry. What are your worries as you begin a new year? Jesus tells us a simple secret to reduce and even remove worry: when we put God first, we should not worry a second. Here, “second” has a double-meaning. It can mean both things that are less important and a tick on the clock.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Priority 次序

First, Jesus asks us to keep a correct priority in life. We must realize what should go first. Jesus says that life itself is more important than food and drink; and the body itself is more important than clothes. Most of us do not have to worry about lacking those items. Sometimes, we worry because we are picky. For example, kids complain that mom always cooks the same dishes. Many people worry about what exotic delicacies to try. As for clothing, some people chase after the latest fashion trend. The world fools us that more is better, and newer means superior. JC Penny used to have a funny commercial. It features a lady intentionally breaking the heel of her shoe and cutting her clothes to give herself an excuse to go shopping. It is a good idea to check what we already have before buying new things. We must understand what is more important. Suppose you catch a cold and cannot do anything except rest in bed. Will you still think of going to a restaurant for a big feast, or catching up on a huge sale? Perhaps not. Years ago, I met a sister who suffered from a terminal cancer. Eventually, the Lord took her home. I visited this family every now and then. At that time, I did not have a green card. A strong message hit my mind: why do I worry about my immigration status while this lady is struggling to stay alive? We will adjust our habits and schedule when our priorities are correct. Life is a gift from God. We should maintain good health so that we can keep

serving the Lord whether in our study, work or retirement life. You do not even need to take any supplement or sign up for a gym membership. Any doctor will tell you that diet, exercise and sleep are all essential. I often remind my two boys that a lot of things in life are cumulative. You will not have a heart-attack if you eat a bag of chips or drink soda once in a while. But it will not be good for your health if you make that into a habit. It is a good practice to read food labels when you shop for grocery. Eating smaller portions and cutting back on late-night snacking are good ideas too. As for exercise, my motto is always: something is better than nothing. Running a marathon may not be for everyone. But most people can walk around the neighborhood. I came across the title of an article recently: “Sitting is the new smoking!” Move around occasionally if you sit all day at work. You can get up for some water or walk outside to catch some fresh air. Just stay active. A healthy lifestyle will not only benefit yourself. It will boost your energy to serve others.

2. Perspective 視野

Jesus tells us to put things in the right priority. Next, we should also have a correct perspective about life. The Lord was teaching on a hillside. He asked His audience to pay attention to the birds, wildflowers and grass around. They have something in common: they grow in a natural environment; they are short-lived and they have little economic value. Jesus compares lilies of the field to the royal garments of Solomon. This king could be the richest man ever lived. His clothes were made of exotic fabrics and dyed with rare colors. But to Jesus, those man-made clothing cannot be compared to the natural beauty God puts on wildflowers. The Lord then draws a similar conclusion in verses 26 and 30: if the Heavenly Father cares about things in nature, how much more will He care about His children? We were made in God’s image. He shared some characteristics with us. We can make judgments between right and wrong. We have emotions such as love and sorrow. We have a soul that can communicate with God. He also gives us dignity that sets us apart from animals. A pastor said it well: “We shed tears when a person passed away, but we drool over a roasted-duck.” We will have less worry when we adopt Jesus’ perspective. He promised us an abundant life. It is not measured in quantity but quality. For example, how can you put a dollar sign on God’s love and forgiveness? If we are not careful, we will follow the world’s value. We will make comparison with others. We will evaluate others based on what brands of goods they use, what car they drive and which school their kids attend. Years ago, I met a student from China in my first job. One day I was wearing a denim jacket. My mom bought it from a street vendor. It did not even have a brand-name on it! That young man looked at my coat and commented: “It is very nice. You can wear it forever.” I am frugal. But I have never imagined wearing the same jacket forever. It reminded me that clothes are to be worn but are not for showing-off. Do you buy certain things just because of the big logos on the outside? Brothers and sisters: our identity is in Jesus. He saved us and gave us a new life. We do not need any fancy decoration to prove our self-worth. Do not attract people by your packaging. Instead, attract people to God by your godly character. This perspective

will free us from craving after what the world loves. We can have contentment whether we have a lot or a little.

