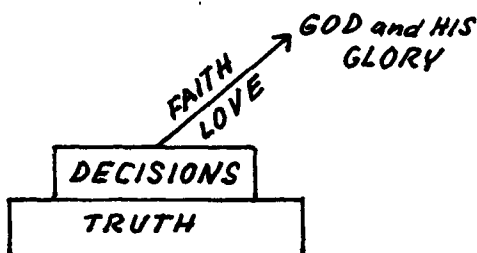


Lesson #5—The Believer's Priorities and the Glory of God

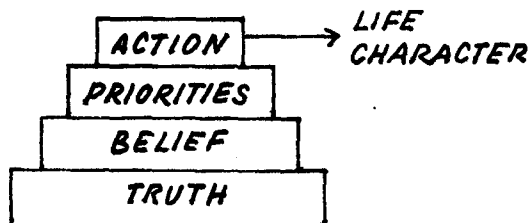
Introduction

- A. In this series we have been considering how we are to measure success. We have come to the conclusion that the only valid unit of measurement is the glory of God. It is not sufficient to simply do what is right. Nor is it satisfactory to do what is right by faith and love. A third element must be included in our attitude and actions in order to be a successful Christian—we must do what we do—for the glory of God.
- B. In the last lesson we learned that God has made an adequate provision for His people. We can live for the glory of God.
- C. Now we must ask the question, "Where do we begin?" The answer that would summarize the Biblical material would be, "Establish the right priorities." This question and answer assumes that the necessary background material is known—the truths concerning the Lord Jesus, His revelation and provision, salvation, and the daily Christian life.



I. Background: The Necessity of Priorities.

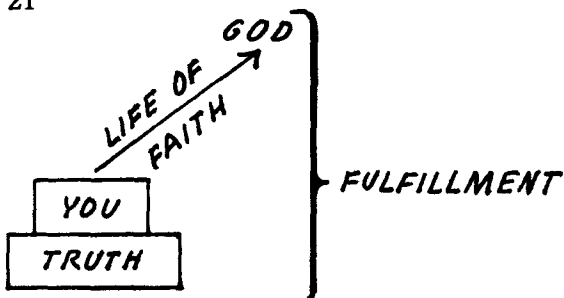
- A. Priorities are important because they determine our character and life.
 - 1. What we count valuable and important today will make us into a person characterized by that value and this in turn will structure how we live.
 - 2. It is an inexorable principle—our priorities prove what we truly believe. To say that we believe in prayer, and then not to pray, is to demonstrate that our affirmation is false.
 - 3. Scripture: **Keep thy heart with all diligence**, for out of it are the issues of life. Proverbs 4:23.



- B. Priorities are important in order to live a successful Christian life.

- 1. In our creation we were designed by God so that we could live for Him and achieve the great purpose of life—to glorify Him.

Even every one that is called by My name, for I **have created him for My glory**, I have formed him, yea, I have made him...This people have I formed for Myself, **they shall shew forth My praise**. Isaiah 43:7, 21



2. In the Fall of Man we lost the ability and desire to glorify God. Because of sin the human race now lives a life without purpose and therefore without fulfillment.

For all have sinned and **come short of the glory of God.** Romans 3:23

3. In salvation the believer is restored to God's favor, forgiven, and given the enablement to live for God and to glorify Him.

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. Ephesians 1:5, 6

4. It is in our daily life that we must now learn how to live so that God is glorified. This is where priorities become so valuable. We must establish Biblical priorities and then daily put them into practice.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or **whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.** I Corinthians 10:31

Observation: All of these verses point our one single important truth—our primary purpose and goal in life is to glorify God. This will never be achieved in your life and mine unless we are willing to evaluate our daily life and establish Biblical priorities. To speak of loving and trusting God or daily obedience without first of all initiating correct priorities is to make an empty and false profession.

II. Explanation: The Meaning of Priorities.

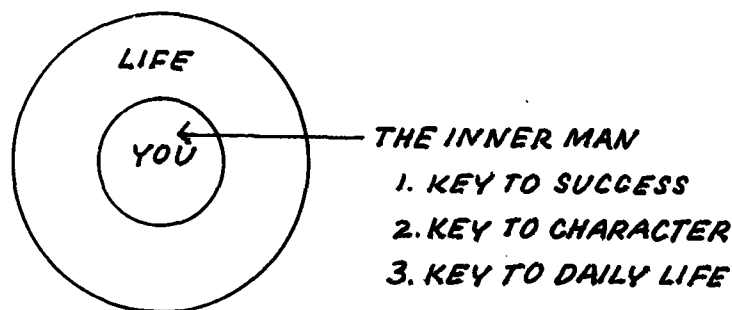
A. The Biblical Exhortations.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. **In all thy ways acknowledge Him** and He shall direct Thy paths. Proverbs 3:5, 6

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the **issues of life.** Proverbs 4:23

...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. Matthew 22:37, 38

Observation: These verses remind us that priorities are the **choices** of the "inner man". They are **decisions** which are made by the "heart" of man. They are such choices and decisions which relate to the **basic values and goals** of the daily life.



