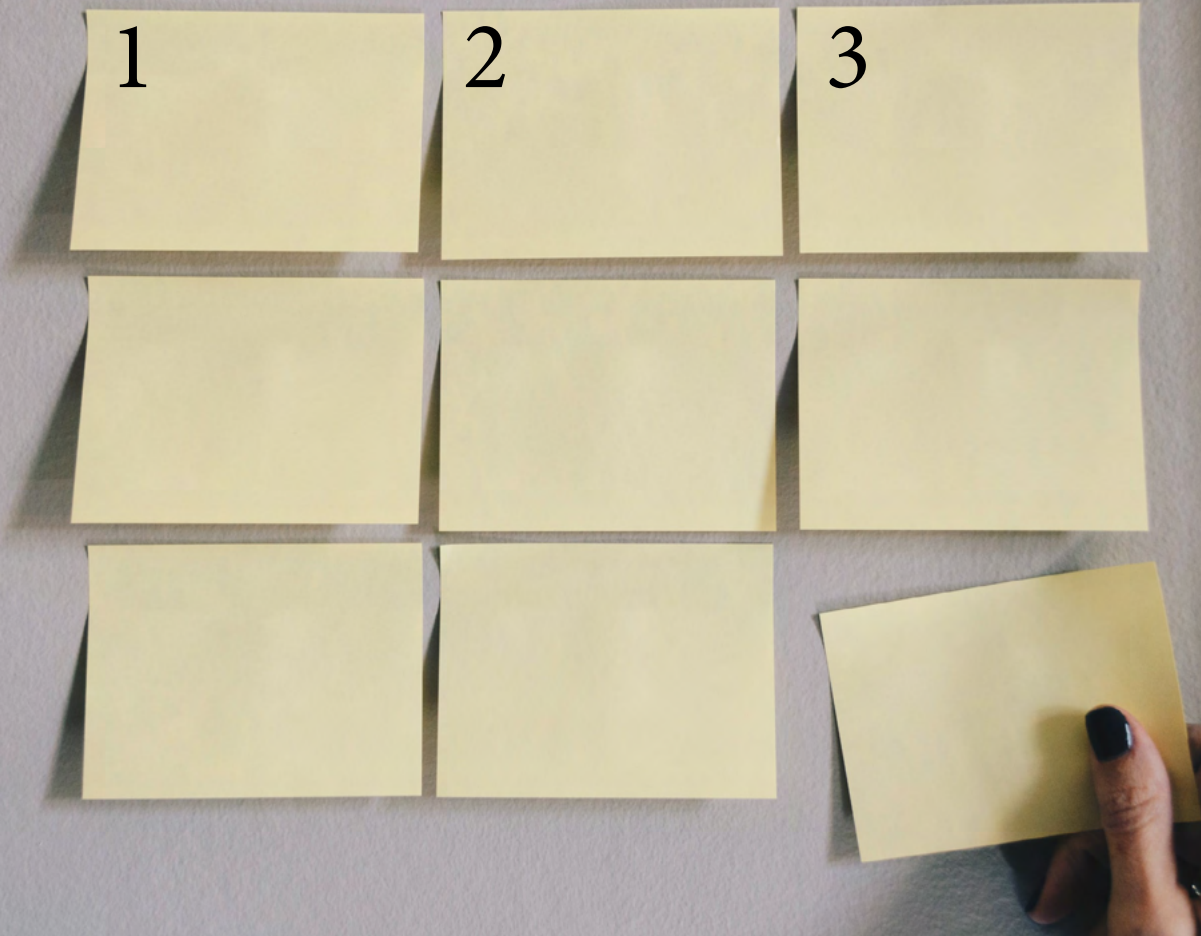


GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical For spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement.



A Believer's Priority



IN THIS ISSUE :

Perspective	Study	Anecdote	Tribute	Outline
A Believer's Priority	Brief Notes on Tabernacle-8 The colours of the gate	What Matters the Most	Life is not measured by the Years we lived.	Leader's Priorities
1	4	5	6	7

PERSPECTIVE:-

A Believer's Priority

 By Nelson Thomas



Once a teacher was asked, “What is the most important thing in life?” His response was interesting, “The most important thing in life is to make the most important thing, the most important thing!” Is it not prioritizing our priorities?

