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Priorities in LIFE



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Matthew 6.33

PRIORITIES in life



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Let me start by telling you that the Scripture is absolutely clear about what comes first, and we find that in the Scripture, in the Gospel of Mathew Chapter 6 verse 33. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, “Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness and everything else will be added to you”.

Everything else will be added to you! When? When you seek first the Kingdom of God; but that is not what people do unfortunately. And sometimes we don't do it either, which is a mistake.

We are going to study today why it is so important to seek God's kingdom first. Well, the first thing we know is that life is complex. It's very complex and you know is not getting any easier, it is the opposite, it is going to be more and more difficult. Have you noticed how the changes in technology are forcing us to learn more and more things, in every field? Life is becoming more and more complex. There are so many things to take care of. Family, bills, health, church, our devotion, our school, friends who sometimes say to us, “I haven't heard from you in forever!” And we say, “yeah, you're right!”, they say “So... what is happening with you? You don't love me anymore?”, we say, “no, it's not that. It's just, that it's been so busy, it's crazy!”, That is the way we say it, right?, “Oh, it's just crazy. It is crazy, way too much.” The reason is that we live a complex life.

Sometimes we feel like the someone who says “I'm going to take care of these things, and we are even using our devices trying to find where things are. And we say, okay, I got it, and I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that.” But it's just a matter of seconds, and then we say, “Well, what is it that I was doing? And what about this? What about that?”, because suddenly more ideas are coming to our minds telling us there are more things to do. Sometimes we are in the middle of work and then somehow this idea of contacting somebody in the family, that we had promised to call back, pops up, and we are say, “Oh no!”

That is a problem that we have. Our lives are too busy. That sometimes gets a little bit stressful. That's the word. There is a huge possibility that we will become irrational and unhappy people, when we are so stressed out. What is the meaning of being irrational? That we are not going to be reasonable. It's just irrational reactions. Let me tell you that one of the reasons why we are getting so crazy, it is because we have not learned how to prioritize. We do things according to how we feel. I feel like I'm going to do this today. I feel like in the next hour I want to do that and we just go by the motions, but we are not prioritizing properly. And as a result of that, we do crazy things like overreacting. Even in a doctor's office when he is trying to help us and we overreact, he would say, "Take it easy. Take it easy. Here, take a glass of water."

It's not his problem that we are hurting. Do you agree? And you know what? Sometimes is not the doctor, but it could be a son, a daughter, a friend, a coworker, somebody in the store. But we just flip up. We just overreact. And why is that? Why is it that we are overreacting and going out of control? Some people say, "that's a female thing". No, it's not a female thing. It happens to men and women. They say "She is too old. He's too old. He's a grouchy old man". No, it has nothing to do with age or gender. It's just the fact that we feel overwhelmed with all the things that we got to do. That's why we need to go to the Scriptures. What is the Scripture is telling us? "Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness and everything else will be added to you".

I want to tell you that in life we need to have priorities. When you put God's kingdom first, you will see wonderful things in your life.

The first thing that you are going to gain or obtain when you seek God's kingdom first is that you will have emotional health. The second thing that you will have is mental health. You will be more understanding, and you will make better decisions.

The third thing that you will have is good physical health, because you will start making rational decisions that will help you to feel better, to take care so much better of your health. And finally, you will have a good financial health, which makes everyone happy! right? When you don't have the money and you have all those bills piled up there, you are freaking out. That's the reality. And many people are crazy out there precisely because their finances are a disaster and because of that their physical health is a disaster! What else?

Their mental health as a disaster too. They don't make rational and good decisions. So emotionally speaking, they are up and down, up and down! It's just crazy and all that is because there are no good priorities in our lives. People are not making the right choices.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

I want to share with you today wonderful things. How you can get all these four things when you seek first God, seeking the Kingdom of God first. So let's start with the first one. How is it, that you can have a better emotional health if you seek God's kingdom first? What are the most obvious emotions that we have? Fear and anger!! That's why you see so many people freaking out all over the place because they are afraid, they can't go to sleep because they are frightened thinking, what am I going to do tomorrow? "I have to do this. I have to pay that. I need to take care of somebody, etcetera". And all this agony is a huge disorder. An emotional disorder.

