

The Christian Man

Session 2: Life Balance

How To Be Faithful With Everything Entrusted To Me

Edited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning men. Please turn in your bibles to First Corinthians Chapter four, verse two. Let's go ahead and begin the day with a shout out. We have a group that's been with us for about eight months. It's the Deer Park Men's Ministry. They are part of the Deer Park Baptist Church. Eight men. They meet on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. They meet at the church, as many of our groups do. The mission of the right.. Lee Howell, their leader of this church, Deer Park in Charleston South Carolina, my favorite southern city, men. I love the architecture there, especially down at the battery. The mission of the Deer Part Baptist Church Men's Ministry, oh I love this, is to make disciples who make disciples. Music to our ears. Music to all of our ears. And watch this, by being Kingdom expanding, character transforming, and culture shaping. Let's give the Deer Park Men's Ministry a rousing Men in the Mirror welcome! One, two, three, Ooo-rah! Welcome men. We are really so glad that you are part of the bible study.

Okay, so the series is The Christian Man. And we talked last time about identity, who we are where only God can see us is who we really are. People look at the outward appearance. God looks at the heart. The second message in the series is entitled Life Balance: How to Be Faithful With Everything Entrusted To Me. So I had left six voicemails for James over a period of a couple of weeks. When I finally got a return phone call, I just had to ask. "James, why didn't you return all of my phone calls?" He said, "I'm sorry, Pat." He said, "My company's had me working out of town for 10 of the last 30 days, and my wife isn't very happy about it. I missed my son's championship Little League game. He hit a double and knocked in the winning run. My daughter is being bullied on social media, and that's created a lot of distress in the home." He said, "I have over 100 emails, texts, and phone messages that are work related, that I still have to return. Frankly, I'm just feeling paralyzed." I get it. And I'm pretty sure that you get it too.

OUT OF WHACK AND DON'T KNOW HOW TO FIX IT

So the first thing I want us to talk about is out of whack and don't know how to fix it. When I interviewed the 24 men, when we did the storyboard with the 24 men, to figure out what are the issues that they would find so compelling that it would make them wanna pick up and read a book for men. On this topic, these are some of the questions being asked. "What should a typical day look like for a Christian man? How do you balance everyday life without losing focus on God and what's important? How do I prioritize effectively? In what ways can I get out of my normal routine and create a Godly one? What are some applicable tips to help me use my time better, especially for personal growth? I want everything I do to reflect Jesus. I want integration there. I do want a clean break between my work and my family. How do I do that? Are hobbies okay?" And many other similar questions.

First Corinthians Chapter four, verse two, where you should be, have your bibles open says, "Now it is required that whoever has been given a trust must be found faithful." So this idea of been given a trust, here's the reason that these men, these Christian men, are asking these questions. How do I prioritize everything? Because they do want to be faithful men. They do understand that they have been given a trust, something to steward. The word faithful also translates reliable. They want to be reliable men. So how do we solve this problem?

Well, Jesus had the same problem. Jesus found that the vector of everyday life was to be out of whack and somehow needing to get it fixed. There's a great text in Luke Chapter four, verses 42 to 44, where Jesus had gone out to a solitary place to take a rest, but the people, because He had done so much for them, they found Him. And when they came to where He was, they tried to keep Him from leaving them. In other words, they wanted things from Him. They needed Him. They felt like they needed Him. But He, but Jesus said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." And that's what He did. He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

So the upshot is that Jesus lived by priorities. Jesus knew what His, what He wanted to accomplish, and He was willing to not do the things that were keeping Him from accomplishing the thing that He most wanted to do. Now Jesus, although Jesus is the Son of God, although Jesus is the exact representation of God's being, and although Jesus is fully God, He is also fully human, and in the fullness of His humanity, He is, like you, finite. So He does not have in His finiteness, in His finitude, unlimited capacity, unlimited time. He can't be in more than one place at one time. And yet, and yet, because Jesus lived by priorities, Jesus had all the time He needed to do everything God wanted Him to do.

And the upshot here is that you can too. You can too. And that's the Big Idea for the day. **We each have all the time we need to do everything God wants us to do.** We each have all the time we need to do everything God wants us to do. And the key to Jesus managing His priorities was intentionality, intentionality. And so we're gonna delve into intentionality, and answer the question, "Okay, how does this happen?" How does it happen that we each have all the time that we need to do everything God wants us to do?

THE POWER OF A SPECIFIC PLAN

And we do that through the power of a specific plan. So step one, step one to be faithful with everything that's entrusted to us, is to determine our priorities. Step one, step one, to be able to be faithful is to determine what our priorities are.

