

(D-R-A-F-T)

The Priorities of The Christian Man

Patrick Morley

I. LOVING GOD

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Charles Spurgeon said, *“In 40 years I have not spent 15 minutes without thinking of Jesus.”* There is a God we want, and there is a God who is. They are not the same God. One day it hit me: Wishing for “the God I want” won’t have one iota of impact on God’s unchanging nature. ***Our job is not to change God—but rather to let Him change the core affections of our hearts.*** We must come humbly and negotiate a full “surrender” to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The turning point of our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want and start seeking the God who is. Read Psalm 96:1-9; Ezekiel 1:25-28; Revelation 4, 5, 21, 22.

Sample Goal: I really want to get to know Jesus. I will search for the God of the Bible, inviting him to change the core affections of my heart. I will begin each day with faith and repentance.

My Goal: _____

SELF EXAMINATION

Richard Foster said, *“Superficiality is the curse of our age. . . . The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.”* Socrates said, *“The unexamined life is not worth living.”* We live in a wonderful age, but it has a dark side. Many of us today are in a “**structural hurry**”—a fast pace is “*structure*” into our lives. The price of pace is peace. Resolve to call periodic a “*time out*” to peer into our souls. John Calvin’s first sentence was, “Nearly all the wisdom we possess...consists of two parts: they knowledge of God and ourselves.” Read Psalm 17:3, 26:1-12, 32:8, 139:1-24; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, 13:5.

Sample Goal: I will take one morning each month to slow down, examine my heart, think deeply about my life, and make needed changes based on how I understand God’s larger purposes for my life.

My Goal: _____

THE BIBLE

If you want to know God’s will, read God’s will. The Bible is God’s will. Oswald Chambers suggests, *“Unless in the first waking moment of the day you learn to fling the door wide back and let God in, you will work on a wrong level all day; but swing the door wide open and pray to your Father in secret, and every public thing will be stamped with the presence of God.”* Most of us have heard, “I knew about God, but I didn’t know God.” Perhaps a greater problem today is that people do know God, but they don’t know about Him. Your life won’t change in any significant way without regular study of God’s word. Read Psalm 1:1-3, 119:9-11 and 89-104; John 20:30-31; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Sample Goal: This year I am going to read through The One Year Bible and memorize one scripture verse each month.

My Goal: _____

PRAYER

Pray throughout the day, because praying once a day is like eating one potato chip. Prayer is constant conversation with a Father who wants to give you everything you need. Prayer is hard work—but it releases the power of God into human actions. A man interviewing for a position with our ministry asked, “Are you a praying ministry?” His interviewer answered, “Yes.” Then he said, “Just so there is no misunderstanding, what I’m asking is not whether you believe in prayer, but do you pray?” Let’s not just believe in prayer—let’s pray! Prayer is the currency of our personal relationship with Jesus. Matthew 6:5-15; Ephesians 6:18; James 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Sample Goal: I will spend time in prayer before making any major decision. I will begin each day with prayer.

My Goal: _____

CHURCH

A wily wolf doesn’t attack the flock. He waits for a lone sheep to stray away. Here is a great irony: Generally speaking, the least involved people in church are the ones who need it most. Yet the church often ministers best to the most involved members. The solution? If you are a needy person, get more involved (don’t rail against the system). For the already involved, spend time reaching out to people on the fringe of your church. Read Hebrews 10:23-25.

Sample Goal: I will seek ways to be actively involved in my church.

My Goal: _____

II. LOVING PEOPLE

LOVING MY WIFE (if married)

After God, but before all others, I will make my wife my top priority. If we took all of the problems of men, put the marriage problem in one stack and the other problems in another stack, the marriage problem alone is still higher than all the other problems combined. Easily the #1 problem most men face today is that their marriages are not working the way God intended. When the party is over, the lights have been dimmed, and the kids are grown and gone, there will only be two rocking chairs sitting side by side. You really are the only ones in this thing together.

Sample Goal: I will prove by the way I spend my time that my wife is truly the most important person in my life after God, but before all others.

My Goal: _____

LOVING MY CHILDREN (if a father)

No amount of success at work can adequately compensate for failure at home. If your children are walking with God all of your other problems will fit into a thimble. So be your children’s spiritual leader, greatest fan, encourager, cheerleader, mentor, and example. Pray for them. Spend time with them in ways they want to receive it—board games, outings, watching their sporting events... Tell each child every day, “*I love you!*” and “*I’m proud of you!*”—like God did in Matthew 3:17! Also read Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:23.