All of us have our priorities, though they change according to each individual and their situation. Our priorities reveal our values and determine our lifestyle and success. Many troubles and failures stem from misplaced priorities.

This is true in our spiritual life also. However, there is a difference. In Christian life there is only one thing to do irrespective of the person or situation; that is, to make God and His purposes as our chief goal.

Notice few scripture passages:

Matthew 6:33: *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

Luke 10:42: *“But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”*

Matthew 10:37: *“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.”*

“

“My order of priorities reflects the level of my commitment to Christ. Whoever or whatever is in first place, if it isn't the Lord Jesus, is in the wrong place”.

----- Charles R. Swindoll

”

Normal Christian Life

True Christian life is not just a religious life of convenience but a life of commitment. It is impossible to lead a smooth and successful Christian life without being consecrated to God and His will. It seems many gradually forget that at the time of conversion they had not only confessed their sins, but also had acknowledged Christ as their Lord. (Romans 10:9).

In other words, we have made a covenant to yield ourselves to Christ as our Master. Yet, do we really give the Lord Jesus Christ the supreme place in all our thoughts, words and deeds?

Often it is because of our half-hearted lukewarm lifestyle, we fail to enjoy the true blessings of Christian life. From Matthew 6: 25 onwards Christ was talking about the worry-free, satisfied life of His followers.

However, this is possible only when one makes God and His kingdom as a priority. The Lord's promise is if we wholeheartedly seek God and His will more than anything else, everything will fall in line. (Matthew 6: 33)

Made a
Covenant



CHRIST
as our Master

Results of Failure

Likewise, the reason behind the irritation and murmuring of Martha was her misplaced priority. Martha's concern to feed the Lord and His people were commendable indeed, yet it should not have been at the expense of hearing God's word. Sitting quietly at His presence and listening to Him would have given her all the needed grace for that occasion. (Luke 10:38 – 42)

One of the failures of the Pharisees of Christ's time was also their confused priorities. They emphasised insignificant, external things but neglected valuable things of eternal value. Reputation was everything for them, not character. Popularity, pomp, position, prominence, etc., were their main concern, but they were least bothered about a life of love, mercy and honesty. (Luke 11: 42, 43; Micah 6:7, 8)

Examine the stories of any failure in biblical history or church history; they all begin with a change of focus. The moment God becomes secondary in our life, our purpose in life becomes something else. God's word, His people, and the assembly gatherings, etc., become optional. Senses of morality, justice, honesty, holiness and humility, etc., become blurred. That's exactly what happened to Lot, Achan, Eli, David and even Peter. They all were fallen due to their failure in recognizing the right priority at certain times of their lives.

Eminent Examples

In the same way consider the successful men of the past; they had one thing in common, their priorities were right. They found the Lord Almighty as the centre of their life. Tents and altars of Abraham speak volume of his priorities. (Gen. 12:8) Even as a young man, Moses set his priorities straight in spite of the cost he had to pay. (Heb. 11: 24 – 27) Solomon's priority for divine wisdom caused God to bless him abundantly. (1Kings 3: 9ff) Of course, later he misplaced the same and reaped the consequences. (1Kings 11:1ff)

David writes "One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple." (Psalm 27: 4) He earnestly longed to spend time with the Lord and His people. (cf. Psalm 63: 1; 42: 1, 2; 84: 2)

Paul's words are pertinent, "I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christthat I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings..... one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3: 8, 10a, 13b, 14)

Paul had only his priority fixed; to know Christ and make Him known. He had no hesitation to forsake his gains and even his rights for the same. (1Corinthians 9:12ff)

Divine Displeasure

Is it really a serious issue? Making God our priority is not just a subject of success or failure. It's about giving God His rightful place in our life. It's absolutely impossible to make God secondary, for He is God the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He cannot deny His very nature, He must be above all. (Colo. 1:18; 2Timo 2:13) No wonder, the Lord spoke to Eli, "Why do you.....honor your sons more than Me....." (1Samuel 2:29) Then He pronounced the consequence to Eli. (1Samuel 2:30 ff)

Our Lord's response to the church at Ephesus is noteworthy in this context. Losing their first love for Christ was tantamount to removing Him from their top priority. In spite of their impeccable doctrinal stand and spiritual services, the Lord warns them to repent of this 'fall' and return to the right path to avoid chastening. (Revelation 2: 1 – 7) That means failure to make God our priority is a serious sin, and disciplinary action becomes inevitable if not rectified in time.