3. Provision 供應

Jesus said we do not need to worry if we set the right priority and hold a correct perspective on life. Thirdly, we will not worry if we affirm the source of our provision. Our Heavenly Father knows our needs. He will give us the best in His manner and at the suitable time. Jesus tells the crowd that the Father feeds the birds, even though they do not plant crops and do not store up surplus. Someone said God provides for the birds, but He does not put food in their mouths. They have to fly around and look for their meals. We must work hard to put food on the table as well. Faith in God should not be an excuse for laziness. The Bible says a productive life proves that we are good stewards of God. It is wise to set aside some reserve for rainy days. A major car or house repair will cost a lot. We must plan for the future too. Kids will grow up and go to college. One day, we will stop working and rely on retirement savings. There is nothing wrong about having an ambition in your career either. Some people are happy to keep the same job till they retire. Other people seek promotion to the next level. There are many godly Christians who are successful businessmen, scientists and inventors. But the higher you reach, the humbler you should maintain. Regardless of your positions, job performance is a way to witness for God. He puts you there to testify to others that you are a believer. You do the best for your earthly boss as a means to serve the Heavenly Boss. Knowing that God is the source of provision will take our worry away. Sometimes, God can supply our needs in surprising ways. My older son came home for the winter break. We do not have any travel plan. An idea popped up on my mind that we could go watch basketball in town. Therefore, I checked the dates and ticket prices. We know everything is getting more expensive nowadays. While I could afford the tickets, an idea flashed through my mind: What if God could somehow provide for that need? I knew a sister who went to the game recently. I asked her where she parked and if by chance the company she works for has discounted tickets. She gave me a coupon code for a parking garage. It will be \$2 no matter how long I put my car there! She also told me that a brother gave her some free tickets. You can guess what I did next. As a result, my family had a good time. Thank God for His special provision. Of course, we should not day-dream about a million-dollar mansion and hope that God will provide for it. God supplies our needs, but He will not satisfy our greed!

4. Pursuit 追求

We do not need to worry if we set our priority right and put things in the correct perspective. Moreover, our worries will be gone if we believe that the Father is the source of our provision. All those beliefs will direct our pursuit. What are your dreams? What motivates you to get up and get going every morning? It is true that we all have to pay bills, and most of us have a family to raise. It is natural to pursue a better life. But Jesus

says in verses 31-32 that if our focuses are only on food, drink and clothes, then we are no different from the Gentiles, namely, non-believers. What do you usually talk about when you eat at the church? Imagine a newcomer sits at your table. Can the person tell that you are a Christian? Do you mention God at all in your conversation? Do you encourage each other with Biblical principles? We need to pay attention to God's presence in our lives. Jesus proposes a revolutionary change in our pursuit in verse 33. Rather than seeking after earthly things, we should seek after God's Kingdom and His righteousness. When we think of a kingdom, things like territory, citizens, customs and ruling come to mind. God's Kingdom is the area where God rules. His righteousness is the value His people should practice. That is related to verses 9-10 in the Lord's prayer of this chapter: **9 ... "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."** To "hallow" God's name means to give Him glory. God puts us in the world to reflect His glory. He can surely accomplish anything with His supernatural power. But God also carries out His will through us. Consider the experience of Jacob, Joseph and Daniel in the Bible. They made great contributions to Israel because of their obedience to God. We may not have an influential role in the society but we can bless the people around us. People will take notice if your life pursuit is to put God first. You do the best as a student, a worker or a stay-home mom because you love God. Your conduct and your character will prove that you belong to God even before you tell others. For example, be loyal to your company and be diligent in the duties given to you. Godly virtues like kindness, grace and honesty are welcome by people too. If the secular world esteems these values, how much more should God expect us to live them out?

