

BIBLICAL PRIORITIES – THE CHRISTLIKE LIFESTYLE

In the spring the flowers start to come out, the rains start and there is a real sense of newness and excitement in the air. This is when baseball starts. As always, the keys to success depend on the basics. Consequently, some of the first things they do are exercises, catching, throwing, and hitting. In basketball they would concentrate on the little things like dribbling, passing, lay ups, shooting and free throws. In football it would be running, passing, catching, tackling, blocking, etc. Everything has basics upon which their success are dependent.

Some have said that one of the biggest keys to successful management, business, or athletics is the ability to focus on the basics and to know one's priorities. Likewise, for the Christian who has received Christ and is trusting in the Holy Spirit daily, it is important to know their Biblical priorities and to live by them.

We are told in 2 Timothy 3:16 & 17 that the Scriptures are the comprehensive equipment for the man and woman of God. In other words, the Bible is the operating manual for the men and women of God. To operate best as Christians, we need to not only know what it says, we have to do it. Yet for many today their knowledge of the Word never really affects their lives. In the old days this difference could be considered the difference between being a Greek and a Christian. You see a Greek was considered to be one who sought to know and understand things, while a Christian was one who sought to know and understand and do things with the information/truth they had.

The whole point is - many create distance between them and the Word of God. In reality they have bought the lie that there are two worlds out there: a Spiritual world and a secular world. The spiritual world is for Sundays and Wednesday nights while the secular world is for everything else, and Christ should have no impact on our work, school, athletics, neighborhoods, friendships, etc. The Bible, however, does not teach this. It teaches there is only one world and it is a Spiritual world, under the dominion and power of God. Therefore our relationship with Christ is to have an effect on our sports, our neighborhood, our family, our work, our school, etc. John 13:17 reminds us that if we know these things, then blessed are we if we do them.

OUR CONCERN IS THAT YOU DEVELOP A BIBLICAL OVERVIEW THROUGH WHICH YOU CAN SEE AND DEVELOP YOUR LIFE AND MINISTRY.

GOOD OR BAD WITNESSES?

God tells us in Acts 1:8 that whether we like it or not we "shall be His witnesses on earth". He did not say that we "can be" witnesses or that we "should be" witnesses or that we "may be" witnesses, but that we would be witnesses. In light of that, some of the questions that come to mind are: Will we be good or bad witnesses? Will we make a positive or negative mark on the world for Christ? One of the keys to being a positive influence is knowing your Biblical Priorities for the Christlike life.

HOW CAN YOU TELL HOW MUCH YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST IS AFFECTING YOUR LIFE?



It is said the easiest way to discover a person's priorities is to glance at their schedule and their checkbook. I contend that for many Christians what is reflected in their checkbooks and schedule is not really what they wished were there. Partly because they have misunderstood what their priorities should be and how to get them into their lives. As a result, it is said, that nearly 98% of the problems Christian have is due to

the fact they do not abide in God and His word.

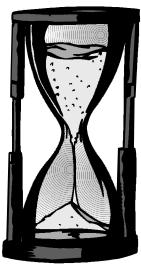
THE THREE PRIORITIES

Read John 15

Background: Jesus Christ is about to leave his disciples and return back to heaven. He is fully aware He is about to be sacrificed for the sins of the world, and as such He now shares those things that would be most important. From these passages we can see the following priorities:

I. PRIORITY ONE - A PROGRESSIVE COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST (VS 7-11).

A. This involves:



1. Spending time in the Word. Set a specific time and start your day off right. Be sure to record your discoveries. You may want to use says, means, applies or some other Bible study method.
2. Spending time in Prayer. Be sure to record your requests and answers to prayer.
3. Spending time in Worship. Focus on who God is.

B. It requires:

1. Alone time with God.
2. Instruction from others.

C. It can be summarized by the words:

1. Abiding - This means to live or dwell in something - in this case Jesus Christ.
2. Obeying - To execute or do the commands of your leader - again Jesus Christ.

II. PRIORITY TWO - A PROGRESSIVE COMMITMENT TO THE BODY OF CHRIST (VS 12, 13, 15B).

A. This involves commitment:

1. First to my immediate family. (Living situation).
2. Second to the larger body of Christ.

B. It involves taking time to love one another.

1. Model the relationship of the Father to the Son. (John 17:18-23)
2. By functioning properly in the Body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12)
 - a. Know and go where the church is. (Not forsaking our own assembling together. Hebrews 10: 24-25).
 - b. Help it to function better. (Use your gifts and skills. 1 Corinthians 12:13-27).

C. It is summarized by the word **loving** and grows out of priority one.

III. PRIORITY THREE - A PROGRESSIVE COMMITMENT TO THE WORK OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD (VS 18, 19, 21, 26, 27).

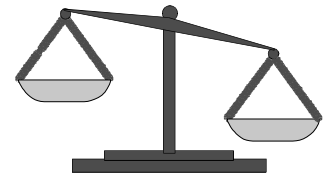
A. This involves:

1. The evangelistic mandate - which is reaching the lost world for Christ (Mt. 28:18-20)
2. The cultural mandate - which is having a ministry of compassion to a lost world and meeting needs. God calls us to be salt in the world. We are to bring seasoning therefore, to our culture and be concerned with the quality of the situations.

B. It requires me going as a servant (Mark 10:45)

C. It involves bearing witness of Jesus Christ.

When we keep this in proper balance and priority we discover that we are secure because we are first in Christ. This allows us to reach out and love the body of Christ. In turn, because we are loved by the body of Christ, we can reach out to a lost world and not feel insecure because of their rejection. (G.I.N. God loves me, I can now love myself, Now I can love others.)



IV. LIST THE TYPICAL ACTIVITIES THAT FILL YOUR WEEK BACK HOME.

Next, place along side this list a one, two, or three to indicate what Biblical priority they can be. Note: You should be aware that you can do many of these activities without letting God have an impact on any of them. However, if you concentrate on your schedule with a perspective of Biblical priorities you will begin to see significant differences for Christ.

Typical activities: work, family, dinner, workouts, Bible Study, Church, recreation, study, school, etc.

V. THE DANGER OF OVERSTRESSING ANY OF THE PRIORITIES AT THE EXPENSE OF THE OTHERS:

A. Over stress of priority one can yield a person so heavenly minded they are no earthly good. They could become like the Pharisees of Jesus' day. They had all the answers but no compassion. They were not sensitive to others. Bleeding Pharisees was a popular term back then for some of the Pharisees. They were so spiritually minded they would close their eyes from seeing the evil of the world and need guides. It goes without saying that they often tripped or walked into walls and bled.

B. Over stress of priority two can yield parasites. These are people who enjoy the fellowship and mooch off others and have little impact on the world for Christ. They are more concerned with the social aspects of being part of the club. They need to study God's word for themselves.

C. Over stress of priority three can yield task oriented people. These are people who are performance oriented and proud of their results. Without priority one and two in line these people can burn out.

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