Let us make God our priority. There should be nothing else more important to us other than our walk with the Lord. Affection for dear ones, love for possessions and luxury, and even ignorance have made many to fail in this area.

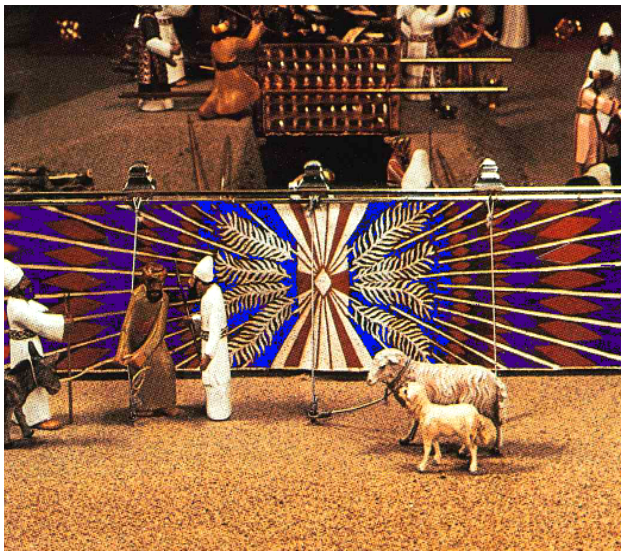
Listening to His word, sharing our heart with Him in prayer, enjoying the fellowship of God's people, etc., should be on the top of our everyday agenda. So that in all things Christ will have the pre-eminence and in and through us He is glorified. This will also assure a satisfied and successful Christian life. It is high time we examine our priority!

BRIEF STUDY:

Brief Notes on Tabernacle –9:

The Colours Of The Gate

 By Charles .E. Wigg, Australia



The Gate of the Tabernacle

SCARLET

The distinctive colour, it stands out, it catches the eye. The children of the virtuous woman are said to be clothed in scarlet (Prov. 31.). It is interesting to note that the scarlet dye is made from the crushed bodies of the worm *CoccusIllicus*, the female of this creature attaches its body firmly to a tree, spreads scarlet dye around itself, and gives birth to its eggs, then dies, its dead body remaining as a protection for the eggs until they hatch, and begin their new life.

How suggestive this is of our Lord Jesus, who in life and in death was absolutely distinctive. Denying Himself constantly, living for others, and finally dying for others on the tree, for you and for me! Shedding His precious blood so that we might have life, “Hallelujah what a Saviour!”

We see the scarlet of Christ’s distinctive and unique humanity in the Gospel of Luke, who presents the Lord Jesus to us as the SON OF MAN. Luke gives us details of Christ’s humanity that are not given by any other of the Gospel writers. He alone tells of His conception, birth and boyhood.

The miracles of Luke’s Gospel emphasize the perfection and beauty of Christ’s humanity, His perfect compassion, as well as His deity. Consider the healing of the man full of leprosy in chapter 5. There in verse 13 we are told that the Lord Jesus put forth His hand and touched the leper. The word translated touch, means to handle freely: we might ask why He did this, when the power of His divine word was sufficient to heal the man completely?

It was because of His perfect human compassion. That poor man had not felt a human touch for many years. He was cut off from his family, feared and shunned by all, and had to cry out “Unclean, Unclean”, wherever he went. How it

must have moved his heart, when he felt the warm hands of our blessed Lord pass over his diseased body!

Here was One who understood how he felt, and felt for him and with him. He was perfectly human, yet absolutely divine. As the dying thief witnessed the calm and graceful way in which the Lord Jesus bore the sufferings of the cross, he was led to exclaim, "This man has done nothing amiss". The centurion cries, "Certainly this was a righteous man," whereas both

Matthew and Mark tell us that he said that He was truly the Son of God. Luke closes his gospel by showing us the Lord Jesus as man, being carried up into heaven, while in the act of blessing His disciples. The perfect manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ was an absolute necessity for Him to be our Saviour.