CONCLUSION 結論

When we put God first, we should not worry a second. We take matters into our own hands when we worry. We will anxiously look for a quick solution. It may affect our emotion, appetite and sleep. We cannot have joy and peace unless we put God first. Then we realize that there is a bigger glory we should strive for beyond our self-glory. I shared the stories about an Olympian at the beginning. Let me conclude with the story of another athlete. Pita Taufatofua competed in skiing at the 2018 Winter Olympics. He set some ambitious goals for himself. First, to finish before people turned the lights out. Second, not to hit a tree. What is so special about Pita is that he is from a tropical country Tonga, where there is no snow. Moreover, he did not begin training until 12 weeks before the Olympics. In the skiing race, Pita finished the 114th place out of 119 contestants. He joked with those who crossed the line behind him that they were racing not to be the last. Pita surely knew that he would not win any medal. But he wanted to use his experience to inspire others. He said that there are many people scared of failure and criticism from others that they do not even dare to try. Pita was proud to represent his country. He did not seek after his own glory. As Christians, we represent God's Kingdom. We should seek after God's glory and put Him first in all that we do.

INTRODUCTION 引言

我們的焦點將會決定結果。馬修·埃蒙斯的故事說明了這個原則。埃蒙斯是一位美國步槍射擊運動員，他曾經在四屆奧運會上獲得幾面獎牌。他在 2004 年獲得了第一面金牌。在獲得榮譽兩天之後，埃蒙斯參加了另一項比賽。他的分數領先其他對手。在他的最後一槍中，不可思議的事情發生了。艾蒙斯集中注意並開槍－他打中了靶心！可惜，那是別人的目標！這個錯誤使他失去了獎牌。他在 2008 年和 2012 年的比賽中也犯過類似的重大錯誤。埃蒙退休後回顧了自己的體育生涯。他意識到這些挫折實際上讓他的生命更加充實。他的故事有一個圓滿的結局。2004 年第一次失誤後，一名女射擊選手鼓勵埃蒙斯。她後來成為了埃蒙斯的太太和他們四個孩子的媽媽。生命就像運動。我們的焦點會影響我們的方向。耶穌在馬太福音第 6 章告訴我們專注於神的重要性。今天的經文談到憂慮。在新一年的開始，你會為著什麼事情憂慮？耶穌告訴我們一條簡單的秘訣，可以減少甚至排除憂慮：當我們把神放在首位時，我們就不應該為次要的事情憂慮了。這裡英文的「次要」這個字有雙重意義。它可以指不太重要的事情，也可以指一秒鐘。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Priority 次序

首先，耶穌要求我們在生活中保持正確的優先次序。我們必須意識到應該先做什麼。耶穌說生命本身比飲食更重要；而身體本身比衣服更重要。我們大多數人不必擔心缺乏這些東西。有時候，我們擔心是因為我們挑剔。例如，小孩抱怨媽媽總是做同樣的菜。許多人操心要嘗試什麼美食。在服裝方面，有些人追逐最新的潮流。世界愚弄我們，以為越多越好，越新越好。JC Penny 百貨公司曾經有一個有趣的廣告。一位女士故意折斷鞋跟、剪破衣服，為自己找藉口去購物。在買新東西之前檢查一下我們已有的東西是個好主意。我們必須明白什麼更重要。假設你感冒了，除了躺在床上休息之外什麼也做不了。你還會想到去餐廳吃大餐，或是去搶購大打折嗎？也許不會。多年前，我認識一位患晚期癌症的姐妹。最終，主接她回天家。我偶爾拜訪這個家庭。那時我還沒有綠卡。我的腦海中有一個強烈的訊息：為什麼我在擔心我的身份，而這位女士正在為生命搏鬥？當我們的優先次序正確時，我們會調整我們的習慣和時間表。生命是神所賜的禮物。我們應該保持健康，使我們在學習、工作或退休生活中

繼續事奉主。你甚至不需要吃什麼補品或成為健身房的會員。任何醫生都會告訴你，飲食、運動和睡眠都很重要。我常常提醒我的兩個兒子，生活中的許多事情都是累積的。偶爾吃一袋薯片或喝汽水不會引起心臟病發作。但如果你養成那些習慣，就不利於你的健康。購買食物時閱讀食品標籤是一個好習慣。少量多餐和減少宵夜也是好主意。至於鍛煉身體，我的座右銘始終是：有總比沒有好。不是所有人都能跑馬拉松。但大多數人都可以在社區附近散步。我最近看到一篇文章的標題：「長期坐著的害處就是等同於吸煙！」如果你整天坐著工作，最好經常走動一下。你可以起身去倒水喝或到外面呼吸新鮮空氣。只要保持活躍即可。健康的生活型態不只對你自己有益，也能使你更有活力去服侍別人。

