

GODLY PRIORITIES

“For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and **choose the things that please me**, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”
Isaiah 56:4-5

Introduction:

1. Life is a series of frequent choices prioritizing duties and pleasures within the limits of scarce resources.
 - a. What is scarce in your life? In order of importance – time, affection, energy, knowledge, and money.
 - b. Linear programming is a mathematical system for allocating scarce resources for optimal profits.
 - c. Every one wants to be a manager (until they grow up), and here is ultimate management – your life!
 - d. The Bible and its great men press us to make choices for the Lord (Joshua 24:15; I Kings 18:21).
 - e. As we learned clearly at the corn maze with the youth, even one poor choice can cost you dearly!
 - f. Consider the Lord’s promises of blessings upon eunuchs that would make wise choices (Is 56:4-5).
 - g. If you set ignorant or rebellious priorities, you and those trusting you will bear the burden (Gal 6:5).
2. The world promotes its priorities via the media and peers; God has communicated His via the Scriptures.
3. Scripture depicts the perfect man, so as we leave His priorities, we become more and more deformed.
4. America has created the “American way,” which has its own set of highly idealized but sinful priorities.
5. There are three obvious sources for our false priorities, and we are at war against these sources always.
 - a. Our heart generates thoughts and ways far different from those of God (Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19; Is 55:8-9).
 - b. The world creates peer pressure to make you ashamed of godly priorities (I Pet 4:1-5; I John 2:15-17).
 - c. Satan will try to entice you constantly through lust and pride (Luke 4:1-13; Ep 6:10-13; Rom 12:1-2).
6. Consider a few examples to get your mind focused on God’s priorities for your life in the Bible.
 - a. The love of God is the most important priority – the first commandment in priority and importance; and Moses and our Lord stressed this commandment as the first and most important.
 - b. The love of neighbor is the next most important priority – the second commandment in priority; and it is repeated in all the duties of how we are to treat our fellow man.
 - c. Judah building their houses before the Lord’s house was a terrible and evil priority (Haggai 1:1-11).
7. This study is not exhaustive, but there will be enough to help you reorder your life to please God.
8. By learning and considering God’s priorities, we may identify a Godly philosophy or plan for life.

Priorities from the Bible:

- A. God’s kingdom and righteousness must be sought first before material things of life (Matt 6:33).
 1. We have several sources of temptation that make this priority a difficult one to keep.
 - a. Our lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life drive us to work and worry.
 - b. Our generation is a materialistic society that promotes things over most everything else.
 - c. Our knowledge that hard work is good gives a deceptive excuse for workaholism.
 2. The Scriptures repeatedly warn against our confusion on this choice in our lives.
 - a. Those setting riches as a goal open themselves up to many temptations (I Tim 6:6-10).
 - b. Solomon often warned his son about this priority (Prov 15:16; 16:8; 22:1; 28:6; Eccl 4:6).
 - c. David warned of the same comparison and declared that wealth was not a priority.
 - d. Consider just a few of the aspects of the folly of seeking after financial wealth in life.
 - (1) There is always the worry about who will get the wealth after you (Eccl 2:18).
 - (2) There is never full satisfaction from obtaining any degree of wealth (Eccl 5:10).
 - (3) There is an increase in costs with an increase in wealth that consumes it (Eccl 5:11).
 - (4) There is fear and anxiety associated with the possession of wealth (Eccl 5:12).
- B. Godliness with contentment is great gain; gain cannot bring contentment or godliness (I Tim 6:6).
 1. But America teaches that more is better, so success is measured by possessions (Luke 12:15).
 2. They teach that prosperity is God’s visible approval, by saying, “You must be living right!”

3. They ridicule true Biblical godliness as extreme and strange and indicative of a loser in life.
 4. They ridicule contentment as a loser's mentality of accepting mediocrity as sufficiently okay.
 5. Contentment with what you already have is better than dreaming of more (Ecclesiastes 6:9).
 6. It saves you from frustration, covetousness, and considering unlawful means to obtain things.
- C. Purity and righteousness must come first before seeking peace in any relationship (James 3:17).
1. Many Christians will compromise most anything in order to keep peace, but this is wrong.
 2. Baptists compromising the mode of baptism to keep the peace is one terrible example of it.
 3. David apparently compromised with Adonijah to avoid confrontation with him (I Kings 1:6).
 4. God calls us to come out and be separate from fellowship with evil (II Corinthians 6:14-17).
- D. Exercising for godliness is considerably better than bodily exercise profiting little (I Tim 4:7-8).
1. We live in a generation obsessed with appearance, health, sports, pleasure, and competition.
 2. Bodily exercise has little evidence of health now and will not maintain health for very long.
 3. Exercise unto godliness has profit both now and later – practical and final results.
- E. Wisdom is more important than other things as an object of our pursuit (Proverbs 4:7).
1. Solomon was greatly blessed when he asked for wisdom rather than wealth (I Kings 3:5-15).
 2. Solomon rhetorically asks us to compare wisdom with silver and gold (Proverbs 16:16).
 3. Wisdom and understanding are more important than money (Proverbs 3:13-18; 8:10,11,19).
- F. Giving of thanks is rather to be chosen than jesting or foolish talking like the world (Eph 5:4).
- G. Self-denial and sacrifice is better than comfortable and pleasant sin (Matt 18:7-9; Titus 2:11-12).
- H. It is better to receive instruction than to stubbornly resist knowledge from teachers (Eccl 4:13).
- I. The obedience of doing what God said is better than any sacrifice to make it up to Him.
1. King Saul tried to justify his disobedience by appealing to a noble intent (I Samuel 15:22).
 2. Solomon, Isaiah, Hosea and Jesus warned (Pr 21:3; Is 1:10-17; 58:3-7; Hos 6:6; Mat 23:23).
- J. It is better to hear instruction than to make hasty promises you cannot keep (Ecclesiastes 5:1-7).
- K. It is better to sing and praise God from the heart than to offer formal sacrifices (Psalm 69:30-32).
- L. A day in God's house no matter the status is better than many days anywhere else (Psalm 84:10).
- M. It is better to put your trust in the Lord than to put trust in either man or princes (Psalm 118:8-9).
- N. The word of God is better than much gold, silver, or even food (Psalm 19:10; 119:72; Job 23:12).
- O. It is better to be slow to anger and rule your spirit than to be a mighty man (Proverbs 16:32), though America defends losing your temper and blowing off as a manly show of strength.
- P. It is better to suffer than to avenge yourself (Proverbs 19:11; Rom 12:19-21; I Cor 6:7; 13:4-7).
- Q. Charity is better than faith, hope, and other spiritual graces (I Cor 12:31; 13:13; I Peter 4:8).
- R. Criticism of your own faults should always come before criticizing others (Matthew 7:1-5).