I want you to read with me this verse, in first John chapter 4 and verse 18. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear". Someone says "That is great, but I don't get it. What is that supposed to mean?" Well, I understand it's confusing. Here is one explanation to this verse and I want you to grasp it and apply it into your life: God is love, correct? Yes. If God is love and you are seeking His kingdom first, what is the first thing that you should receive from God? Exactly LOVE. And when you have that perfect love in your heart, what will happen with fear? It goes away! So how do you do this in a practical way? Every time you're in your home, and you start to feel a little bit frightened. You are in your car, and you are frightened. You are doing your job, and then you are frightened. All that you have to do is just to pray and say, "Dear Lord, I know that you are LOVE and your perfect love casts away fear. Make me feel that you love me Lord" - Let's do an exercise here right now. Stop what you're doing. I want you to do this. Please. Lift up your hands and now say "Dear God, make me feel loved by you right now." Breathe in. Say it again "Dear God, make me feel loved by you Lord!!" Close your eyes, and say it again. Breathe in and out...Now you feel the love of the Lord. You feel His presence. You feel how much He loves you! But maybe you say, "I didn't feel anything". Okay, let's do it again. And you do it

two, three times, five times, and you say “Still, I don't feel anything”. Just keep saying it! Keep praying. Eventually, you will start to receive that. You will get used to feel His love. That's why it is so important worshiping the Lord. A principle: in order to receive we must first? Give! Because the principle says “if we give, we will receive”. Let's imagine this: we are singing to God. We are worshiping God. There are two individuals. One is kind of cold, not committed to God, so how much is this person giving to God in that moment? Not much.

Now let's compare the second individual. This person is singing even with zero abilities to sing, but this person is doing it from his heart. He sings “What a beautiful name it is. The name of Jesus!”. Is this person giving or not?

You sing “I love you Lord”. Maybe you don't sing well, but you can speak. You can say, “God, I love you”. When we give to the Lord He's going to give you back. In church, is the place where you should feel the love of God right away. Why? Because church belongs to Him. He dwells in church. His Holy Spirit is moving in church and through this reading He is touching you, every time when we talk about God, He moves.

But if you don't want to open your heart, if you don't want to give to Him anything, it's hard that you will receive. And it is not because He does not want to, but because remember that on the cross, He gave His life for you. So you cannot say “He doesn't love me”. No, no, no. If you are thinking, “I have never received the love of God”, I want you to know that you are absolutely wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, and wrong. You get it? Wrong! Equivocado!

Because on the cross He paid the price for your salvation, to redeem you from your sins to set you free. He loves you. He loves you so much. That He gave His life for you. Open your heart and receive His love!

Now that we've discussed this, we understand that if we feel frightened and we say the prayer, “Lord, please make me feel loved”, as soon as you start receiving that love from God, all the fear is going to go away. Practice it; master it to the point that you will never feel frightened. Never again in your life! It doesn't matter if it's in the middle of the night and is dark, and there is no electricity and you start hearing noises. You are by yourself in

your house. It doesn't matter. You will say, "Lord, make me feel loved. You are my God". You know the Lord loves you. He wants the best for you, and He loves you.

So you say "You love me", and you breathe in and out, which is a great thing to do to put oxygen in your brain the same way that you stand up. You stand straight up and say "Lord, make me feel loved". That is a powerful thing my friend. The fear is going to go away.

What is the other emotion that we live? It is Anger. "Well, not me Gian, I never get upset. I'm such a cool kind of person, you'll never see me angry". Okay, good, we'll talk about it in one week. You say you never get upset? Wait and then we will talk later. We all experience that, we all have our moments, everyone. Sometimes we have those moments because of medical or biological reasons. But what is the key in being able to stop being angry? What is the key? To learn three things: 1- Do not judge anyone. 2- Do not condemn anyone. 3- Forgive everyone.

Why do you get upset in the store, for example? I'll tell you why you get upset in the store. Because that person is not talking to you the way that you want him or her to do it. You are thinking "if I were him, if I were her, I would be speaking to this client in a very nice way, not like you are talking to me". What are we doing there? We are judging that individual! That is not right. The truth of the matter is that we are judging that person.

We are driving, we are in our cars and how beautiful it is to see those individuals driving their cars in front of you... You are about to park, you have your hazards. You waited two minutes until the spot was free, and when you are just getting ready to park, someone comes and boom! They take your parking spot. Correct? Yes... that happens, it is life! And we get angry, maybe out of control. How many people get angry and out of control. How many people get into huge fights and even shootings for things like that! What is it that we do? We judge people even the way that they are driving. But if we judge them and we don't condemn them you would say, "I forgive you buddy. I'm going to go park somewhere else". You continue driving. And you find another parking spot.

