

Calvary Chapel O'Hare
Men's
Servant Leadership Study

Week 7

PRIORITIES

Meory Verse for the Week: [Phl 3:12](#)

“I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be”

Day 1 - Priorities

Reading - Luke 12:16-21

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Discussion - Every leader lives under the influence of the Law of Limited Resources. Time, in particular, is one of those precious commodities. The time invested in any project is taken away from some other place in life. The energy invested in one job won't be there for another one. No leader will ever lack for things to occupy his or her time and energy. Because that's the case, every leader must answer an important question: “Where should I invest my time and energy?” Or to put it differently, “What should be my priorities?”

Jesus told the story of a man whose main priority was himself and his possessions. In telling this story Jesus not only warned against the danger of greed, but also pointed out the futility of priorities that are not in line with God's will.

The man in the parable had clear priorities. First, he wanted to accumulate wealth. Second, he wanted to use his wealth to secure his own future. Now, any retirement investment consultant will tell you that saving for the future is a good – even necessary – pursuit. But the rich fool, as he is called in this parable, started with the wrong motives and unfortunately failed to achieve either priority. He died before he could either expand his business or enjoy retirement. Jesus applied this parable to anybody whose priorities reveal a heart absorbed with self instead of God.

Ultimately, our purpose for living should be to bring recognition (honor and glory) to God rather than to bring pleasure to ourselves (see 1 Corinthians 10:31). With that purpose in mind we can set our priorities by discovering what will bring the greatest recognition to God. If we do that, unlike the fool in the parable, we'll be rich in God's eyes.

1. What are you top five priorities? _____

2. Are you struggling with selfish ambition and greed? _____

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3. How has that struggle affected your priorities? _____

4. How do you need to reshuffle your priorities so you can overcome these two destructive attitudes (greed and self ambition)?

Day 2 - Priorities and Who God Is

As important as success, security and significance are, there is something far more meaningful than these. Philosophers and theologians call it the *summum bonum*, the “supreme good,” and they tell us that to miss this is to miss everything. Read Revelation 1:8 and the note below to study the biblical vision of the *summum bonum*.

Reading - Revelation 1:8

Discussion - Just as the Lord God calls Himself the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty, so Jesus at the end of Revelation says of Himself that He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the beginning and end (22:13). Nothing and no one preceded the Lord, and nothing will follow Him. He is the supreme Author of matter and energy, of space and time. The infinite and personal I AM is the ultimate reality, and everything else is derived from Him.

If the utmost reality is the timeless, unchanging Person, then the *summum bonum*, the supreme good of humanity, is to know and be known by this Person. Scripture reveals that the Son of God had made it possible for us to enter into a genuine relationship with the Father (Matthew 11:27).

This is why it is possible for someone to attain the wildest fantasies of humanity and still lose everything in the end. What’s the point in receiving everything you’ve ever wanted, at the cost of losing your own soul (Matthew 16:26)? Our ultimate priority is to give our souls in exchange for the One who created them.

Day 3 - Priorities and Who I Am

The good can become the enemy of the best. Effective leaders have the ability to discern not only the difference between the good and the bad, but also the difference between the good and the best. Since we cannot do everything well, we must carefully choose a few things on which we will concentrate. Read 1 John 2:15-17 to consider the competing claims of the world and of the Father.

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Reading – 1 John 2:15-17

Discussion - Our perspective should determine our priorities, and our priorities should determine our practice. A biblical perspective informs us that anything that keeps us away from the love of the Father is idolatrous, no matter how “good” it appears to be. In one sense, it is not strictly correct to say that a Christian’s priorities should be God first, family second, and career and ministry third. If Christ is our life (Colossians 3:3-4) He is our all, and He brooks no competition or even comparative ranking.

A Christ-centered life means that everything else must be seen in relation to Him (Colossians 3:1-3).

Like Martha (Luke 10:38-42), it is easy for us to become distracted by the anxieties and concerns of the world and to miss out on the one thing that is most needful (vv.41-42). The worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desire for other things have a way of choking the Word in us and making it unfruitful (Mark 4:19). Unless we are diligent and watchful, we will miss out on the best in our quest for the good.

1. Take a moment to consider each area of your life through the lens of the lordship of Christ. What are the implications of seeing through the lens of the lordship of Christ? _____

2. Why or what are the major reasons we fail to live our lives in a Christ – centered manner? _____

3. In the areas of our lives that we are not living Christ – centered, think of some practical ways we can remember to choose to look first to Him in our thoughts and actions. _____

Day 4 - Priorities and How I Think

Life gets confusing and conflicting. We have to decide what matters most or we become victims of the loudest or latest demands. Paul, whose focused life made him a literal world-changer, discovered the key to prioritized life and shared that key in Philippians 3:12-14.

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Reading - Philippians 3:12-14

Discussion - Paul accomplished an amazing amount in the approximately twenty years he functioned as a leader. The churches he planted and the letters he wrote have helped shape Western culture. Part of Paul's ability to accomplish so much is defined in Philippians 3:13.

The book of Acts and Paul's epistles reveal that he lived a real life in real circumstances with real options to choose from. He, like everyone else, had to decide what to do and what not to do. He obviously made wise choices. He pursued matters that mattered. When options conflicted he had the ability to choose well. But priorities have to begin with a "one thing" on which to focus. Without a defining, central priority, there can be no sensible priorities in leading or in life.

Life is too complex to live it by lists of priorities. Paul knew what one thing gave definition to his life, and all his priorities grew out of that central focus. Priorities help us say yes and no to things that matter and don't matter. Far more, having a consuming priority redefines how we say yes and how we live to make that yes a reality.

1. Why do we need to have a personal set of priorities? _____

2. During the last 7 weeks of our study, we have spent much time reviewing the words and life of Paul. Make a list of what you believe to be Paul's priorities in life.

Day 5 - Priorities and What I Do

How can you choose which task you should devote your time to? Peter F. Drucker gives us some practical guidelines aimed at helping us choose priorities. As we consider his advice we need to be sure to order our priorities according to the words of Jeremiah.

Reading - Jeremiah 9:23-24

Discussion - Leadership expert Peter F. Drucker observes that "there are always more productive tasks for tomorrow than there is time to do them and more opportunities than there are capable people to take care of them – not to mention the always abundant problems and crisis" (p.632).* Drucker urges leaders to determine which tasks deserve priority rather than allowing the pressures to make the decision (p.633). How can a leader make such choices? Drucker provides the following guidelines:

- Pick the future over the past.

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- Focus on opportunities rather than problems.
- Choose your own direction – rather than climbing on the bandwagon.
- Aim high, for something that will make a difference, rather than something that is safe and easy to do (p.635).

While choosing our priorities rather than allowing the pressures to choose them is important in the marketplace, it's also crucial in the spiritual arena. God has harsh words for the ancient religious, military and financial leaders who boasted about their wisdom, strength and wealth. Their arrogant words revealed that their priorities were out of order. Perhaps they had allowed the pressures of their world to dictate their focus.

God urged them to evaluate their lives and rearrange their priorities. They should have chosen to focus on knowing and understanding God and pleasing Him. A leader who applies Drucker's guidelines to both his or her spiritual and business life will discover he or she is choosing what's important rather than allowing the pressures of life to make the choices.

1. What are your priorities in your spiritual life? _____

3. What are your priorities in your family life? _____

4. What are your priorities in your business life? _____

Are there any areas of your life where your priorities are not Christ – centered. If so, take the time to go before your Father and ask Him to show you where and how you need to change your priorities to first increase the depth of your relationship with Christ and then increase your ability to be a servant leader.

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