

Grace Notes: growing our faith through music by Coni Ferland

First Things First Jordan David Ward/Caleb Paul Ward/Jake Hess/Grant Timothy Bias

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If you'd like to hear the song: <https://youtu.be/bpTOcZN9JB4>

All the things that I have held dear, the vanities that whispered in my ear;
What would I do if they all disappeared?
Riches and fame, and all that they could buy, I've come to find they never satisfy.
What would I gain if my souls the price?

Refrain:

I don't wanna love what the world loves; I don't wanna chase what the world does.
I only want you, I only want you.
First things first, I seek your will, not my own, surrender all my wants to you.
Keep the first things first.
To live your truth, walk your ways, set my eyes Lord, I fix my eyes on you.
All my desires reversed, to keep the first things first.

I gave it all, my life an offering. My heart is yours, so have your way with me.
Your kingdom's all I want to seek.

Refrain x2:

All the things that I have held dear, the vanities that whispered in my ear;
What would I do if they all disappeared?

Matthew 6:30-31 *"If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers – most of which are never even seen – don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you? What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting so you can respond to God's giving."* The Message¹

Job 15:31-32 *"Let him no longer trust in foolish riches, let him no longer deceive himself, for the money he trusts in will be his only reward. Before he dies, all his futility will become evident to him. For all he counted on will disappear."* The Living Bible²

What "vanities" whisper in your ear? What do they say to you? Is it easy to ignore them?
Why do you feel that way?
What would your life be like "if they all disappeared"?

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Luke 12:15 *“Beware! Don't always be wishing for what you don't have. For real life and real living are not related to how rich we are.”* The Living Bible²

Luke 9:23-25 *“Then he said to all, ‘Anyone who wants to follow me must put aside his own desires and conveniences and carry his cross with him every day and keep close to me! Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it, but whoever insists on keeping his life will lose it; and what profit is there in gaining the whole world when it means forfeiting one's self?’”* The Living Bible²

So much of modern society seems focused on getting things, on having more. How does that influence the way you look at your life? The choices you make about how you'll live your life? How do you feel about the authors' statement that “they never satisfy”? Could this be “the life” Christ calls us to lose? What difference would it make in your life if you released those societal expectations?

I don't wanna love what the world loves; I don't wanna chase what the world does.
I only want you; I only want you.

Spend some time with the invitation of these words. What things that “the world loves” call to you? How would it feel to live these words?

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“First Things First is a very special song for us. We were in a very transitional stage of our lives. Our Dad had a major stroke. During this dark time, we contemplated, do we want to get back out, and want to do ‘Consumed by Fire’ ever again. We were doing a lot of writing at this time. And First Things First was a reflection of our hearts returning to our first love... Every record you make is sort of a chapter of your life. In this chapter, everything we thought we wanted and were geared up for, we’re saying we surrender all those things. We’re saying ‘Lord, we want what you want.’ It’s a prayer of surrender, especially after losing our dad. We just want to surrender our hopes and our dreams to the Lord.” Jordan Ward The Promise FM 5/16/2023

Jeremiah 9:23-24 “Don’t let the wise brag of their wisdom. Don’t let heroes brag of their exploits. Don’t let the rich brag of their riches. If you brag, brag of this and this only: That you understand and know me. I’m God and I act in loyal love. I do what is right and set things right and fair, and delight in those who do the same things. These are my trademarks.’ God’s Decree.”

The Message¹

Can you relate to the struggle the songwriters expressed at finding their way after their father’s stroke and death? Their writing seems to help them process their struggles. Do you have an outlet to help you process? What is your process?

In your time of struggle, do you turn to God? Why? How does that make you feel?

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2 Peter 5b-6 *“For then you must learn to know God better and discover what he wants you to do. Next learn to put aside your own desires so that you will become patient and godly, gladly letting God have his way with you.”*
The Living Bible²

Ezekiel 36:26 *“And I will give you a new heart – I will give you new and right desires – and put a new spirit within you. I will take out your stony hearts of sin and give you new hearts of love.”*
The Living Bible²

What would releasing your plans, your heart, to God mean to you? How might it change your life?

How would a “*new heart of love*” impact your interactions with others?

**“Seek the kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously,
and he will give you everything you need.”**
Matthew 6:33 New Living Testament³

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