Now, you are in the highway and someone is try to pass you and is driving very badly, what we need to do is let this person pass. You will let him go, and go away.

You just forgive. Do not judge. Let him go. When you apply these two principles in your life that I just to share with you, you will see you will be a much calmer individual. You will have a better and much more relaxed emotional life.

MENTAL HEALTH

Let's go to the next point, which is the mental health. How is it possible that when we are seeking God's kingdom first, we have a good mental health? Well it is because after our emotions are under control. We will be able to make better decisions and the most important decision that you need to make in your life is to rely on the Lord, but that is not what people do. People are always trusting in themselves. They say "I got this! I know how to do this. I'm going to do this, I'm going to take care of this". Don't think that way!

Yes, certainly. You are the one who has to have the strength to do the job, doing whatever it is what you need to do. Somebody has to go grocery shopping, somebody has to wash the car, and somebody has to clean the house. Somebody has to do the job with the equipment. Somebody has to do the job! We do the job, but we put our trust in the Lord. Let's read all together please. This beautiful Scripture, this is amazing! Jeremiah 39.18 "Four I will surely save you and you shall not fall by sword, but you should all have your life as a price of war because you have put your trust in me. Declares the Lord." What a promise here, victory after victory after victory after victory. Things that you can't imagine the Lord will do for you when you put your trust in... yourself? Is that what the Scripture says? No. Unfortunately many people say "I'm very smart. Do you know how many years of experience do I have in this business? Do you know that I have degrees? Do you know how knowledgeable I am about this thing or do you know that I have contacts?". Don't put your trust on any of those things, trust only in the Lord. Put your full trust in the Lord. Even if it's something as simple as making scrambled eggs. Sure you are scrambling the eggs but you are not trusting in yourself. You trust in the Lord and you are grateful. Just say "Thank you father for my breakfast", you do it trusting in the Lord. What if you try this...before you put the eggs in there, try this: sauté some onions, leave them for 30 seconds. Sauté some garlic and then put in some tomatoes, then some spinach, then add the scrambled eggs. Get your toast. It's a healthy breakfast. Easy to do! This is just an example. Try to enjoy life, enjoy life whatever it is what you do, just enjoy life! Putting your trust in the Lord.

There are four things that you will do, if you are trusting in the Lord. When you are trusting in the Lord, when you rely on the Lord.

The first thing you will have to do is to organize your things. You have everything organized, everything must have a place. Tools should be where the tools go, in the closet? No! The keys? where the keys should be. Some people go crazy looking for them, where is the key of the house? Where are the passwords for the websites? Just looking for them is wasting time.

Do you see the issue? Organization! If you don't have your things organized in your life you will be miserable because you will not find anything, and it has nothing to do with the fact that God loves you and wants to bless you. But if you are not smart enough to organize your things, don't you think that God doesn't love you. You have to organize your things! It's your responsibility.

The second thing you will have to do is to have a good schedule. You have to have a schedule and a plan! When are you going to do what? Put it in the calendar. One thing that I suggest is for you to become someone accountable. Talk to one of your friends or mentors, relatives, whoever you want. Just be accountable. Tell people where you're going. Make sure that somebody knows what you are doing at all times. Becoming accountable means you are humble. You are not the king of yourself. You are not the queen of yourself.

Just choose a person that you can be accountable to. There is nothing wrong with telling others if you are you going out of town. When are you coming back ? Where are you eating today? With whom you are meeting? There's nothing wrong with that. Of course you're not going to put it everything on Facebook. Right? By the way, you know that some people just love to bring attention to themselves and they are posting breakfast, lunch, dinner, what they are eating, this is me now, and in between my lunch and breakfast... Wow! You know I'm not talking about that! I'm talking about a personal relationship between you and somebody. You are accountable to that person.

