

Put God First Part 01

Learn from Jesus' Disciples

“33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33 KJV)

Life is demanding and each day there are many things you need to have and to do. More than that, the temptations is so much around added to your desires and wishes to gain good things, which you think would make your lives easier and better!

God is the Creator of Heaven and earth. All the good things on earth which are good for you have come from Him. But in order for you to get all the good things that daily you see, you need to put God first in your life. Put God first, seek His Kingdom and His righteousness, ***“and all these things shall be added unto you.”*** All the rest of things that you lack and things that make your life better will be given and added to you when you make your priority correct. Make no mistake about it; not the other things first but God first in your life, and He will be the one to add to you other things that you lack and you really need. Therefore, put God first – God, the Creator of Heaven and earth and everything in it.

You love God and you keep a space in your heart for Him. But certain times you are unaware that you are already favoring other things and not putting God first. The message is not to accuse you but to help you see and realize what you are not aware of, so that you will correct yourself and will be blessed. It may cause you sadness to hear and to know that you are not putting God first, but let it bring you to a Godly sorrow that would change your life's priority in order to experience the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christianity is commitment. Certain people of God maintain a Godly profile and keep their commitment as long as things are going well and God is helping and providing. And so their short coming and lack of commitment are hidden from the sight of men covered by the grace of God. But time comes that the Lord would allow trials and hardship to pass in the life of His church and His people in order to test people's commitment and to show what is in their hearts toward God and toward His work and His body, the Church of God.

The event of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion was a heavy event that the Lord allowed to take place in the presence of His disciples who were following Him. But the difficulty of that event had helped to disclose what was in each and every one's heart and their real motive in life. His disciples loved Him but they soon deserted Him when they were in a tight situation. They loved the Lord as the church does today, but they were unaware that certain wrong things had entered their lives and God no longer took first place in their hearts which made them vulnerable and not able to stand firm to face the trials.

The Gospel of ***Luke 22:24-62***, mentions the events that happened the night our Lord Jesus was arrested and it is in the same piece of Scripture, the wrong motive and attitude in the hearts of the disciples that caused them to move away from the Lord, is revealed. Let us learn now from Jesus' disciples because the same things could enter our life at any moment and bring us to a point of not giving God the first place in our hearts. Let us learn from the pitfalls that the disciples encountered on the night of Jesus' arrest and be cautious enough to put God first in our lives:

1. Strife: “24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.” (Luke 22:24 KJV) Arguments, fights, quarrel, answering back – all are hindrances to the work of God. They are very common events but if we are unaware these actions will cripple us and make us ineffective, unproductive, and ungodly. Apostle Paul reminds us not to be involved in disputes: “14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. 24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” (2 Timothy 2:14, 16, 23-26 KJV)

Strife and arguments that are happening inside the family, between husband and wife, between children, or between parents and children disturb the whole family and take away blessings and God's presence in a home. Strife and arguments that are happening among the members of the church and inside any ministry weaken that ministry leading to ineffective service. The same thing happens in our personal walk with God. If we involve ourselves in long disputes we may be pulled away from God, and evil thoughts may take the first place in our hearts. So if we decide to put God first in our life, let us avoid strife and avoid long arguments. Paul separated himself and his disciples from those who were opposing him so he can do the work of God, reaching the lost and caring for those disciples who needed his care: “8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.” (Acts 19:8-9 KJV) We need to move away from those who oppose us so we can reach the lost and take care of the disciples who need our care.

