

## ***Where Are My Priorities?***

It was a 99° September day in San Antonio, when a 10-month-old baby girl was accidentally locked inside a parked car by her aunt. Frantically the mother and the aunt ran around the auto in near hysteria, while a neighbor attempted to unlock the car with a clothes hanger. Soon the infant was turning purple and had foam on her mouth.

It had become a life-or-death situation when Fred Arriola, a wrecker driver, arrived on the scene. He grabbed a hammer and smashed the back window of the car to set her free. Was he heralded a hero? The lady was mad at me because I broke the window, Arriola reported. "I just thought, what's more important - the baby or the window?"

This story illustrates one who failed miserably to distinguish between what was truly important and something that was relatively immaterial. As Christians, we must make sure that our priorities are in the right order as well. Do we put the Lord first at all times? Many place Him first some of the time, but not all of the time. If we fail to have our spiritual priorities right, the results will be disastrous; we will lose our souls.

Notice a few of the passages in the Bible that teach us about our priorities.

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

"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" (Matthew 10:37).

"Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59-62).

"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs" (John 21:15).

Do we really put the Lord first in our lives? Is He our number one priority? If He is, there will be certain things obvious about the way we live.

**Attendance.** We will be present at all of the assemblies (Heb. 10:25). Sunday night worship and Wednesday night Bible study are very important to those who really love the Lord. When it is time to assemble, those who value their relationship with God are always going to be there.

**Studying.** If our priorities are right, we will spend several hours each week meditating upon the word of God (Ps. 1:2). It is not hard to see what we value. Do you spend more in studying the Bible or watching TV? Do you read the paper from cover to cover each day, yet fail to spend an adequate amount of time reading the Scriptures? Answer these questions truthfully and you will see what is really important to you.

**Giving.** I have heard brethren say that we need to give until it hurts. The Bible teaches no such thing. It does tell us to give as we have prospered, not grudgingly nor of necessity but cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:6-7). If under the Old Law the Jews gave 10%, should we not at least give back to the Lord as much as they gave? If our priorities are right, giving as we have prospered will be no problem.

**Visiting.** All of us are busy each day. We get up each morning and head out to our jobs, returning in the evening tired from working all day. It is so easy to just relax and never call nor visit someone who is sick in the hospital or the weak Christian who has been missing services. Those who are devoted to the cause of Christ will exert the energy and find the time to make that call or visit (Mat. 25:31-46).

Where have you placed your priorities? If you have put the Lord first, notice the promise that He has made. "So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time-houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions-and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30).

**- by Jim Mickells**

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## ***Which Way Are You Headed?***

Most of us have seen the little ditty below, which was originally found, we are told, as an epitaph on a tombstone:

Remember, friend, as you pass by,  
As you are now, so once was I.  
As I am now so you shall be.  
Prepare for death, and follow me.

Pretty good, huh? Not too long ago I read it again but with a different twist. A passerby had scratched out this extra note and added it below the verse:

My friend, I've read what you did write,  
But, I feel I need a little light;  
To follow you I'll not consent,  
UNTIL I KNOW WHICH WAY YOU WENT!

**- by Robert Hines**

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## ***"I'm At Peace With My God"***

It is not uncommon -- while trying to rebuke or admonish someone concerning their spiritual condition -- to have them reply with this statement: "I'm at peace with my God." For instance, we got this reply from a fella who left the Lord's church and joined a denomination. In another case a Christian, after admitting his homosexual lifestyle, used the same defense. Apparently these folks think that this feeling of "peace" is the absolute standard by which their conduct should be judged. They could not be more wrong!

In ancient Judah, the prophet Jeremiah bemoaned the unfaithfulness of God's people. One of the great problems was that they were oblivious to their lost condition. This was largely due to the fact that "from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jer. 6:13,14) Do you see it? They believed they were at peace with God. Their religious leaders even told them that there was peace with God. But in reality, there was no peace.

People today, like those in Jeremiah's day, are deceived into thinking that they are at peace with God even as they continue in their rebellion against Him. False teachers contribute to the problem with "good words and fair speeches that deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:18)

The only true basis for peace with God is in humble obedience to His will. The apostle Paul urged: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." (Philippians 4:9) Faith and obedience produce true peace. Anything other than that is simply the deception of subjective feelings. Think!

**- by Greg Gwin**