



## Of First Importance

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4** -- For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

### Introduction

1. Life can get extremely crowded with things to do. And interestingly enough, it is often the trivial things that demand our time and attention. This can be because it is often easier to do the simple and unimportant things while our minds bog at starting the weightier things.
1. It can also be that the forces of evil have conspired to reschedule our lives so that God is filtered out.
1. There are many lessons that we need to learn in keeping things in proper order. There are some things we need to understand are of first importance. If we expect to please God we must endeavor to put First Things First.

### A. First Give Self

**2 Corinthians 8:3-5** -- For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints. And this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

1. Paul gives posterity an example of Christians going beyond their ability. They exceeded what an apostle had even hoped for.
1. They realized the thing of greatest value that they could give was themselves.
1. Every Christian needs to comprehend that all things will eventually be made easier and come backed by God's strength if we first learn to present ourselves to Him for use.

**1 Timothy 4:16** -- Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

### B. A Willing Mind

**2 Corinthians 8:12** -- For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have.

1. God has always required that His people have a willing mind.

**Exodus 35:5** -- Take from among you a contribution to the Lord; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the Lord's contribution...

**1 Chronicles 28:9** -- As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

1. No matter what aspect of life one is referring to, things get done when we have a mind to work to achieve them.
1. This attitude was needed in Biblical times. It is still vitally needed today.

**Nehemiah 4:6** -- So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.

**John 7:17** -- If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.

### C. A Cleansing Inside

**Matthew 23:26** -- You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

1. Jesus is using here the Jewish ritual of purification to get across what truly makes a man pure. A man is like the bowl and it is the contents of the bowl that really determines its cleanliness or filth.

2. If a man is clean only on the outside, it is tantamount to hypocrisy. The involvement of a right heart is important for the heart determines the intrinsic quality of the actions that proceed from it.
3. The heart is the seat of our moral fiber and conscience. It is out of the fullness of the heart that the mouth speaks, whether good or evil. It is of first importance that an individual purify his heart or else all that he does is useless to his salvation.

**Matthew 15:18-20** -- *But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.*

#### D. Casting Out the Beam

**Matthew 7:5** -- *Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*

1. It is easy to understand that a log is large and a speck is small.
2. When it comes to a person being right with God, he must of first importance look to his own faults. This would include not only his sins, but in this context, his standard of judging others.
3. We need to remove the things that impede any aspect of our righteousness, especially as it concerns others. We must be right before we can correct the wrong in others.

**1 Timothy 5:22** -- *Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thus share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.*

#### E. Reconciled to a Brother

**Matthew 5:23-24** -- *If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.*

1. God will not accept our worship when we are at odds with our brothers. Jesus has warned us that we cannot truly love God if we cannot first learn to love the brotherhood. There is no need for us to try to worship God when we have a problem relationship going on. This is so in a marriage as well as in the church.
2. When Jesus takes up His kingdom, His body (Ephesians 5), He says it will be without any spot, blemish or wrinkle. If we are the blemish, our journey will not be upward.

#### F. Finding Own Brother

**John 1:40-42** -- *One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.*

1. When Andrew learned of Jesus, it was of first importance to bring his brother to the Lord. The word should always emanate out, to those closest to us. It makes sense that those we love most should receive what we cherish most.
2. The growth of the church, and thus the kingdom, will therefore be made up of loved ones. It will consist of those we truly look forward to assembling with and with those we want to share eternity with.

#### G. Seeking First the Kingdom of God

**Matthew 6:33** -- *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.*

1. One of the greatest needs of the church is for Christians (all people for that matter) to put the kingdom of God and His righteousness first. When the church is of first importance:
  - Every member will be at every service.
  - The church will grow.
2. Also - Putting all these things first means putting them first NOW!