Last week I had a couple of huge things and I needed to make a decision. I texted my mentors and I said, "can I talk with you?". They gave me an appointment and I made the phone calls. I do that. So here is me making the phone calls, "How are you?", and then af-

ter the greeting and “how is everything going”, I said “I have a question. This is my situation...”, I shared the problem and then I said, “What do you think?”, and they told me the answer. Do you know what is interesting? In both occasions, both of my mentors told me exactly the same thing, exactly the opposite of what I wanted to do and I hated it, I was mad. I thought “why?”. One of my mentors is Billy Billy, he has been my mentor for many years, and I said, Billy Billy, “but what about this and that?”. I tried to argue with him and he convinced me. He said, “no Gian because of this and because of that”. I said “you're right.”

The second person is Pastor Ted, and I called him and said “How are you doing pastor?”, he said “Good here! What's going on with you?”, I said “this is the situation... I think maybe I should do this.”, He said, “No, what you need to do is this.”, I said “Okay. Thank you Pastor!”

You become reasonable because you are speaking with someone that has a larger vision than yourself, is more experienced than yourself, loves you, cares for you and can see things from the outside.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

The next thing is physical health. How is it, that when you seek God's kingdom first, you have a better physical life? Well, first of all it is because you have the knowledge that the Holy Spirit dwells in you. The Lord lives in you! First Corinthians 6.19 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?”. Our bodies are not ours. Someone says “What? I thought that this was my body!”. Know that our bodies belong to the Lord. He dwells in us and He wants the best for us. So when you understand that, the first thing that you should do with your body is to try your best to have enough hours of sleep. Someone says “You know that I can survive with four hours of sleep...”. You actually will survive, but you will not have good physical health. What about six hours to it? That's fine, but you are not going to perform as well as if you'd slept at least eight hours a day. You need to go to bed earlier! What is the problem we have in these days? We are so tempted to watch another show on TV or to continue being on Facebook, or to continue doing whatever we want to do on the phone even if it is

11:00pm, 12:00pm or 1:00am or 2:00am. And here we are wasting time because we are not studying, or working, we are not reflecting on God's word either.

Now, let's face it. You are just trying to entertain yourself!! But if you force yourself to go to sleep, you will do it. I read something very interesting about wanting to sleep. It says to turn off the lights and then to start blinking, and blink, blink, blink, blink, blink until you fall sleep. It says that this exercise helps you to go to sleep faster.

I'm so exhausted every night, I go to bed and in a matter of two minutes I'm out!! I just turn to the right side and I'm out. My wife says to me, "That is a blessing!! I can't do that! And I say, well sorry, but I can!!", I force myself to go to sleep. Sleeping is so important for your physical health.

The second important thing is what you are eating! What are you eating? I'm going to share with you now three things that my personal friend, Doctor Julio Jorge Taracena recommends, and I thank you Doctor for giving me this list. I appreciate that very much.

This is what he says. This is the list of YES. Meaning this is what you should be eating: Vegetables, fruits, chicken, fish, fiber cereals, grains, drinking enough water and organic juice. That is what he suggests. That is a list of the YES things that you should eat. Okay?

The second list he gave me a list of things that you should be careful with. Restriction number one, sugar. Be aware of the damages that sugar cane does in your body. Excess of salt and alcohol, they must be very limited because they are dangerous for your health.

And finally the list of NO: the number one thing is FAT. Fat and fast food. He says, "stay away from it". Carbonated drinks, stay away from that and anything that has too much sodium. Thank you, Doctor Julio Jorge Taracena.

We discussed that in order to have good physical health, we need a good sleep and to eat right. But what is the third thing? Exercising. I have a funny story about that. My Dad who never exercised in his life, was a funny guy for that matter. He said to me one day, "The day I see somebody jogging in the streets and I see this guy with a big smile on his face, then I will start exercising". You know it was a joke, but the truth is exercising is good for you. Regardless of your age. You should invest time, exercising, moving. The issue we

have today is that we need to work a lot on computers. Correct? We have to be in front of the equipment for a long time. Or sometimes we are hours and hours sitting in the car, etc. Try to move. It's for your own benefit. Try to move. Go places and stretch yourself, stop every 15 minutes. Somebody told me this, if you have to be in front of the computer for three hours, set your timer every 15 minutes and then get up and stretch yourself! You move, stretch your legs 20-45 seconds or more, move, go to the bathroom, drink a little bit of water, come back. Go ahead. Moving is necessary. We were created to move. Exercising is important.