2. Love of positions and titles: “24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. 25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. 28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. 29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Luke 22:24-30 KJV) The disciples were quarrelling between themselves as to who was considered the greatest among them. They were fighting to have the higher title or the greater position. But Jesus corrected them and explained that gaining position and sitting at tables is only considered an honor in this world. The kingdom of God belongs to Christ and to be the greatest in the Kingdom of God is to be like Christ who came down to earth to serve. In Christ, authority is gained by how much we offer our life and service to God and to the people that God has placed around us and are under our care. The Lord Jesus came down from Heaven to serve and God the Father conferred to Him the Kingdom. Earthly position, name, or title does not change the principle of God that if we want to be part in His Kingdom we

must be willing to serve with Christ. So let us not fight for title and position in the Church because in doing so we are not giving God first priority in our life. Instead, let us put God first by taking every opportunity to serve God through His people around us and as much as we can reach. *“42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.” (Matthew 10:42 KJV)*

3. **Pride and overconfidence:** *“31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. 33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.” (Luke 22:31-34 KJV)* Jesus warned Peter that Satan was pulling him away. Jesus also mentioned that He prayed for Peter’s faith not to fail and when restored has to strengthen his brothers. It was a very clear warning and instruction from the Lord for Simon Peter, but imagine how Peter answered! Peter did not accept his weakness. He was overconfident. He was not humble and did not thank the Lord who corrected him and prayed for him. Sometimes when someone corrects us or rebukes us and points the wrong in us, we become angry or we allow pride to rule our hearts. Let us put God first by humbling down and listening to what really the Lord is telling us through the lips of Godly people. Then let us check ourselves in the light of the Scriptures, and thank that righteous person who corrected or rebuked us. King David said, *“Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head:” (Psalm 141:5 KJV)* Let us hear God’s warning and instruction to discern our shortcomings which are taking away our blessings. When we pay heed to righteous advice and instruction it truly helps us to give God the first place in our hearts and life. *“20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.” (Proverbs 19:20 KJV)*

4. **Lack of preparation and good stewardship:** *“35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. 36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. 37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. 38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.” (Luke 22:35-38 KJV)* Jesus told His disciples to take with them whatever they have because He was then going away. In the above passage, the Lord Jesus was recommending to His disciples the necessity of good preparation and how important to keep material things to be used for the glory of God and Christian ministry. Nowadays, many Christians they really love to serve the Lord, but they are not good stewards or they do not follow the principle of saving and preparing for ministry.

In Luke Chapter 9 and Chapter 10, when Jesus sent out the disciples while He was still with them He instructed them not to bring anything. But when He was going away, He asked them to bring with them purses, bags, and swords. Pursuing God’s ministry requires money and other material things. Everything we have has come from God so we should include in our plan the priority to save for God’s service. We need to be keen in keeping God’s material blessings with us to be used in time of need while serving the Lord. In the same manner, every disciple of Christ must be a good steward of everything they receive from the Lord. Lack of good stewardship and preparation for ministry means that we do not put God first. To

carefully save what God is giving us to be used for the furtherance of God’s ministry is an indication that we really love God, we desire to honor God, and we plan to serve Him only.

5. **Prayerlessness:** *“39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. 40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. 41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” (Luke 22:39-46 KJV)* The disciples of Jesus failed to respond to God’s call to pray. When Jesus came back to them, *“he found them sleeping for sorrow”*. Sorrow and tiredness creep into our body when we fail to keep a constant life of prayers. Daily reading the Bible and praying continually is the very refreshing attitude that we need in life to keep us from temptation, and to keep tiredness and sadness away from our heart and mind. To put God first in our heart and mind, we must pray unceasingly. *“16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 KJV)*

6. **The love of money:** *“47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:47-48 KJV)* Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus for a certain amount of money, but was he in need of that amount of money? *“3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.” (Matthew 27:3-5 KJV)* Judas was not in need of the money but he was enticed to have it. At first he wanted to have the money even if it caused him to betray the Lord Jesus. Clearly it was a wrong motive that moved him to approach a wrong source of money. Nowadays many disciples and workers of the Lord abandon their ministry and service to God for the sake of getting more money from wrong sources. They are not in need of a large amount of money but they want to have more of it. They even justify that they want to earn money to help build God’s kingdom, but finally we find them away from God’s service and having forgotten their commitment to put God first and serve Him only. God’s Word declares, *“for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Matthew 4:10)*