2. Perspective 視野

耶穌告訴我們要把事情放在正確的優先次序。其次，我們也應該有適當的視野。主在山坡上教導人。祂要求聽眾注意周圍的小鳥、野花和草地。它們有一些共通點：它們生活在自然環境中，壽命很短，而且沒有什麼經濟價值。耶穌比較田野的百合花和所羅門的衣服。這位君王可能是有史以來最富有的人。他的衣服是用特別的布料製成的，並染上了稀有的顏色。但對耶穌來說，那些人造的衣服無法與神設計野花的自然美相比。然後主在 26 和 30 節中提出類似的結論：如果天父關心自然界的事物，祂豈不是更關心祂的兒女嗎？我們是按照神的形象創造的。神與我們分享了一些特徵。我們可以判斷是非。我們有愛和悲傷等情感。我們有一個可以與神溝通的靈魂。祂也賦予我們尊嚴，使我們有別於動物。一位牧師說得好：「我們聽到人過世會流淚，但我們看到烤鴨會流口水。」當我們採納耶穌的視野時，我們的憂慮便會減少。祂應許我們豐盛的生命。它不是用數目來衡量的，而是用質量來評估的。例如，你怎麼能以金錢換算神的愛和寬恕呢？如果我們不小心，我們很容易跟隨世界的價值觀。我們便喜歡跟別人比較。我們將根據其他人用什麼牌子、開什麼車以及孩子讀什麼學校來評估他們。幾年前，我在第一份工作中遇到了一位來自中國的學生。有一天，我穿著一件牛仔夾克，是我媽媽從路邊攤販買的。它上面甚至沒有牌子！那個年輕人看了我的外套，說：「這件衣服真好看。你可以穿一輩子啊！」我很節儉，但我從來沒有想過永遠穿著同一件夾克。這件事情提醒我，衣服是用來穿的，不是用來炫耀的。你購買某些東西，是否只是因為外面的大標誌？弟兄姐妹們：我們的身分是建立在耶穌裡。祂拯救了我們，給了我們新的生命。我們不需要任何華麗的裝飾來肯定自我的價值。不要透過你的包裝來吸引人們。你應該是以敬虔的品格吸引人歸向神。這樣的視野使我們脫離追求俗世所貪愛的事物。無論我們擁有的多或少，我們都能知足。

3. Provision 供應

耶穌說，如果我們有正確的優先次序並且保持適當的視野，我們就不需要憂慮。第三，如果我們認清楚我們的供應來源，我們也不會憂慮。我們的天父知道我們的需要。祂會在適當的時候以祂的方式給我們最好的。耶穌告訴群眾，天父餵養飛鳥，儘管牠們不種植，也不儲存剩餘的食物。有人說，神供應小鳥，但祂不會把食物放在牠們的嘴裡。牠們必須四處飛翔並尋找食物。我們也必須努力工作，使家人有飯吃。對神有信心不應該成為懶惰的藉口。聖經說，勤奮的生產力證明我們是神的好管家。未雨綢繆是有智慧的。大型的汽車或房屋維修要花很多錢。我們也必須為將來計劃。孩子們會長大並上大學。有一天，我們將停止工作並依靠退休儲蓄。在職業中擁有雄心壯志也沒有什麼錯。有些人很樂意繼續做同樣的工作直到退休，其他人則尋求晉升的機會。有許多敬虔的基督徒是成功的商人、科學家和發明家。但你坐得越高，就應該越保持謙卑。無論你做什麼職位，工作表現都是為神作見證的一種方式。祂把你放在那裡是為了向別人證明你是信徒。你為地上的老闆盡忠，作為服侍天上老闆的方式。知道神是供應的源頭就會消除我們的憂慮。有時，神會以令人驚訝的方式滿足我們的需要。我的大兒子放寒假回家。我們沒有計劃出外旅行。我突然想到我們可以去看籃球賽。於是我查了一下日期和票價。我們知道現在什麼東西都越來越貴。雖然我買得起門票，但我的腦海中閃過一個想法：神會不會以某種方式滿足這個需要？我知道一個姐妹最近去看球賽。我問她把車停在哪裡，以及她的公司有沒有折扣票。她給了我一個停車場的優惠券代碼，不管我把車放在那裡多久，都是 2 美元！她還告訴我，有位弟兄給了她一些免費門票。你可以猜到接下來做了什麼。結果，我一家人享受了美好的時光。感謝神特別的供應。當然，我們不應該做白天夢想要一棟百萬美元的豪宅，並希望神會供應。神供應我們的需要，但祂不會滿足我們的貪欲！

