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Jesus Taught With Riddles

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Jesus often spoke in riddles. For instance, what did He mean when He asked the following two questions intended to free us from worry:

“Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?” (Matthew 6:25).

Now remember, Jesus asked those questions so we wouldn't worry about the basics of life. Yet, how does admitting life consists of many things–work, play, family, sleep, study, and much more, reduce worry? I don't think it does. In fact, the more I consider the things needed to sustain my life, and that of my family, the more I have to worry about, not less.

Key to the Riddle

Unlocking the meaning of the riddle requires unpacking the question. I would suggest Jesus meant that the value of a life is greater than the value of food and water. And the value of the human body is greater than the value of clothes. Consider Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft. He was reportedly worth $20 billion at the time of his death. Allen battled non-Hodgkin lymphoma for nine years before losing his war against cancer. How much of his fortune do you think he would have paid to extend his life five years? Or, four? Or, three? Or, two? Or, even one year? He paid $70 million for the Trail Blazers in 1988 and $194 million for the Seahawks in 1997. I’m sure he would have paid more for his life. He may have even offered his entire fortune in exchange for his life. He certainly would have placed a higher value on his life than a steak dinner and a glass of wine.

And what is the value of a human body? I’m talking about the worth of each individual organ, body part, and of course, the brain. All of these assembled make a perfectly functioning body. Nobody knows the answer to that question. But the human body is priceless, as is a human life.

Did Jesus Mean This?

While a student in high school my dad bought a ski boat and docked it at a marina on Lake Austin, about fifteen minutes from our home in Rollingwood Estates. He gave me the keys and told me he set up a charge account at the marina gas station. “Have fun,” he said. My dad’s generosity provided me with the greater gift, the boat, and the lesser gift, the gas needed to run it. Not once did I climb into that boat and wonder if I would have gas. Isn’t that what our heavenly Father has done for us? He’s given us the greater gifts and promised all we need to sustain them?

Since that’s the case, don’t worry about the future, instead follow the advice of Jesus: “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33) NIV

The Picture: Yes, that's me at 18 barefoot water skiing on Lake Austin behind the boat my dad gave me.