Loving money and putting it first instead of serving God would certainly add on more troubles in life. Many believers begin as true followers of Jesus and are happy and content with the Lord, but later on when they are tempted to love money, they spend more time to work and collect more money; they invest more of their time to gain skills so they become more qualified to gain more money. They may succeed but their love to serve God is replaced by the love of money. *“6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and*

perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1 Timothy 6:6-10 KJV) Definitely, if gaining more money is priority in life, the consequence is more trouble and hardship. To gain more of money but less of God’s Word ends to destruction of life. **“11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” (1 Timothy 6:11-12 KJV)**

My Dear and Beloved: To put God first and not other things need discretion and your own decision to keep aside worldly things in order to concentrate on God and what God wants you to do for Him. To put God first is to know how God wants you to behave not only for His own glory but for your own sake and benefit. To put God first is a wise decision that you should not forsake or keep aside, but to adopt, to act on, and to apply in your daily life, remembering the Word of the Lord Jesus, **“33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33 KJV)**

Come now to the Lord and commit your life for Him and apply what you learned from the pitfalls of the disciples, that you will avoid strife, running after positions and titles, pride and overconfidence, being non teachable, lack of preparation and good stewardship for service, prayerlessness and the love of money. Be willing to go along the process of correction so you will be able to set your priorities right, honoring God by putting Him first and start to serve Him in the way that he ordained for you so He will add to you His blessings and what you need in your life.

Let us pray

My Prayer: Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord, thank you for your Word that you sent to me to teach me to put you first in my life and to show me the area that I failed you and went away from your Word. Lord thank you for all the correction and the admonishments that I received in this message. Lord thank you for all your good promises to me as I put you first in my life.

Come now to God and confess and renounce all your sins. Confess and renounce your worldliness, your greed, and your love for money and material things. Confess your laziness and procrastination in doing your works and responsibilities and your lack of preparation to serve God and your bad stewardship. Confess and renounce your pride, non teachable spirit, overconfidence, stubbornness and your delay obedience. Confess and renounce your non willingness to serve and your love for titles and positions. Confess and renounce your strife, arguments, hatred, revenge, non forgiveness, grudge, bitterness, fights, and quarrels. Confess your lack of reading God’s Word and your lack of prayers. Confess and renounce your yoke with non believers, many friends and in bondage with the Media, News and games. Confess and renounce your bad example and your non willingness to serve God and suffer for Him. Lord forgive me, I repent of the following sins _____.

Lord I commit myself to serve you and to live my life for you according to the teaching that I received in this message; to put you first, to abstain from strife and quarrels, to be humble,

teachable, listening to correction and advices, to love to serve you and not to be after titles or positions, to live in persistent prayerful life, to prepare myself well to serve you and to be good steward to what you entrusted to me, and to love you and put you first and not money. Lord I commit myself to be a good example to others and to reproduce more of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in my life; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance so people will see Jesus through my life. Lord uphold me with your grace and provide for me so I will continue to serve you. Lord I ask you to help me to come out from this trial in my life_____. this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented of their sins, and who responded to the teaching of your Word in this message and willing to put you first in their lives. Lord continue to watch over them and correct them whenever they deviate from your ways and the truth of your Word. Lord give them wisdom, protect them, and open to them new opportunities to serve you, to reach the lost, and to bring new souls into your Kingdom.

Lord, bless us as your church. Lord we commit ourselves to live in obedience to your Word that we received in this message. We commit ourselves to put you first in our life and ministry, and to teach that to our families, disciples and members. Lord we ask you to refill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need in order to go on and evangelize, and make new disciples and train new workers to go and plant more Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord we pray for more people to get water baptized and receive the Holy Spirit baptism. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, ‘Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God.’ Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

Put God First Part 01. Learn from Jesus’ Disciples. Matthew 6:33. Luke 22:24-48. 2 Timothy 2:14, 16, 23-26. Acts 19:8-9. Matthew 10:42. Psalm 141:5. Proverbs 19:20. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Matthew 27:3-5. Matthew 4:10. 1 Timothy 6:6-12
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Note: The Bread of Life is a weekly publication from the Church of God, United Arab Emirates. For further issues and more spiritual enrichment you can visit our web site at: www.churchofgoduae.com.

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