

Attention!

Priorities...Important Things...

“Just as God Commands”

“So Noah did these things; according to everything that God had commanded him” Genesis 6:22

“So Moses did these things; according to all that the Lord had commanded him.” Exodus 40:16

“Just as the LORD had commanded Moses” is repeated many times in Exodus 39 & 40. Common sense should tell us that has importance!

November Birthdays

10 Daniel Brown

November Anniversaries

2 Shannon & Susan Hudson

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Priorities

By Mike Johnson

“We need to put first things first.” “You need to get your priorities straightened out.” These are common expressions in our society. We should keep priorities in mind as some matters are *more important* than others.

The Bible has a lot to say concerning priorities. God does expect people to put “first things first.” Therefore, we must realize what is truly important. **Matthew 6:33** says that we are to seek first the kingdom of God. Also, Paul admonished us to *“approve things that are excellent”* (Philippians 1:10). Consider some areas in which people have confused priorities.

Outward Appearance: The Bible speaks of certain ones who were “fair” or “beautiful.” For example, the “daughters of men” (Genesis 6:1-2), Sarah (Genesis 12:11), Rebekah (Genesis 24:16), and Vashti (Esther 1:11-12) were all described as “fair.” Likewise, as we further learn in the Old Testament, Esther was “fair and beautiful” (2:7).

Society places much emphasis on physical beauty. Think of all the products and services advertised, which are supposed to make people more attractive. Of course, we should be concerned about our bodies and our appearance. However, we must understand that attaining physical beauty is not our primary goal.

The main point of emphasis with the Christian should be the inner person, as Peter points out in **I Peter 3:3-4**. Here, as Peter addresses wives, he says their adorning should be “. . . *the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*” Physical beauty quickly fades; character, i.e., inner beauty, can last a lifetime. There is nothing wrong with physical beauty, but it should not be the primary goal. Instead, inner beauty (character and spiritual strength) is where our priorities should always be.

Health: We read of people in the Bible who had physical ailments. Job would be an example from the Old Testament of a person who suffered a great deal, at least for a while. **II Kings 20** tells us that King Hezekiah was sick unto death. In the New Testament, Paul had a *“thorn in the flesh”* (II Corinthians 12:7), and Timothy apparently had stomach problems (I Timothy 5:23). Paul spoke of Epaphroditus as having been sick *“almost unto death”* (Philippians 2:27). We also read of various diseases and physical problems of people who Christ healed.

Physical health is significant to people. An often-repeated statement is, “if you have your health, you have everything.” Much emphasis is on health today. Health food stores, vitamins, exercise equipment, and exercise shows are still popular. Most everyone wants to be physically healthy. However, physical health should not be a person’s primary goal.

The main emphasis with people should be spiritual health. We read of certain ones in the Bible who had spiritual ailments. The church at Laodicea thought they were in good spiritual health, but they were not, and Jesus told them they were spiritually blind (Revelation 3:17-18). Simon may have had good physical health, but Peter told him in **Acts 8:21**, “. . . *for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*” He was a man with spiritual heart trouble.

There is nothing wrong with trying to maintain or acquire good physical health. However, it is essential to understand that the main point of emphasis should be our spiritual health. A person may have good physical and spiritual health. However, if a person loses his physical health and continues to maintain his spiritual health, he is healthy in the most crucial way.

Wealth: We read of quite a few wealthy people in the Word of God. We learn that people such as Abraham, Job, and Joseph of Arimathea were rich. There is nothing wrong with money itself; we need a certain amount to function in our society. However, Paul charges the rich in **I Timothy 6** to not be high-minded or trust in uncertain riches and use their wealth to accomplish good (vs. 17,18). There may be some advantages to material wealth, but obtaining it is not the *primary* purpose in the life of a Christian. The primary kind of wealth for us should be spiritual wealth. Jesus said to the church at Smyrna, in **Revelation 2:9**, *“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) . . .”* Smyrna, known as the suffering church, may have been materially poor, but

they were spiritually rich. On the other hand, Laodicea, which was physically wealthy, was described as spiritually “wretched,” “miserable,” “poor,” and “naked” (Revelation 3:17). Smyrna had the most crucial wealth of all— spiritual wealth, and their wealth was enduring (note Matthew 6:19-21). Smyrna is sometimes called the “poor-rich church,” while Laodicea is referred to as the “rich-poor church.”

Preaching: There are many polished, educated, and eloquent orators of God’s Word today, which was also the case in Bible times. Apollos, in the New Testament, fits into the category of an eloquent orator. He is described in **Acts 18:24** as *“eloquent and mighty in the scriptures.”* He was from Alexandria, which was a center of Hebrew learning. He was a very effective teacher and is cited for the work he did at Corinth.

Preachers do need to present their material clearly. They need to try and improve their grammar, pronunciation, and general presentation. Eloquence is important, but it should not be a preacher’s primary objective. Instead, the main criterion for a preacher is to be *“set for the defense of the gospel”* (Philippians 1:17). He must have conviction and always be willing to stand for the truth. Eloquence means nothing without a desire to stand for God’s Word.

Paul said in **I Corinthians 2:1** that he came not to the Corinthians with “excellency of speech” or “wisdom.” He said, *“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified”* (v. 2). Paul was not against the excellency of speech or human wisdom. Instead, he emphasizes the importance of God’s message.

It is helpful for a preacher to have a good education and be a strong, polished, and eloquent speaker. However, that is not the primary goal. The main goal is to preach the truth and be willing to stand for it. What is our attitude toward preaching? Do we place “polish” over substance? We need to make sure we have our priorities straight regarding preaching.

Conclusion: It is essential to put first things first. We need to keep our priorities in order. Therefore, it is vital to understand what the crucial goals in life are.