ANECDOTE:

What Matters the Most

 By Warren W. Wiersbe

During the early days of the Salvation Army, William Booth and his associates were bitterly attacked in the press by religious leaders and government leaders alike.

Whenever his son, Bramwell, showed Booth a newspaper attack, the General would reply, "Bramwell, fifty years hence it will matter very little indeed how these people treated us; it will matter a great deal how we dealt with the work of God."

“

"Authentic Christian living has its own order of priority in our lives: God first, others second, self third".

----- Billy Graham

”

TRIBUTE

Life Is Not Measured By The Years We Lived.

 By Tom Johns, USA

“*Contented Christians are people with priorities, and material things are not high on their priority lists.*”

---Warren W. Wiersbee ”

My older brother John Kurien [Joychayan] died in 1956. He was the middle child of T. K. John & Rachel John. Our family, known to be of Thaiparampil, lived in Narakathany and attended the Brethren assembly at Ezhumattor. He was only 7 years old and died of a heart disease that was not properly diagnosed or treated even though he was taken to Madurai General Hospital, one of the best hospitals available. Yet he died in a few days and only our mother and her nephew Bro M E Cherian [MEC] and a few other brethren were there for the funeral. No other family members were present due to communication delays and travel difficulties of those days. His grave remains unmarked in the Madurai assembly cemetery and his body is waiting for the sound of the trumpet.

I was just five years old, and my brother John Mathew [Valiachachen] was ten when Joychayan passed away. A few months later our parents gave to MEC a small amount to start something special in the memory of Joychayan. This gift served as the seed money for the very first SBS camp at Kallissery. We are amazed to see how God had blessed this ministry and how it still influences the lives of many people.

My brother currently lives in Thrissur and I live in the USA. I often wondered why Joychayan was called home at a tender age, although I know it was for the greater good. He was saved at a very early age and was used to reciting a few Psalms in whole and several other scripture verses, even to the amazement of our neighbours. While lying in my mother's arms he called out, 'my Lord and my God' as he took his last breath in a laboured yet distinct voice. I am recording some of my memories as a tribute at the dedication service of the SBS campsite at Punthencavue on December 8, 2012.

I am sharing this story now to refresh our minds to stay focused on God's eternal promises when we go through fears, anxieties & uncertainties. You have been in heaven over a half century I think of you often, my dear brother. You were all of seven and I was just five Valiachachen was ten, when you bade us goodbye.

To Joychayan ----

*You were my pal, my dearest friend
Took me around, to the shops and the market
We ran to places to see goats and the cows
You showed me the snakeskin lying in the yard.*

*You showed me love when I was in trouble
You really grieved when I got punished
Only vaguely can I remember your face
Though do I recall well, my protector and guide!*

*Your testimony, your call, "My Lord and my God!"
Your last words were words of faith and longing
From Ammachy's arms your spirit soared high
Away into the arms of our loving Lord.*

*Ammachy wept for you ever so long!
Her step with a gift has kept your memory alive
She gave MEC a tiny mustard seed
He planted it at Kallissery and many have watered it.*

*God is making it grow to become a big tree
Many souls are finding rest under its shade.
For the ones who find Jesus through these camp
ventures
You dear brother, we here, and our parents can be
glad.
Of those who have passed on I think of you most
I still do miss you and sometimes shed a tear
For we parted without the chance of a good-bye
My pal, and my brother, my guide and my friend!*

*I wonder how heaven is! And how Christ appears!
I think of God's mercies that made us His own
His Gift of His Son Whom He loved above all
The cause of our hope and of my seeing you!*

*As so often said, by many with wisdom,
"Our lives are not just measured in years;
They are measured in the lives we touch."
You lived your life to the fullest and you still live.
By- Tom J.*

OUTLINE:

Leader's Priorities, Exodus 18: 19 - 21

- Stand before God, V. 19
- Teach the law V. 20
- Appoint able men, v. 21, 22

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