

Your Priorities

Lesson 2

Let's Discuss Priorities

Notes

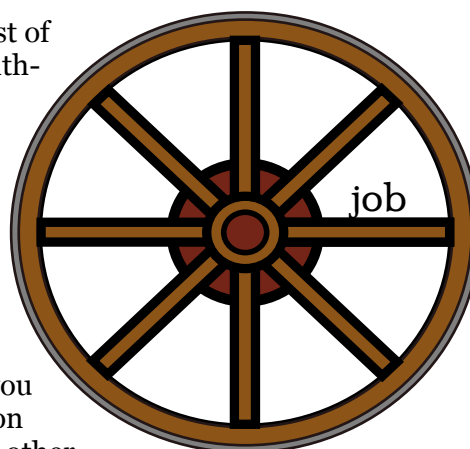
- Definition of priorities – Definition: “2 : a preferential rating; especially : one that allocates rights to goods and services usually in limited supply <that project has top priority> 3 : something given or meriting attention before competing alternatives” (Merriam-Webster Online, www.merriam-webster.com)
- Priorities are those things within a person’s life which he rates as possessing a greater level of importance.
- Let’s try a little exercise. Use the following four lines to list the four most important elements within your life.

- ✓ Consider your list and place an **X** in the box of the element that you feel to be least important.
- ✓ Of your three remaining top three elements of your life, select another one to remove from the list by placing an **X** in the box.
- ✓ Finally, pick one of the remaining two priorities to mark off by placing an **X** in the box.
- ✓ Give consideration to what remains as the most important thing in your life. Now, consider your life and ask yourself if your academic choice matches your real life choices.

Why Must God Take Priority in Your Life?

- To better understand the concept of priority, consider the illustration of the wagon wheel.
 - The center of the wagon wheel represents your heart, your love, and your desires. Whatever is at the center of your life, at the center of your heart will be the center point around which everything else will revolve in your life. That which lies at the center of the wagon wheel will take a position of priority within your life. Whenever there are conflicts between the various elements of your life, that which is most important to you will win the conflict.*

- Using the wagon wheel to the right, make a list of eight things which can struggle for priority within a person's life. {One is already listed as a starting point.}

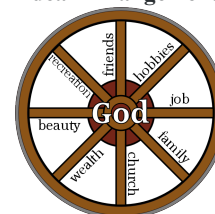


- ❑ After completing the illustration, give thought as to how each element, when moved to the center of the wheel, would affect the other elements within a person's life.
- ❑ For a Christian, a child of God, what do you think should be at the center of the wagon wheel? How should the answer affect the other elements within that person's life?

- How does a person establish his priorities?

- ❑ A person's priorities may be determined by what he or she finds most important.
 - ✓ Family - kids, spouse, parents
 - ✓ Recreation - golf, fishing, football, etc.
 - ✓ Anything that a person lives for or has strong desires toward.
- ❑ A person's priorities could also be established upon what will benefit him the most.
 - ✓ Job - money, promotions, social status, lifestyle
 - ✓ Lifestyle - social status, certain friends or acquaintances

Ideal Arrangement



- In the end, a person's true priorities will reflect what is in his heart.

📖 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. (Proverbs 4:23, ESV)

📖 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. "Eat and drink!" he says to you, But his heart is not with you. (Proverbs 23:7)

📖 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21)

- When a Christian places God at the center of his life, that Christian will make everything else within his life revolve around God. This is the only outcome possible when a person truly loves the Lord God.

📖 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'" (Mark 12:29-30, ESV)

- Consider the challenge which Jesus issued to His disciples as recorded by both Matthew and Luke.

📖 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. (Matthew 10:37-38)

📖 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26-27)

How Do You Change to Give God Priority in Your Life?

- To answer this question, consider two main thoughts seen in Proverbs 4:20-27.
 - ❑ Step One: A person must put the word of God in his heart. If a person will place instructions, the words of wisdom, even the words of God within his heart, then that person will have life and will live his life in a wise and godly manner. (verses 20-23)
 - ❑ Step Two: A person must put away all ungodly thoughts and actions. If a person will put away all deceitfulness and perverseness, then his attention will be focused on following the path that he must follow. (verses 24-27) In order to follow the proper path of godliness and righteousness, consider the following instructions from Proverbs 4:24-27. (Use the lines provided to state each instruction in your own words.)
 - ✓ One’s eyes must look straight. _____

 - ✓ One’s “eyelids” must look right before him. _____

 - ✓ One must ponder the path of his feet. _____

 - ✓ One must let all his ways be established. _____

 - ✓ One must not turn to the right or the left. _____

 - ✓ One must remove his feet from evil. _____

- The person who follows the above principles taught in Proverbs 4:20-27 will be the individual who allows his life to be guided by God's will. He will not allow himself to be led astray by the ungodly ways of the world. {Consider Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Jonah, etc.}

- ❑ A person's every spoken word will be within the guidelines laid forth in the scriptures.
- ❑ A person's every action will be within the guidelines laid forth in the scriptures.
- ❑ A person's every thought and motive will be shaped within the boundaries of godliness.
- ❑ There will be no areas of a person's life that will not be kept within the limits of the scriptures, within the realm of the authority of Jesus Christ.

📖 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:16-17)

- A Christian who follows these principles will change his life, giving God the ultimate position of priority within his life.

How Will Placing God First Change One's Life?

- A person who gives God ultimate priority within his life will affect change within his life. Consider the following examples:
 - ❑ Giving God priority will affect one's activities on the first day of the week. This person will set aside the time to assemble with the saints and to worship his heavenly Father.
 - 📖 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. (Acts 20:7. ESV)
 - 📖 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV)
 - ❑ Giving God priority will affect change in one's speech or conversations.
 - 📖 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. (Ephesians 4:29)
 - 📖 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, (Colossians 3:8-9)
 - ❑ Giving God priority will affect change in the type of clothing one wears.
 - 📖 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. (1 Timothy 2:9-10)

📖 Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. (Luke 17:1-2)

📖 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28)

❖ *It is wrong to cause another person to sin, including having lustful and covetous thoughts. Therefore, if one's apparel or one's behavior tempts another person to sin, then that person has sinned.*

❑ Giving God priority will affect change in regards to the type of people with whom one chooses to have association. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

📖 Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." (1 Corinthians 15:33, ESV)

❑ Giving God priority will affect change in how often one studies the word of God. (Deuteronomy 6:1-10)

📖 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

📖 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, (1 Peter 2:2)

- In other words, when a person gives God priority within his life, he will keep every word and every action within the guidelines of the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the apostle Paul wrote, *"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."* (Colossians 3:17)

Conclusion

- In His sermon on the mount, Jesus said, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."* (Matthew 6:33) This attitude of seeking God first will enable a person to faithfully serve the Lord in every area of his life.
- Every Christian should do an honest examination of his life, looking to see if God truly holds the place of top priority within his life.

Any Final Questions or Comments?