I was looking through a number of different articles this week. Two thirds of 1800 CEOs said that their companies had too many priorities, too many priorities. And what happened as a result of that is that the staffs of these companies felt like their strategies were incoherent because they were trying to do too many things, too many things. Warren Buffet famously says that you can only handle five priorities, five priorities. In fact, Warren Buffet says, "Go ahead, make a list of your, everything that's important to you, all the things you wanna get done, all the things." A priority is something to which we assign a degree of urgency or importance, something that's important to us, something that we wanna get done. Buffet says make a list of your 25 items, or whatever it is. And then he says, go back and circle the five that are the five most important things. And then, he says to protect yourself against anything that would distract you from those five priorities. So I'm going to help you be very intentional. I'm going to help you with a very specific plan that you can amend, adjust, adopt, adapt, in a way that would be in

concert with your own priorities. But I'm gonna guess that what I'm going to show you is going to come pretty close, pretty close, to the specific plan that we all would like to have for our lives.

So on your tables is a handout. It says at the top, "Draft -The Priorities of the Christian Man." And there are five priorities on this list. Numeral one is loving God. Numeral two, on the back of the first page, loving people. Number three is vocation. And on the back page, numbers four and five are money, and ministry. Now, there can only be one number one priority. There can only be one number one priority. So let's look at what that is for the Christian man.

By the way, this is already laid out for you. You don't have to think through, "Okay, I wonder what my number one priority should be?" This has already been well thought out for you. We just get to adopt it. We don't even adapt it. We just adopt it. You don't have to innovate here. Just adopt.

Turn to Matthew Chapter 22, verse 37. Matthew Chapter 22, verse 37. And I think there's a parallel passage in Mark, you can look, Mark 12, you can look at that if you wanted to, perhaps later. So an expert in the law had come to Jesus, verse 36. He says, "Teacher, which is the greatest," the megas, "commandment in the law?" The Mark passage just asks what is the most important or the protos, the proto, the proto commandment, or the mega commandment. Here's what Jesus said. "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind." Jesus is not trying to particularize, compartmentalize different specific parts of your body and your brain and everything. What He's trying to bring to this is the idea that He wants us, the first and most important commandment is to love God with the totality of your being, with every ounce of your energy, with the sum of your strength, that we are to bring all of that to the loving of God.

And then, verse 38, "This is the first and the greatest commandment." The top priority, number one thing. And the second is like it. This is like the woman whose house was on fire, and she was, you know, she could save one painting. She said, "Well, let's make it these two." "This is first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, Love your neighbor as yourself." Watch this. "All the Law and the Prophets," Jesus says, "hang on these two commandments." This is it. This is the priority, loving God and then right after it, loving people. These are the two highest priorities of the Christian man. And then elsewhere, we would also find that vocation, both the work we do, but also taking care of our health, resting our bodies and so forth, recreating, or recreation as it's commonly called, taking care of ourselves financially, and then also investing and building God's kingdom, are also priorities for Christian men.

Now, how helpful is that so far? Well, it's pretty good because it gets you into the right neighborhoods. However, it doesn't actually help you be faithful for everything entrusted with you and the particulars. I had a most interesting experience recently. I was working with a young man who was trying to reboot his career, his selling career. So he had engaged in a number of social media video ideas and so forth, in order to try to get some marketing out there, get some activity and so forth. He had actually been very successful before this slump. And he had a mentor who he had not talked to in a while. He called his mentor, and the mentor suggested that all the social media marketing was great, but it was speculative marketing, speculative marketing. He said, "Here's what I would recommend. You have a lot of previous customers. Sit down and phone 10 customers a day, and tell them how much you appreciate their former business, and let them know that you're looking for new business, and if they have any suggestions, you'd be happy to hear them, and so forth."

And so he said, "I'll do that." He began making 10 calls a day. Every day he'd sit down and make these ten calls. Two weeks later, the floodgates opened, and business started coming in over the gun walls. He called his mentor. He said, "I don't get it." He said, "I'm doing what you said, and my business is rebooting and taking off, but none of the business that I'm getting has come from any of the phone calls that I made." And his mentor laughed. He said, "I didn't tell you that your business would come from the phone calls that you're making. I just said that if you made ten calls a day that your business would reboot and take off." That's the power of priorities, and that's the power of a specific plan.

