

Priorities and the Christian Life

Introduction

- A. Our priorities determine the kind of a person we are today and what kind of a person we will be in the future.
- B. Priorities are therefore one of the most important keys to success. This is true for the student, the business man and the housewife. Many Christians have failed to live for the glory of God because of wrong priorities.
- C. It is helpful to see how often the Scripture utilizes the word "first" to indicate various areas of priority.

I. Priority Regarding the Bible, II Peter 1:19-21.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Observation: In these verses the Apostle Peter instructs us of the foundation and source of truth - the inspired Scripture. By use of the word "first" he shows the Word of God to have come to us from God Himself and not from human searching. In referring to "interpretation" Peter states that the Bible and what it means does not have its origin in man. God has given us His Word. Among all books and sources of help this is the only one worthy of being recognized as number one! We must treat it as such.

II. Priority Regarding the Commandments, Matthew 22:36-38.

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, 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.

Observation: This is a clear statement which comes to every member of the race, and particularly to every believer, with the character of a divine priority. Our first privilege and obligation is to recognize Who God is, give Him His rightful place in our lives and do what is right by Him. This is the first of a number of commandments. From the Bible we understand that to do this faithfully will insure our spiritual success.

III. Priority Regarding the Goals of Life, Matthew 6:33.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Observation: By nature we are selfish and self-centered people. Here we are told to set goals that will glorify God and enable us to live a righteous life. Now His kingdom is essentially, for the believer, living in the will of God. We must accept this counsel.

IV. Priority Regarding the Believer's Daily Life, Revelation 2:4,5.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works

Observation: These verses were written to people who were in need of help. They had failed to maintain the priority of love (Matt. 22:36-38). The Lord Jesus instructs them to do three things: remember, repent, and choose to live as they did when they loved Him preeminently. We need this reminder that the basis of our daily life is not our emotions - but the truth and its practice in love, faith and hope.

V. Priority Regarding the "Inner Man", Matthew 23:25,26.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Observation: This counsel speaks very deeply into the life of every one of us. We all have the tendency to neglect the "inner man" and to put too much emphasis on the "outer things" of our daily life. This is where every person must begin; the non-Christian with the new birth (John 3:3-6), and the Christian with spiritual progress.

VI. Priority Regarding "The Brethren", Matthew 5:23,24.

Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Observation: One cannot be out of fellowship with our "brethren" and walk in fellowship with God. This is referring to sins that are known and have not been confessed, the bearing of grudges and the failure to make things right by way of restitution. Forgiveness and fellowship are important characteristics of the successful Christian life.

VII. Priority Regarding the Home, I Timothy 5

But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety (kindness) at home and to requite their parents, for that is good and acceptable before God.

Observation: While this is given to meet a specific need related to widows there is also a Biblical principle found in these verses. That area of life where we exert and receive the most influence is that of the home. Our spiritual commitment must manifest itself first among those with whom we live.

VIII. Priority Regarding the Judgment, I Peter 4:17.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel . . . ?

Observation: The believer must recognize his great responsibility to obey the truth. If God holds His children responsible what should be said of the non-Christian? They have no hope.