

Words of Truth



God Centered Decision-Making

By: Brian A. Yeager

Jesus said: *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment”* (Mark 12:30). While most who profess to be Christians say they love God and put Him first, the evidence says that most people are not honest about this matter. If all who professed to love the Lord first really did, the Lord’s church would not be plagued with the problems we face. Even here in El Paso (the Sunrise Acres church of Christ), we’ve found that many times those who seemed to love the Lord above all else really did not.

Consider some things as we get started into our study. If you love the Lord first and foremost, where will your “contribution” be on your financial budget (Proverbs 3:9)? Most are laying up treasures in property, savings accounts, investments, entertainment, education etc.; rather than laying up treasures in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). One cannot put their giving second, third, fourth or down the line and claim that God is first in his or her life (Malachi 3:8-9, Luke 21:1-4, and II Corinthians 9:6-7). I say this because; our contribution could certainly be better.

If you love the Lord first and foremost, where will your time in studies of His word fall into your schedule (Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Joshua 1:7-8, Psalms 1:1-2, Psalms 119:97, John 5:39, Acts 17:10-11, II Timothy 2:14-18, and II Peter 3:18)? Many who profess to love God first put their time to study and learn of the Lord behind work, play, social websites, relaxation, our favorite novel, etc. I have even seen some, who profess to put God first, worry more about family meals than time to study with brethren (Luke 10:38-42). I say all of this because; our studies in God’s word could be occurring more often. This is something we need to individually and collectively work on.

The two applications above are obviously dealing with priorities. So, what do priorities have to do with God centered decision-making? Well, that’s simple and should be obvious. If God is our first priority, then all of our thinking and decision-making will start and end with His will (Romans 12:1-2, II Corinthians 10:5, Ephesians 5:17, and Colossians 3:1-4). A person whose priorities begin and end with God will think on their ways and turn to God’s will (Psalms 119:59). God centered decision-making begins with having your mind settled on the fact that God’s will supersedes your will.

God’s Will Over My Will

We all should know that our way is never the right way (Proverbs 14:12, Proverbs 16:25, Proverbs 20:24, Proverbs 21:2, Jeremiah 10:23, and I Corinthians 4:6). If our decisions are going to be the right decisions we’re going to have to make sure our steps are ordered by the Lord (Psalms 37:23). We always talk of Bible authority. Well, how much do you believe in the truth concerning all things being said and done by the authority of the Lord (Colossians 3:17)?

When we all made the decision to obey the Gospel, we made a commitment to allow our self-will to be overridden by the Lord's will (Luke 9:57-62 and Luke 14:25-33). Thus, when any one of us has to make a decision, we should be able to set our own desires aside so that we may fulfill the Lord's will with that decision.

We need to be mindful of the fact that being a Christian requires self-denial. Remember these words of Jesus Christ, our Lord: *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works"* (Matthew 16:24-27). Now, let's consider some applications to what we've been studying.

Applying Godly Priorities To Decision-Making

Let's say it's time for a new job. The need to provide for one's self (II Thessalonians 3:10) and one's family is certainly something that is necessary for a Christian (I Timothy 5:8). At the same time, we have to remember that being a faithful Christian will mean that we'll never be without what we need in this world to live (Matthew 6:25-34). Being faithful means that we'll be willing to work (Ephesians 4:28), but that our physical labor will not take the place of our spiritual obligations to the Lord (Galatians 2:20 and Jude 21) and to our brethren (Galatians 5:13 and I Peter 1:22). To be clear, this means we'll always work harder for our spiritual inheritance than for our physical needs and wants (Proverbs 23:5, Luke 12:13-21, and John 6:27).

With this in mind, when it comes time for that new job, shouldn't your first questions be about whether or not you'll be able to faithfully serve God and work with your brethren? However, most are more concerned about pay scales, benefit packages, vacation time, promotion schedules, etc. What about asking whether or not promotions mean you'll be moved to other places wherein there may not be a faithful congregation? What about making sure you have Sundays and other times wherein the brethren can assemble GUARANTEED to be free?

Prior to jobs, some among us will have education decisions to make. We have to apply these same principles. Where will that education have to be secured? Will you be here in El Paso or will you be somewhere that you are SURE you can faithfully serve God? Will your education mean you'll be too busy in school to be busy for the Lord? Do you expect God to give you a vacation from your spiritual responsibilities? Listen up; even when you're at your full capacity of spiritual work, you're still an unprofitable servant (Luke 17:7-10). Don't act like God owes you something. He's already invested much into you (Mark 10:6, Acts 14:17, and I John 4:14).

Conclusion

Whether it is a job, choosing a spouse, obtaining an education, starting a hobby, investing money, choosing a vacation, or an endless list of other decisions we make – GOD MUST BE FIRST. When we have our priorities straight, our decisions will essentially already be made before the question is asked (Philippians 3:3-17).