

Unit 3: Spiritual Priorities Lesson 2: Everything you need to know to put God first in your life by your actions.

Main Point: To motivate the learner to take a more active role in making God their first priority by changing the way they live and not just what they do in private.

The History: Many people assume that is they live a good Christian life privately that they are doing what God asked of them. The fact is that people are more likely to talk about their favorite TV show or sports team than they are their faith in God. If we are to be ambassadors of Christ, people have to know that we are Christians. Putting God first in your life means we take him with us and show him to others. We can't keep leaving God at home and think we're doing what he wants.

The Scripture:

1. **Matthew 6:19-21**—Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**
2. **Matthew 6:24**—**No one can serve two masters.** Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.
3. **Matthew 6:33-34**—But **seek first** his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.
4. **Matthew 10:32-33**—Whoever **acknowledges me before men**, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever **disowns me before men**, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.
5. **Matthew 10:37-39**—Anyone who loves his father or mother **more than me** is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter **more than me** is not worthy of me; and **anyone who does not take his cross and follow me** is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

The Facts:

1. We only have one treasure because our heart can only be in one place at a time. (#1)
2. Jesus specifically warns about the temptation of money becoming our number one priority because it is so powerful. (#2)
3. We shouldn't be worried about anything on this earth because if we put God first, he will provide for us whatever we need. (#3)
4. We must make an effort to acknowledge Jesus before people so that he will acknowledge us too. (#4)
5. So many things can be number one in our lives, but we must put those aside and let Christ have the highest place of honor in our lives. (#5)

The Application:

Making God first in your life is not as easy as it sounds. Most people think that as long as they read their Bible and pray every night before they go to bed that God is first in their life. This is not the case. Sadly enough, American Christians do a good job of keeping their Christianity to themselves. It might be because we're afraid of what others will say or think, or it might be because we just don't care enough to say anything, but either way, if God is not shining through in our daily lives, he's not number one.

If God were to walk along with you for an entire week recording everything you said to everyone you encountered, how many times would he find you talking about him or Jesus or the Bible or your faith? Are you someone who lives out the "Closet Christianity"? That means you look like everyone else, except when no one is looking, you're a Christian—not because you're humble, but because you're afraid. Don't hear the wrong thing here; you're not supposed to go make a show of being a Christian. Jesus doesn't like that either, just read Matthew 6. The teachers of the law ONLY did their righteous acts to be seen by men. Jesus wants you to do your righteous acts in secret, but when someone asks, tell them why you do what you do.

The difference between a hypocrite and a person who puts God first in their life is this: The hypocrite wants people to praise them for their "spirituality" while the person who puts God first wants people to praise God. As it says in Matthew 5, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden...In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Ultimately, there are a few things that keep someone from putting God first in their lives. From the scriptures above, you can easily identify what they are: Earthy Possessions (#1), Money (#2), and People—including yourself (#5). If God's not first in your life, what is? Is it your desire to be popular? Is it your drive to be successful in sports or academics so you can make lots of money? Is it your relationships? Whatever it is, if it's taking up the number one spot in your life, it has to go, and the thing that wins the number one spot most often is YOU.

Your heart can only be with one thing at a time, and most often it's with you. The world teaches you that you have to look out for yourself first and put what you want above anything else. Well, if you're more concerned about what you want than what God wants, he's not number one in your life. And according to the scriptures, if he's not number one in your book, you're not number one in his book either (#4). Also, according to scripture, if he is first in your life, you don't have anything to worry about because he will take care of you (#3). If you worry about him first, he'll worry about you, sounds fair to me.

Let's look at some practical ways you can actively put God first in your life by your actions (not the things done in private):

- Start a Bible study with friends at church or school
- Pray before meals and don't worry about who's watching.
- Stand up for those who are mistreated or made fun of. (You might get some too.)
- Make an effort to share Christ with your friends who don't know him.
- Invite your friends who aren't Christians to church with you.
- Offer Christian advice to your friends who are struggling with sin. (use the Bible)
- Always give the reason for the hope that you have when people ask. (1 Peter 3:15)
- When people ask why you don't act like them, tell them the truth. (Jesus)

The Questions: (Section for teens to share their questions about the topic.)

Possible Questions:

Is all of this really necessary?

What if my friends make fun of me?

How do I know when God is number one?

The Reality:

Option 1—Leaving behind what you previously knew as your “Christian walk,” you set out on a new path of truly making God number one in your life. Your friends notice a difference immediately because you have started bringing God into your conversations. When they ask why you aren’t going to the party, you tell them you’re living for Christ and don’t want to be tempted. Things get tough for a while. As time passes, your other friends who are Christians become motivated by your new lifestyle and decide to start making God first in their lives, too. Now God has surrounded you with a support group that prays together and studies the Bible, but most importantly, lives completely and whole-heartedly for Christ in all they do.

Option 2—You don’t do anything. Well, I take that back. You read your Bible and pray everyday that God will change you and make you a stronger Christian. Each day you wait for him to change you and give you the courage to stand up for him. When you’re given the opportunity to speak up for Christ, you just sit back and wonder when you’ll be strong enough. Your fear of being made fun of or rejected because of your faith takes over your life. Slowly you become more and more like everyone else, just doing what everybody else does. You don’t realize that God is not pleased with you. He’s waiting for you to step up for him. He’s given you several opportunities and you’ve done nothing. How long will you wait before you answer his call?