- S. The house of mourning i.e. a funeral is better than the house of feasting (Ecclesiastes 7:1-6).
- T. Heaven and the presence of Christ are far better than staying on earth (II Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23).
- U. A little with righteousness of one is better than the riches of many wicked (Psalm 37:16).
- V. Poverty with fear of the LORD is better than treasures and trouble (Prov 15:16; 16:8; 19:1,22; 28:6; Ecc 4:6), yet men of the world call stress for getting treasures a good work ethic.
- W. Turnip greens or crackers with love are better than filet mignon with hatred (Prov 15:17; 17:1).
- X. Humility with the lowly is better than having profits with the proud (Prov 16:19), yet the good life (lifestyles of the rich and famous) of America is the opposite.
- Y. A good name, or reputation, is better than money and precious ointment (Proverbs 22:1; Ecc 7:1).
- Z. Mercy is more important than sacrifice according to Jesus (How 6:6; Matt 12:7; 23:23), yet slavish zeal for traditional institutions and ceremonial customs is more important to many.
- AA. The fear of the LORD should be a treasure and priority (Is 33:6; Pr 19:23), yet character to an American is worth little compared to pleasure and position.
- BB. Moderation is superior to wealth (Prov 30:7-9; Luke 12:15; Phil 4:11-13), yet Americans believe that the richer of two people clearly has the better life.
- CC. The woman was created to be a wife rather than a mother (Genesis 2:18; I Corinthians 11:9).
- DD. Two are better than one in spite of modern hype about being single and loners (Eccl 4:9-12).
- EE. Being single and desolate is better than having an odious wife (Proverbs 12:4; 21:9,19; 25:24).
- FF. A woman that fears the LORD is of far greater value than beauty or favor (Proverbs 31:30).
- GG. Teaching children the fear of the LORD is the priority (Eph 6:4; Deut 6:4-9), yet America worships a pagan education model as the panacea for all problems.
- HH. Honoring parents is the first commandment with promise (Eph 6:2), yet America teaches that children are far more important than parents or really anything else.
- II. Considering and appreciating things above (spiritual and permanent) is more important than the things of earth (carnal and temporary) as in Colossians 3:1-3.
- JJ. The day of death is better than the day of birth (Eccl 7:1); the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting (Eccl 7:2); and sorrow is better than laughter (Eccl 7:3). But America promotes birthdays, sitcoms, parties, and entertainment.
- KK. The rebuke of the wise is better than the entertainment of fools, which defies this world (Ec 7:5).

- LL. A carnal priority in life should be soul enjoyment of your labor (Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:22; 8:15).
- MM. Being praised by others is certainly better than praising or exalting yourself (Prov 25:6-7).
- NN. Open rebuke for your profit is better than secret or unproven love without it (Proverbs 27:5).
- OO. Good neighbors and friends kept honored are better than brothers far away (Proverbs 27:10).
- PP. Poverty and wisdom are better than position and foolishness, despite this world (Eccl 4:13).
- QQ. The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit, though the proud are often praised (Ecc 7:8).
- RR. The end of a thing is better than the beginning, for finishing is harder than starting (Eccl 7:8).
- SS. Living with hope is better than the dead expectations of the defeated (Eccl 9:4).
- TT. Wisdom is better than strength, for it is profitable to direct (Ecclesiastes 9:13-18; 10:10).
- UU. Diligence and real property are more important than public opinion (Prov 12:9).
- VV. The order is to establish your career and/or income before building your house (Prov 24:27).

Conclusion:

1. Established priorities make many of life's decisions simple, but confusion breeds confusion.
2. Consider your ways; make sure your priorities are the same as the LORD's priorities (Haggai 1:5).

For further study:

1. The Bible study, "[Life Is Like a Maze](#)," which uses a corn maze to illustrate and explain Psalm 119:105.
2. Use the "[Proverbs](#)" of our website to read a detailed and practical commentary on any of the proverbs above.