

## The Key to Spirituality: Priorities

### Introduction

- A. God created us to be spiritual people – but because of the Fall of Man and the devastating effects of sin – spirituality and spiritual growth only come to pass by the struggle of faith, love, and hope.
- B. One essential and therefore necessary part of this struggle has to do with personal priorities – and the decisions related to them.
- C. Since every believer is responsible for his or her own spirituality each of us must accept that responsibility and choose the priorities of life which apply to us individually. Neglect is a terrible sin.

### I. The Importance of Priorities.

- A. The exhortation regarding keeping the heart.

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

Comment: Here Solomon reminds us that the quality of our life is determined within ourselves. This truth has been recognized by both Christians and non-Christians. How often we have read or heard formulas which encapsulate this exhortation.

"You can choose your response."

"Our life is not determined by what happens to us – but by our response – to what happens to us."

- B. The exhortation regarding the kingdom of God.

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Matthew 6:33

Comment: Every individual has a pattern of values by which they live. Some of these patterns are clearly chosen and some are not. Because of sin most of our patterns tend to be of a selfish and self-centered nature. In this verse the Savior commands us to give the values of His character and kingdom top priority in our daily life.

Summary: Both of these passages emphasize the necessity of making decisions to accept and implement the values found in the Bible (Prov. 4:23) and/or those related to the kingdom of God and righteousness (Matt. 6:33). As the title of this lesson suggests – one key to living a Biblical Christian life is that of making correct decisions.

## II. The Promise Regarding Priorities.

*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* Philippians 2:12,13

Comment: A brief summary of this passage could be "When we obey God works." This does not mean that we earn the grace of God – but by our obedience we learn to practice the truths related to salvation and the Bible – and open the spiritual door so God can work in our life and fulfill His promises.

## III. The Areas of Personal Priorities.

There are four areas which form a foundation for other priorities and make it possible to live successfully.

- A. We must accept the priority of worship
- B. We must accept the priority of Bible reading and study
- C. We must accept the priority of prayer
- D. We must accept the priority of the Church and Christian fellowship.

## IV. The Principles Regarding Priorities.

- A. The principles related to authority.

It is very important to understand that our functions (how we think, feel, will, or desire) are not authoritative and should not be recognized as such. This may seem so obvious – but many of our doubts, failures, and temptations are due to the pressure generated by our functions.

"But I keep thinking that thought so there must be something to it."  
"I just can't make a decision – I seem so confused."  
"I feel so weak it doesn't seem like I have any faith at all."  
"But it must be the will of God because I have such a deep desire."

- B. The principles related to decisions of faith.

Since the Bible is our authority we must make decisions to read, study, and practice the Bible. This is where planning comes in. Circumstances, time, metabolism, weaknesses, and obligations may vary from one person to another. Every believer must honestly accept the truth of divine authority, and make the decisions of faith which will produce obedience, trust, and growth.

- C. The principles related to faithfulness.

Priorities must be faithfully carried out – by faith – and for the glory of God – without falling into legalism. God will honor us if we honor Him.

Victor M. Matthews