

# The Grapevine

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2:15*  
Number 42

## Priorities

*by Jack Northart*

From the time that we are born until the day that we take our last breath, there is an ongoing education that takes place in the mind of a person to prioritize their life. When we are infants, priorities are something that are quite simple for us. When a baby is hungry, he cries and his mother feeds him. If he is sleepy, he gets cranky and is put to bed, and so on. But as we get older, priorities become more of a decision or a choice, rather than how we feel, although some people continue to base their priorities on how they feel. As Christians, our priorities should be based on Godly choices that are spelled out in God's Word.

### **Colossians 3:1,2**

**If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

To seek those things which are above should be one of our biggest priorities in life. And to set our affection on things above is simply to put our heart's desires into what God thinks is important, not into the things of this earth. Our competent and sole authority is the Bible, the Word of God, rightly divided. Thus, in the realm of Christian priorities, our behavior, our affections and desires should be shaped and tempered by the Word of God.

The behavior of an animal is prescribed by its physical constitution, its animal nature. Biologically, a man is a Homosapien. He is categorized as an animal. However, when a person is a Christian, he or she is more than a physical and mental being; he or she has a spiritual side, which no other animal, whether human or beast, has. Christians are body, soul and spirit beings. And the spirit, which was given as a gift by God at the time of the new birth, enables a human to receive information from God in a way that was not available before the new birth. Our priorities can now be re-directed and replaced from our former ways of deciding what is important.

### **I John 4:19**

**We love him [God] because he first loved us.**

As Christians, we can now love God because He first loved us. We were dead in trespasses and sins, without God and without hope in the world. Being natural men, we could not see, hear, smell, taste or touch God because He is Spirit [*John 4:24*]. But God so loved us that by His mercy and grace, made it possible for us to be born again and have spirit born within. This spirit enables us to have a personal, spiritual relationship with Him. But how do we prioritize and learn to love God with our whole being?

### **Luke 10:27**

**And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all they strength, and with all they mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.**

To love God with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind sounds like a big task. But let's take a look at each aspect of this and see what he is talking about here. First of all, when this verse is talking about our heart, it is not referring to the organ in our bodies that pumps blood, but rather the innermost part of our being. It is part of the mind that all of our beliefs and decisions come from.

**Proverbs 4:23**

**Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.**

All decisions and priorities actually come out from the heart. Our mind has many thoughts, but it is the heart where true believing or unbelief comes from. So to love God with all of our heart would be to love Him with everything within us. In order for this to happen, a person must put God's Word into their heart and this begins by studying it [*Psalm 119:11*]. It must permeate the innermost part of our being. We must change our thinking to line up with what the Word of God says and believe it.

It states in Luke that the next thing we need to do is to love God with all our soul. The soul of a person is the individual himself. It is what makes a living being, alive. It is physical life. It tells us this in the Old Testament.

**Leviticus 17:11a**

**For the life of the flesh is in the blood...**

The word "life" comes from Hebrew word *nephesh*, which means soul-life or breath-life. When God made man a living soul (*nephesh chai*) in Genesis, he had breath. He had movement and was alive. To love God with all of our soul is to do what is right according to His Word. We practice the Word that we have in our hearts. If you have a knowledge of God's Word in your mind, but do not live it, then it is just "head knowledge." We must practice what we learn by living it.

Next, we are to love God with all of our strength. Strength gives us the ability to carry out things in life. When we truly believe what God's Word says, we will practice it and carry out what we believe in our hearts. We will act upon it. Thus it is to love God with our actions; in the things that we say and do. We make it a priority to do the things of God as God would have us to do.

Finally, we are to love God with all of our minds. As we are all aware, without the mind the body dies. So the mind is virtually our starting point for all of this. But notice that it is mentioned last in the order of all these things. In Deuteronomy 6:5, the word "mind" is not mentioned. Jesus placed it last to supplement the three major areas listed in the Old Testament, of which, he was totally knowledgeable. Therefore, the Word says we are to love God with all our hearts, lives, and actions, as well as with the whole mind, by properly sorting out the information that comes into our minds in the first place. *Luke 10:27* also says to love our neighbors as ourselves. Do we love our neighbor with just one thought? No. Love carries all the way through to action. As we love our neighbor, we bless him. Love has action to it.

Natural man, man of just body and soul cannot love his neighbor because he really cannot love himself. If we don't love ourselves, how can we ever expect to love someone else? We care about other people, but we care about ourselves too. We must put God first in our lives. We must love God, love ourselves, and then we are able to love our neighbors. As we do this, our lives begin to gel. Things start flowing together. Life is not the struggle it may have once been. We set our priorities straight by getting our lives lined up with God's Word.

**Matthew 6:33**

**But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

When we prioritize our lives by putting God first, all the doubts, worries, fears, and frustrations disappear. Our needs are met and life becomes more abundant in every way. Life is full of joy and peace, and the "struggles" of believing God are gone. Perhaps it is time to stop and reset our priorities.