And so, I'm giving you, in addition to the five priorities, I'm giving you some specifics here. And you can look these over. I don't think there's a need to go through all of these in any kind of detail. But under loving God, part of the specificity and the intentionality of executing on that priority would be paying some attention to your relationship with God. And you'll notice there is a little paragraph there to sort of stimulate some thinking and stimulate other thoughts. For example, I love the Charles Spurgeon quote. "In 40 years, I've not spent 15 minutes without thinking of Jesus." That's pretty interesting. I heard that a long time ago. I've never even got close to that. But there's a sample goal down there. "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."

So you could look this over, and I'm getting a little ahead of myself, but I'm gonna encourage you in a moment to take a personal retreat and think this through. So you could read about your relationship with God. You could read the sample goal. And then you could jot down, put into pencil if you want to, my goal. What's my goal for my relationship with God? I want to love God. Loving God is the most important thing I can do. I want that to be my first priority, because that's what Jesus would have for me. It's a gift that Jesus has told us this. And so I want that for my life.

And then self examination. There's a sentence I put in there towards the end, John Calvin's first sentence in his theological tome is "Nearly all wisdom we possess consists of two parts, the knowledge of God and ourselves." And so the idea here, if you want to make God your priority, some self examination would go along with that. 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 purpose for my life." So you could then take all of the stimulation that would come from that and maybe make your own goal. Something there about the bible, prayer, and then church. This would give you a very specific plan, a very powerful, specific plan, an intentional plan that would help you, help you, to live your life by priorities too.

And then, loving people, which is the second part of the first and most important thing. There's a section there for loving your wife if you're married, loving your children if you're a father, and then authentic friendships. Under the authentic friendships, sample goal. "This year, I will either start or join a weekly men's small group or become even more committed to the group that I'm already in," for example.

And then vocation. Under the priority of our vocation, "I want my work to be a priority. I'm a called man. It's important for me to have a sense that my life is making a contribution and a difference." And so there's some thoughts there. A sample goal, and a place where you can write on your own goal. And then, under vocation, there's this whole idea of health, and leisure, rest, recreation. So part of, I consider it to be part of my vocation to take a rest from the work ... I'm extremely intentional in my work. I work very hard, as I'm sure you do too. And I find it extremely important to follow the pattern of Jesus who went out to a solitary place, and often did, to be alone and to pray, in order to have a sense of renewal, a sense of renewed energy for the work that I do.

And then, on the health side, which health is, it's a gift from God, but it has to be managed. And so, I don't know if I've ever said this before, but I'm going to say it now. When I was a young guy, and I would be seeking advice from an older guy, if he had let himself go, you know, if he was, if he wasn't taking care of himself physically. This is a secular idea, not a spiritual idea. But I couldn't hear what he had to say, because I just didn't respect him because he wasn't taking care of himself. Now I feel a little differently about that now, because I understand how hard it is. But one of the reasons that I take care of myself today is that my vocation, a lot of it, is talking to younger guys. And I'm just assuming that many of them would feel the same way towards me as I would've felt towards some of the guys that had let themselves go, if I did that. And so, I practice, about an hour a day, of what I call temple maintenance. I spend about an hour a day in temple maintenance. I do all kinds of different things. But I think it's very important. So it's a priority for me. It may not be like way up there for you. But by working through this worksheet, you can decide intentionally what it means to you.

And then also money. You know, Proverbs 21:20 tells us that "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil." So your goal might be to tier to tithe by faith and save five percent. It might be, a sample goal might be, "I'm gonna hire a financial planner, because I don't wanna be a burden on, I wanna take responsibility for my finances, my personal finances." And then there's a section there on ministry as well.

At the very end, you'll also notice there's a little self audit you can do. I'll talk a little bit more about the self audit in the next section of the message. But what the power of a specific plan enables us to do is it enables us to execute the Big Idea. We each have all the time we need to do everything God wants us to do, and it's very helpful to have a specific plan so that we are intentionally pursuing those things that he wants us to do. Making sense?

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

Finally, making adjustments. So the first thing I would just suggest is that you do go on some kind of a personal retreat. I don't know. You could probably blast through this in an hour. And that may be all you have, so do it that way. Personally, I would think maybe you could take a half a day. Or you might even go over to the beach and spend the night or something like that. There are lots of different ways to do it. But as you begin the audit, here's the first thing I'd like to ask you to do. Don't ask yourself, "Okay, what do my priorities need to be?" Don't ask what your priorities need to be. Ask, "What do I want my priorities to be?" "What do I want?"