B. The Biblical Illustrations.

Nevertheless there are good things found in thee (King Jehoshaphat), in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast **prepared thine heart to seek God.** II Chronicles 19:3

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. Ezra 7:10

But Daniel **purposed in his heart** that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat. Daniel 1:8

Observation: All of this has been written into the Bible to instruct us in the necessity of making choices which establish the correct priorities. Without Biblical priorities it is impossible to live a successful life in which God will be glorified. **We must surrender ourselves to God, accept the Biblical priorities and make a "heart" decision to implement them in our own daily life by faith and love.** When that has been done—then it is possible for God to bless us and lead us into maturity of life and service.

III. Exposition: The Biblical Priorities.

A. Orientation to the Biblical Priorities.

The Bible not only instructs us in how to make priorities but gives a list of them. These are presented to us as the various ways in which we may glorify God. It is important to keep in mind that these are not simply spiritual actions. The principle behind each of these is first of all related to our spiritual commitment, then to the decisions of faith and love, and only then are we ready to put the priority into practice.

B. Examples of Biblical Priorities. (Sample only)

1. The priority of good works, Matthew 5:13-16.

Ye are the salt of the earth...ye are the light of the world...Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Observation: What does the Lord Jesus mean by "good works"? The immediate context has to do with the list of beatitudes which He had just stated and explained. These beatitudes, which relate to both our attitude and action, are a rich potentiality for every believer. Because we are in Christ, and He is in us, we can live out these basic characteristics of the Christian life and thereby glorify God.

a. The "good works" of being "poor in spirit", Matthew 5:3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Observation: To be poor in spirit is to possess that spiritual discernment which gives to one the understanding of man's true condition before God. It is the comprehension of our innate unworthiness before God, of the realization of what it means to be a sinner before the infinite perfections of divine truth, love and holiness. It is the spiritual awareness of the distance between infinity and finiteness and particularly when that finite creature has turned against God in pride, rebellion, and self-sufficiency. It is the spiritual helplessness which causes one to bow in humility, in silence, in complete abandonment to the mercy of God.

When that attitude of life pervades all of our thoughts and actions—then how we live our daily life will cause God to be glorified.

b. The "good work" of "mourning", Matthew 5:4.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Observation: This beatitude again points to the inner attitude of the believer. It is the correct expression that comes when one realizes the meaning of being "poor in spirit". It is the sorrow which continually flows from the heart of the one who understands the nature, the effects, and the characteristics of sin. It is the repentant cry of the heart as one stands in the shadow of Calvary and looks up into the loving face of the One Who suffers in his place.

To understand our relationship to God in the light of this truth will make a difference in our daily life. There will be no pride—but humility. There will be no rebellion—but submission. There will be no selfishness—but love.... This will glorify God.

c. The "good work" of "meekness", "hungering and thirsting for righteousness", "being merciful", "pure in heart", a "peacemaker" and willing to be "persecuted for righteousness". Matthew 5:5-10

Observation: These beatitudes form the foundation for a life of "good works". How different is all of this from the "public works" of serving before men so that we may be praised!

2. The priority of prayer, John 14:13.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Observation: In this verse the Lord Jesus Christ asks the believer to come and take his place in the divine plan of the ages. The design of all creation is to glorify God. Here we are presented with an invitation to share in that all-comprehensive and glorious endeavor.

The amazing truth also found in this verse is that the Lord Jesus promises to become involved in our daily life of prayer! He will do what we ask—so that the Father would be glorified. How can any believer look upon such an offer and such a glorious purpose in life as unimportant?

What we must do is to change our daily priorities so that prayer comes high on the list every day. We must learn how to pray and then to give ourselves to this important task.

IV. Application: The Benefits of these Biblical Priorities.

- A. God will be glorified.
- B. The non-Christian will receive a good testimony.
- C. the Christian will achieve the purpose of his life and be fulfilled.

Conclusion: The Application.

- A. We must apply these truths to ourselves and accept the responsibility.
- B. Whatever this may mean—repentance, confession, restitution, apology, change of priorities—that we must do!