4. Pursuit 追求

如果我們有正確的優先次序並保持適當的視野，我們就不需要憂慮。此外，如果我們相信天父是我們供應的源頭，我們的憂慮就會消失。所有這些信念將指導我們追求的目標。你的夢想是什麼？是什麼促使你每天早上起床並付出行動？誠然，我們都必須付帳單，而且大多數人都需要養家。追求美好生活是理所當然的。但耶穌在第 31-32 節說，如果我們只關心飲食和衣服，那麼我們就與外邦人，即非信徒沒有什麼不同。當你在教會吃飯時通常會談論什麼？想像一下一位新朋友坐在你的桌子旁。他能夠看得出你是基督徒嗎？你在談話中會提到神嗎？你會用聖經原則互相鼓勵嗎？我們需要留心注意神在我們生命中的存在。耶穌在第 33 節提出我們的追求要發生革命性的改變。我們不應該追求地

上的事物，而應該尋求神的國和祂的義。當我們想到國家時，我們會想到領土、公民、風俗和管治等事情。神的國就是祂統治的範圍。祂的公義是祂的子民應該實踐的價值觀。這與本章第 9-10 節主禱文中的內容有關：9「...我們在天上的父：願人都尊你的名為聖。10 願你的國降臨；願你的旨意行在地上，如同行在天上。」尊崇神的名意味著榮耀祂。神把我們放在世上是為了反映祂的榮耀。神可以運用祂的超自然力量完成任何事情，但是祂也透過我們來實行祂的旨意。想想聖經中雅各、約瑟和但以理的經歷。由於他們順服神，他們對以色列有很大的貢獻。我們或許對社會沒有影響力，但我們可以祝福身邊的人。如果你的人生追求是把神放在第一位，人們會注意到的。因為你愛神，你作為學生、雇員或家庭主婦有好的表現。在你告訴別人之前，你的行為和品格就會證明你屬於神。例如，對公司忠誠，做好你的本份。良善、恩慈和誠實等敬虔的優點也會受到人們的歡迎。如果連俗世都尊重這些價值觀，那麼神豈不是更要求我們把這些美德活出來嗎？

CONCLUSION 結論

當我們把神放在首位時，我們就不應該為次要的事情憂慮了。當我們憂慮時，我們會把事情掌握在自己的手中。我們會焦急地尋找快速解決方案。它可能會影響我們的情緒、食慾和睡眠。除非我們把神放在首位，否則我們就不可能有喜樂與平安。然後我們意識到才明白，除了我們的個人榮耀之外，我們還應該為更大的榮耀而奮鬥。我一開始就分享了一位奧運選手的故事。讓我以另一位運動員的故事作為結束。皮塔·陶法托弗亞 (Pita Taufatofua) 參加了 2018 年冬季奧運會的滑雪比賽。他為自己設定了一些雄心勃勃的目標。首先，在人們關燈之前完成賽事。第二，不要撞到樹。皮塔的特別之處在於，他來自熱帶國家東加，那裡沒有雪。而且，他直到奧運前 12 週才開始訓練。在滑雪比賽中，皮塔在 119 名選手中獲得第 114 名。他對那些比他更慢的人開玩笑說，他們正在競爭，不要成為最後一個完成的人。皮塔當然知道他不曾贏得任何獎牌。但他想用自己的經歷來激勵他人。他說，有很多人害怕失敗和別人的批評，甚至不敢嘗試。皮塔很自豪能夠代表他的國家。他並不追求自己的榮耀。作為基督徒，我們代表神的國。我們應該尋求神的榮耀，並在所做的一切事情上把神放在首位。