Sample Goal: I will rotate taking one child each week on a “fun date”, tell each child I love them and I’m proud of them every day, and pray for them each day.

My Goal: _____

AUTHENTIC FRIENDSHIPS

Most of us could name six pallbearers, but few of us have a friend we could call at 2:00 a. m. Mother Theresa, once asked, **“What is the greatest problem facing the world?”** answered without hesitation: **“Loneliness.”** You will be fortunate in life if you have three real friends. Friendship is hard work. It takes time to build trust. Accountability—a step deeper—means giving a few people permission to ask you how you are really doing. Nothing will do more to keep you on track. A men’s small group is one of three things that will solve 90% of your problems. Read Proverbs 27:6,17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; John 13:34; Galatians 6:1-2; Philippians 2:4

Sample Goal: This year I will either start or join a weekly men’s small group (or become even more committed to the group I’m already in).

My Goal: _____

III. VOCATION

WORK

I don’t have to work 70 hours a week to be successful. In fact, if I work that much, I can be pretty sure I’m failing everywhere else. Most people will spend more time at work than any other place. Work is not merely a platform to do ministry—it is ministry. Our work is a holy vocation. Do your work with uncompromising excellence as if doing it for the Lord Jesus—because you are! Read Genesis 1:27-28, 2:4-15, 3:17-19; Colossians 3:22-24.

Sample Goal: I will stop thinking of work as merely a “means” to other ends and begin to look for intrinsic value in the work I do.

My Goal: _____

HEALTH, LEISURE, REST, RECREATION

Jesus didn’t say, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you *more work to do!*” He said, “and I will give you rest” Matthew 11:20. *If we don’t take care of ourselves it’s because we don’t think we have time. But in God’s economy, you have all the time you need to do all the things God wants you to do. Yet no one else can take responsibility for our private lives.* Health is mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual wholeness. Health is a gift from God, but we are responsible to create a proper balance with rest, recreation, nutrition, and exercise. For example, since I sit in front of a computer a lot, I like to practice “temple maintenance” by averaging about one hour a day of physical activity.

Sample Goal: I will study one new subject completely foreign to my normal routines (e.g.; astronomy, interior design, sailing) and exercise 3 times each week. I will get off Adderall.

My Goal: _____

IV. MONEY

MONEY

When the 10th of the month rolls around your landlord isn't looking for Jesus, he wants cash! Money is very important, but it won't solve all our problems. Most men think that money will do what it won't, and that God won't do what He will. Pray for a "conversion of the wallet." Be generous. Be a steward. Read Matthew 6:24; 2 Corinthians 8 and 9; 1 Timothy 6:6-10.

Sample Goal: This year I will tithe by faith and save five percent.

My Goal: _____

V. MINISTRY

SERVING GOD

Brother Lawrence said, *"I tell you that this sweet and loving gaze of God insensibly kindles a divine fire in the soul which is set ablaze so ardently with the love of God that one is obliged to perform exterior acts to moderate it."* Dwight L. Moody said, *"The reward of service is more service."* Bob Dylan sang, *"Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord, but you're gonna have to serve somebody."* Jesus prayed to the Father, *"As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world"* (John 17:18). *so am I sending you."* We are sent to live for Christ. Serving someone else is one of three things that will solve 90% of your problems. Service is it's own reward. We belong to Jesus. Use your spiritual gift(s) for the glory of God by loving and serving others. I'm praying in faith that your life will make a difference—in your calling as a spouse, parent, provider, churchman, witness, servant, and friend. To discover your "spiritual gifts" study Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:9-11. God calls us to build his kingdom.

Sample Goal: This year I will gain a better understanding of my spiritual gifting, and ask my pastor for a way to use it.

My Goal: _____

SELF-AUDIT

___ I. LOVING GOD

Very faithful | mostly faithful | somewhat faithful | not faithful

___ II. LOVING WIFE, CHILDREN, FRIENDS

Very faithful | mostly faithful | somewhat faithful | not faithful

___ III. VOCATION: WORK, REST, RECREATION, HEALTH

Very faithful | mostly faithful | somewhat faithful | not faithful

___ IV. MONEY

Very faithful | mostly faithful | somewhat faithful | not faithful

___ V. MINISTRY

Very faithful | mostly faithful | somewhat faithful | not faithful