

When we consider priorities in the Christian life, there is one which I think stands out head and shoulders above every other one. Sadly, however, it is a priority that many Christians fail to maintain. This priority is known by various names; "having a quiet time", "daily devotions", "time alone with God" and others. I am convinced that the reason we have so many immature, sickly, weak, anaemic and defeated (you name it !!) Christians is because they do not have this as a number one priority in their life. In order to stress the importance of this as a priority I would say that many Christians will have only a shallow relationship with God and will struggle to know and to do God's will for their lives. Why do I consider this so important?

1. Let us consider first of all what the Lord Jesus said in Matt 6:11; that we were to pray daily that our Heavenly Father would provide our daily physical needs. Many of us don't of course because our fridges and cupboards are full! Now the Word of God is referred to among other things as milk, bread, honey, meat and water. If we are to seek God daily for physical food, how much more should we also be seeking from Him daily, spiritual food from His Word? Imagine how we would be physically if we only ate one meal a week (perhaps Sunday!).

2. Now let us look at what the Lord Jesus said in Matt 4:4 as He quoted from the OT. The 'bread' that we are to ask for daily is to cover "every word". Imagine eating icecream every meal! We wouldn't grow too strong with just that. I know that I appreciate having different meals served ie a variety in my diet. We speak of having a balanced diet. How much more spiritually do we need a complete and balanced diet. For that we need "every word". (see also II Tim 3:16,17) Sadly many Christians, even some who have been saved for years, have never read through the Bible, God's Word, even once. That is a tragedy. If you are one of those people let me encourage you to determine from today to read through God's Word once (it can be done easily in one year!), and then continue.

Now let us consider some instruction that God gave in the OT which is an encouragement for us to be reading the Word of God daily and praying.

1. Deut 17:18-20 Notice what God said that the king of Israel was to do. He was to write out for himself a copy of "this law" ie God's Word and then he was to "read therein ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE" (my emphasis added) How about you and I?

2. Joshua 1:8 God told Joshua that "this book of the law" ie God's Word was to be always in his mouth and that he was to "meditate therein day and night" and that he was to "observe to do according to ALL that is written therein" How about you and I?

3. Psalm 1:1-3 God says of the blessed man that he was to meditate in God's Word "day and night" How about you and I?

No thinking person can deny that every Christian ought to have as their number one priority a time each day when they get alone with God and read His Word (God talking to us) and pray (us talking to God). Some may ask, "When should I have a time alone with God?" Where possible I would suggest first thing each day. Be like the soldier who reports in for duty at the start of the day for orders not when the day is finished!

I remember a story which was told one time about a preacher who had fallen into sin and lost his family and ministry. When being counselled he was asked whether there was a particular thing that happened that led to his situation. He said, "That is easy, it began the morning I first deliberately missed my quiet time" Beware!

May everyone of us have a conviction set in concrete concerning this matter, and make it our number one priority. I WILL MEET WITH GOD EVERY DAY IN HIS WORD AND PRAYER!