

# First Things First: First in the Week

## Message Extras

We need to be intentional in our worship of God, and more than this, our worship of God must be the highest priority in our life... the most important thing. This challenge to make God and the worship of God of highest importance reminded me of a young man I once knew. To protect the identity of the innocent, let's call him Steve.

Steve was a newlywed and working at his first "real job." He was a follower of Jesus, did a good job of attending church every week, was in a small group, and even read his Bible a few times throughout the week. On the surface, Steve looked and acted like a good Christian. One day, Steve's employer sent him to a training class on time management. The trainer told the class, "Get out a piece of paper and list seven to ten of the most important things in your life in the order of importance." Steve wrote, God, my wife, my family, my home, my job, golf, and Ohio State Football. The trainer then said, "Now write the number of hours you invest in each of these important things each week." Steve was a smart young man, and he knew where the training was going with this, so he really thought about how much time he gives to God every week. He thought, "well, I go to church every Sunday, I pray every morning and every night, and I go to a small group every other week. O, and I read the bible at least 4 days a week." Steve added up the time and next to God he wrote, "About 3 hours." On Steve's list, God fell just below golf at 4 hours and Ohio State Football at 3.5 hours. Though Steve had listed God as most important, in terms of hours spent, God was number 7 on the list of 7. This realization hurt Steve deeply.

But the trainer wasn't done. He said, "Now, on a new sheet of paper, write the priorities in order based on the amount of time you invest in each with the most amount of time at the top and least amount of time at the bottom. Next to the top 3 write the words 'is a high priority in my life.' On the next 3 write, 'is a low priority in my life.' And on the rest, write, 'is not important to me.' Steve looked at his paper and tears filled his eyes when he read... "God is not important to me." Then the trainer said, "Anything that is not important to you, you need to do 1 of 2 things, either make it a priority by giving more time to it or stop wasting your time on it so you have more time for your true priorities." Steve decided then and there for the rest of his life, God would be his number one priority, in word and in deed, followed by his wife and family. Everything else he did in his life would take their proper place after these 3.

No matter who you are or where you come from, there is a law of nature all are constrained by. We all get 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You cannot change this. God established this rhythm of time when He spoke the world into motion. Where you spend your God-given time reveals who and what your priorities are.

If you desire to respond to the speaker's challenge this week and make worshiping God your highest priority, then you must obey the Scriptures and worship God in Spirit and Truth. And this will require an intentional investment of your time to worship God every day of the week. Some may argue, "Sure, but even if I spent an hour every morning in personal worship, 90 minutes at church, and an hour at small group, that would still only account for 10 hours of the week. There is no way I can get my time for God to match more than the 40 plus hours I spend at work."

This is a valid point, but as the wise philosopher, Yoda, once observed, "you must unlearn what you have learned." Our life in Christ is not meant to be broken down into compartments of time. To worship God in Spirit and Truth is to worship God with your entire being. When we worship God with our entire being, God teaches us how to apply His word in our lives so that our lives are marked by worship for God. Consider the following:

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (Romans 12:1)*

God desires that we would offer our bodies, our whole self to Him as living sacrifices, and when we do this, we are truly worshiping God. Approaching God in worship in this way positions us to do the following:

*...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)*

As an act of worship, when you choose to offer your whole self to God as a living sacrifice and do everything you do for the glory of God, you will experience a spiritual paradigm shift. Your entire life becomes a fragrant aroma of worship to the Lord. Work becomes an act of worship. Cleaning the house, yes even doing the dishes, becomes an act of worship. Husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church. Wives respect their husbands. Children obey and honor their parents. And Sundays become the day of the week we look forward to because we can't wait to gather with God's children, our brothers and sisters in Christ, to worship and give glory to our great God! All these things we are called to do in Christ, which are difficult in the flesh, become easy in and through the power of Christ in our lives when we intentionally commit ourselves to worship God.

All of this starts with, as the speaker shared – Priorities. When you make worshiping God your number one priority, everything else falls into place. And here's the really cool thing, God knows this. He wants your worship for two reasons. One, He is worthy, and two, He knows when you give Him your worship, then and only then will you experience the full life Jesus came to give you.

- If you went to the time management course Steve attended, would God be a high priority in your life, a low priority in your life, or not important?
- If God is not your number one priority in life – what changes do you need to make today to make Him your number one priority?

- When you consider God desires for you to offer your whole self as a living sacrifice, and that this is true and proper worship, what changes do you need to make today to worship God in Spirit and in Truth?
- When we live the full life Jesus gives, every part of life is marked by worship. Is every part of your life marked by worship for God? If not – where is the Holy Spirit prompting you today to honor God in worship?