The last thing about your physical health is to be prudent when you do things. I have seen many people getting into accidents because they are not being prudent. They are around equipment; there are doors, drawers, a lot of stuff there. And they are just moving like blind people just getting hit everywhere. Hits in the head, hits in the arms and the legs. And they say things like, "I am clumsy". I hate hitting myself. I have hurt myself because I was not paying attention. I hit the door of some cabinet there and I got hurt. I don't like it. So I fight against that. How do I fight against that? By paying attention and being prudent. I have seen people falling from ladders and getting into huge health problems because they were not prudent. You have seen videos, I bet, those videos where there are three guys holding a ladder because they wanted to take a football down from a tree. You know, things like that. Be careful with your body. If you hurt yourself, let's say you hurt one arm, a hand, a shoulder, a knee, your hips, whatever organ you hurt, you have to realize that the damage will be in your body for the rest of your life. Do you want that? Of course not! You have to be careful when you are moving, be prudent when you're driving be prudent in everything you are doing, you don't want to get hurt.

FINANCIAL HEALTH

Finally I want to talk to you about your financial health. When you seek God's kingdom, you will have a good financial health. And how does it happen? By realizing that whatever we have comes from the Lord! It's as simple as that. James, chapter 1 verse 17 says "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the father of

lights". What is the meaning of that? That everything we have, everything we own is not because we bought it, it is not because we got it, it is because we receive it coming from God! It is coming from The Lord. You need to work with a budget. You need to have a budget. You must know your income and your expenses. If you don't have a clue about how much money is coming in, how much money is going out, you are going to end in a huge problem. Do you see how important it is to put God first, because He will help you with your emotions and then He will help you to make good reasonable decisions. You will have a good physical health. And you will be able to make wise decisions with your money. Who comes first in your budget? The Lord must be the number One. Then your needs. Here's the problem. Most people as soon as they receive the money, they want to go to eat at a restaurant; they are going to spend \$100 in a dinner because they think: I deserve this, I worked so hard! So who is coming first? "Me". Do you see how that's wrong? Nope, no, no, no, no, no. You put the Lord first and then your needs. What is need it, not your desires. What are your necessities? Write them down. Work on a budget and if you can, try to save some money.

Priorities in life, but here is the deal: Everyone makes their own decisions. Correct? Some people love to say, "I cannot make my own decisions about my emotions because my boss is mean, he's always mean and I cannot have peace in this job". No, you can have peace because your peace comes from God, not from your supervisor. Do you realize that? Don't blame your supervisor. Don't blame your work environment. That's why you are angry or frightened. Your peace comes from the Lord!

What about your decisions, your health and your finances? The same thing. you need to realize that everyone makes his own or her own decisions. And I want to share with you a passage of the Scripture In Proverbs 19.3 "People ruin their lives with their foolish things they do and then they blame the Lord for it". Someone says "I end up in this fight because I'm frustrated, and why am I frustrated? Because my spouse left me, because I lost my job, because I don't make enough money, because I was born without a leg... and all this is God's fault."

Read what the Scripture says “People ruin their lives and then they blame the Lord.”. Don't make that mistake. I want to talk to my friend, if you are the kind of person who is unhappy with your life and perhaps blame God for your problems, you need to stop doing this. You need to stop blaming God for your problems. You have to stop it. Everything has a consequence, maybe you have made poor decisions. Now you need to make good decisions and the best decision you can do is to put God first.

Put God first and then you will see, your life is going to be absolutely different. If you have never opened your heart to the Lord. This is the moment. Give your heart to Him and say this prayer “Lord, I'm ready for a change. Lord, You are right, Father in Heaven, I have not made good decisions and I need to change that, and that is going to start today! Dear God, I acknowledge that I have been mad at you. I admit, sadly, I have been blaming you for many things that have happened to me, but it is not right. You are good Lord, you are merciful. It is all me, because I need to stop blaming everyone else, that ends today. I am sorry that I have sinned against you. Please forgive me. Lord, I pray in the name of Jesus that you will give me a new opportunity to restart my life. I need to change. Please help me, Lord, thank you for your mercy. Thank you for your kindness and thank you for your forgiveness. I surrender to you, Lord. I love you God!

My friend: remember that it is on the Cross, where the Lord Jesus Christ paid the price for your freedom, you are forgiven in the name of Jesus, receive that forgiveness and join a local church, talk to the pastor and ask him to help you to become a good member.

If you are in Odessa TX, join VICTORY CHURCH.

Thank you for reading!

- Gian