Here's why I suggest you don't focus on what you need. Because we're always focusing on what we need, and we don't do it. We talk about, "Oh, I need to do this. I need to do this. I need to do that." And then what do we do? We do what we want. People do what they want, even if you pay their salaries, people do what they want. That's why, in employment interviews, I never, I don't spend my time trying to explain to the interviewee what it is that we want them to do. I spend almost all of my time with the interviewee trying to figure out what do they want to do. Why? Because I know that regardless of what I want them to do, once they get there and get settled in, they're going to do what they want to do.

So right now, as you're trying to figure out what your priorities, forget about what they need to be. Focus on, "What do I want? What do I want?" Now, if loving God is not the thing that you want most, then you can make that a goal, to improve that as your priority. But be honest with yourself that if loving God is not really the most important thing to me, be honest about that. Don't, just because you need it, don't say that that is what your top priority is. Go ahead and be honest about it. So in order for you to

be honest about what your priorities are and what you want, I have prepared for you a little self audit on these five priorities, at the bottom of the last page. Loving God, loving wife, children, friends, vocation, work, rest, recreation, health, money, and ministry. And there are four answers, and you can circle the answer that you feel like is most appropriate to you. Say loving God as a priority. Very faithful. Remember the idea. Whomever has been given a trust must be found faithful. So the question on the final exam is going to be what? Was I faithful? That's gonna be the question on the final exam. Was I faithful? And if you were, Jesus is gonna say what? "Well done good and," what? "Faithful servant." So it's about being faithful.

And so if you're going to audit yourself on these priorities, then you want to audit not your performance, but your faithfulness. So loving God, very faithful, mostly faithful, somewhat faithful, not faithful. By the way, this is the exact same four that your leaders self evaluate themselves on each year as they consider whether or not they want to renew their job for another year. Every leader has a one year contract with me, with me as the, and Brad now too, as the leader of the leader group. We have a one year contract. And so what I'm interested in is, okay, "Were you intentional? Were you faithful?"

So you can do that here for yourself on each of these things. And then say, okay, based on these answers, okay, and being honest with myself, "Okay, what is it that I really want? What do I want my priorities to be?" And then, there's a blank in front of each of these five, and you can order, you can put in order your top five priorities there. And then Warren Buffet will be very happy about that. Where is that thing about Warren Buffet? I don't even know if I made a copy of it, but it was really cool. I guess I didn't.

Once you have figured out what it is that you want, what your priorities are, you can work on adjusting them and so forth. And I'm gonna give you the idea that I have used for my entire career. I hear this when I was first getting started. In 1918, Charles Schwab, the President of Bethlehem Steel was concerned about the inefficiency at his company, and not getting things done. So he hired a business consultant by the name of Ivy Lee. I

Ivy Lee spent 15 minutes with each of the executives that worked for Charles Schwab. And this is what he told them. Said, "At the end of the day, make a list of your top six," oops. Warren Buffet, sorry. "Top six priorities or tasks for the following day. Then the next day, when you get to work, start working on the first priority, and don't let anything distract you from it until you've finished it. Only when you have finished your first priority, then move to your second most important priority for the day. Execute it completely without distraction, and then go on to the third, and so forth, to the fourth, fifth, and sixth. If you are only able to get say three or four things done in the day, don't worry about it, because you will have done the three or four most important things. Then, at the end of the day, you make a list for the following day of the six most important things you wanna do, and you take the things that might not have been accomplished this day, and put them on the list for the next day. And in so doing, you will always be working on the highest priorities that you have."

I have used this relentlessly for four decades. It's worked pretty well for me. It might work pretty well for you. I have amended it a little bit in the digital age, because there are constantly all these emails coming in, and so forth. It's made communication so fantastic that I will, if I can, say look at my inbox, and I have say six or seven emails, a lot of them just simply require one word or two word responses, and by answering them quickly and by several times a day answering emails, I'm able to keep other people's list of priorities moving. It lubricates their list by giving them the answer that they need to keep on moving on. And so, I think this is a tremendous way of making adjustments to how you can live by priorities. And

when you do, I don't know. Maybe you already have all the time you need to do everything you want to do, but if you're like most of us, you don't. And the Big Idea today is simply this. God has given us all the time we need, and we each have all the time we need to do everything God wants us to do.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, thank you so much, that You have not left us on our own to figure out how to be faithful with everything that's entrusted to us, that You've given us a road map in the scriptures and then lots of practical ideas through the scriptures as well so that we can be intentional. I pray, Father, that You would help each of us who really do, I mean, that's why we're here, Lord, is we want to be those faithful men, those reliable men. We want to be found faithful. So Father, I pray that you'd help each of us take and appropriate these ideas as You would wish. In Jesus' name, Amen.