

LESSON 53 - PRIORITIZE QUALITY TIME

What Does God Want You To Prioritize First?

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What does God want you to prioritize first? Being a disciple of Jesus and advancing God's Kingdom? No, your *mission* isn't first. Loving and serving your spouse, family, church, or community? No, your *lifestyle* isn't first either. Being holy, godly, and righteous? No, not even your *character* is first. These all *proceed from* the greatest thing: your relationship with God. The most important thing, Jesus says in Mark 12:30, is to, "[Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.](#)" Your mission, lifestyle, and character will all suffer if your relationship with God isn't good. This is first. We need to: 1) Prioritize deeper love/connection with God, 2) Pursue quality time with God, and 3) Be intentional in our pursuit.

1. Prioritize Deeper Love/Connection With God. God is relational in His own nature. Our triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) has been united in perfect relationship for all eternity. He created us so that our *deepest needs* for life, certainty, love, significance, and contribution are found in relationship with Him. The Bible is full of relational metaphors, all pointing to our need for connection with God. Believers are said to form one Kingdom, one Bride, one Body, one Family. All with one King, one Husband, one Head, one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all (Ephesians 4:4-6). God created us with a God-shaped hole in our hearts that only He can fill. No *other* relationship, cause, or accomplishment will ever be enough to truly satisfy our deepest needs. Only connection to God can. The way a cell phone needs electrical power to run, we need God's Holy Spirit to run. We're lifeless without the Spirit of God, the source of all life. We're born into this world already spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically dying. You must be born again through faith, and then allow God to heal and restore life to every part of you, but it isn't automatic. You must prioritize your pursuit of a deeper love/connection with God over everything else that tries to compete as an idol or distraction. Like a cell phone battery with 2% power left, we can sputter along in life, pursuing other things besides God in our own strength, but we desperately need a recharge. Your true potential won't be found in limited power saver mode. What is competing with God for *your* time? What do you need to reprioritize?

2. Pursue Quality Time With God. So you need to prioritize and pursue deeper connection with God, but how do you do that? Well, how would you deepen any other relationship? By spending time with them! Spend time with God in prayer, communion, worship/singing, reading/studying the Bible, praying for/serving others, fasting, journaling, reading, studying and mission work. Just as a cell phone battery gets filled up when it's plugged into the charger, you'll get filled up whenever you're "plugged

in” to God. It’s not the *duration* but the *quality* of the connection that matters. It’s not just time with God, it’s *quality* time with God. A phone with a broken terminal or plugged into a failing charger may be connected for days but receive very little charge. Likewise, we need a *quality* connection to God. You can’t just sit in a church building or have on worship music all day. Luke 5:16 says, “*Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.*” We also need to get away from the distractions of this world and pursue personal, intimate two-way conversation with God. Engage your mind and think deeply about God, His Word, the Gospel, and your identity as child of God, bride of Christ, and temple of the Holy Spirit. Engage your emotions and share with God about your painful past, current challenges, fears, anxieties, doubts, praises, gratitude, dreams, goals, and hopes for the future. Leave no stone unturned. Desire closeness. Give God every part of you. He’s perfect, loving, and you can trust Him - even more than yourself! He’s the best Father, master, spouse, pastor, counselor, and friend. Pursue God’s tangible presence. Psalm 34:8 says, “*Taste and see that the LORD is good.*” Pursue seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling God. Pray for dreams and visions to receive wisdom, insight, and greater revelation of who He is and His plans for you. Discover and identify the ways you feel closest to Him, where you feel Him speaking to you, ministering to your needs, and filling you up. Pursue ways that you feel you’re giving all of yourself to Him as well. It’s a two-way street. John Piper says, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” The more quality time you have with God the more filled—and fulfilled—you’ll be. How could you spend more quality time with God? Schedule it.

3. Be Intentional In Your Pursuit of Quality Time. It’s easier to seek God when we’re desperate for a miraculous solution. When there’s nowhere else to look - we look up! God allows difficulties because they help us turn to Him. Praise God for these because they help us connect with Him. But what about when life is *okay*? Are you spending *casual* time with Him, but not *quality* time with Him? Let me encourage you to be more intentional about this. You might be unaware but your battery is draining without it. You need to prioritize it. Imagine a husband and wife together in their living room. The husband is laying on one couch watching sports, the wife on the other reading a book. They’re together but they’re *not connected*. They’re mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually engaged in two separate activities. The spouses could be more connected if they laid on the same couch, touching one another. They would have an even better quality time of connection if they snuggled and had a heartfelt conversation about their deepest needs and desires. And even more so by pursuing together quality time activities that met their deepest needs and desires. Similarly, God lives inside of us, so it’s like He’s in the same room. But this doesn’t mean we’re deeply connected to Him. God is doing that which glorifies Him and He hasn’t stopped doing that just because we aren’t. If we’re disengaged and doing our own thing then we’re not connected and participating with Him. Start being intentional about what you do with your limited hours. Spend intimate quality time with God to know His heart and share yours, and deepen your connection. Then do activities—together—that will glorify Him and deeply fulfill you!

Let’s pray. LORD God, I need You. Draw near to me. Help me reprioritize my life so I put You first and make quality time to deepen our connection and strengthen our relationship. In Jesus’ name. Amen.