

# THE BROADLANDS BROADCAST

**“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”**

**Matthew 6:33**

Hi,

I hope you are enjoying May!

I am a bit behind in getting this newsletter out but “better late than never...” right???

One of the biggest problems of my life is priorities.

Oh, I know, I have preached that the only priority of the Christian life is putting God first which will result in all of the other priorities falling into place.

BUT...

I struggle with putting God first in my life which results in me having problems with the other priorities as well!!! Is it just me or do you struggle too?

The priority of putting God first is something that doesn't come automatically. It takes work... A LOT of work... One of the things I have found is that the more I am reminded of putting God first, the more conscious I become of it, and the more I work at it...

I pray this month's newsletter will serve as a reminder of the importance of putting God first!

Love y'all!

*Tim Bergen*

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## What does putting God first really mean?

It is common to hear a Christian say, “I'm putting God first” or to counsel others to “make sure God has first place in your life.” Such expressions are used so often they run the risk of becoming a Christian cliché. But there's nothing trite about the idea of putting God first; in fact, it's thoroughly biblical.

Everyone has priorities. We arrange our schedules, budgets, and relationships according to perceived importance. Putting God first means we give Him top priority over everything else. He is the principal figure in our lives and central to all we do and think. When we choose to put God first, we determine that He is more important than any other person, His Word is more

valuable than any other message, and His will is weightier than any other imperative.

Putting God first means that we keep the greatest commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). In other words, we are totally invested in our relationship with God. Everything we have and everything we are is devoted to Him. We hold nothing back.

Putting God first means we keep our lives free from idolatry in all its forms: “Dear children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21). An idol is anything that replaces the one, true God in our hearts. As Gideon demolished the altar of Baal and chopped down the Asherah pole (Judges 6:25–27), we must tear from our hearts anything that lessens our devotion to or reverence of God. As Gideon built an altar to the Lord to replace the idolatrous images, we must dedicate ourselves as “living sacrifices” to God and in that way put Him first (Romans 12:1).

Putting God first means that we strive to follow in Jesus' steps (1 Peter 2:21). Jesus' life was characterized by total submission to the Father's will, service to others, and prayer. In the garden, faced with unthinkable agony, Jesus prayed, “Not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42). That's putting God first. Jesus' words, actions, and doctrine all came from the Father (John 5:19; 7:16; 12:49). Jesus glorified the Father in every detail of His life and accomplished all that He has been sent to do (John 17:4).

Jesus taught us to “seek the Kingdom of God above all else” (Matthew 6:33, NLT). That is, we are to seek the things of God over the things of the world. We are to seek the salvation that is inherent in the kingdom of God, considering that of greater value than all the world's riches combined (see Matthew 13:44–46). The promise associated with the command is that, if we are putting God first, “he will give you everything you need.”

During a time of famine, the prophet Elijah visited a town where he met a widow who was preparing a final meal for herself and her son. Elijah asked her for some bread and water, and the widow explained that she had the resources

for one meal only, and after that was gone, she would face starvation. Elijah persisted: "Don't be afraid. . . . But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son" (1 Kings 17:13). In essence, Elijah told her to put God first. By faith, the widow obeyed. She put God first and fed the prophet. And then came the miracle: "There was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry" (verses 15–16).

Those who put God first will stand out from the rest of the world. They will obey God's commands (John 14:15), they will take up their cross and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23), and they will not forsake their first love (Revelation 2:4). They give God the firstfruits, not the leftovers. The Christian life is characterized by moment-to-moment selfless service to God that flows from love for Him and His people. In all things, the believer trusts, obeys, and loves God above all else. Putting God first becomes easier when we take to heart the words of Romans 11:36: "Everything comes from the Lord. All things were made because of him and will return to him. Praise the Lord forever! Amen" (CEV).

<https://bit.ly/3eviKFI>

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#### Relationship Priorities

**Elsa no longer remembers what the argument was about, but it began before breakfast one morning and continued as Steve started off to work.**

**"How can you just go off like that?" cried Elsa. "We haven't settled a thing!"**

**Then Steve did what few men as ambitious and driven as Steve is could do: he turned around and went to the phone and canceled all his appointments for that day, "saying to me, in effect, that our relationship meant more than business meetings, saying that I'd married a man who would sacrifice work for love."**

*Reader's Digest, August, 1982.*

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#### How to Lose the Things You Love

Stephen Witmer

In a fascinating 1942 essay, C.S. Lewis offered a "universal law" of human experience:

Every preference of a small good to a great, or partial good to a total good, involves the loss of the small or partial good for which the sacrifice is made. . . . You can't get second things by putting them first. You get second things only by

putting first things first. ("First and Second Things," in [God in the Dock](#))

In other words, overvaluing a lesser good results, paradoxically, in losing it. In a letter to his friend Dom Bede Griffiths, Lewis expanded on his observation, "Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first and we lose both first and second things."

Lewis applied his law of firsts and seconds to everyday life. The woman who makes her dog the center of her life loses "not only her human usefulness and dignity but even the proper pleasure of dog-keeping." The man who focuses solely on the woman he loves, doing nothing but contemplating her, eventually loses the pleasure of loving her, as well as all the other things that make life rich and enjoyable. On a much larger scale, Lewis believed that the civilization of his day was imperiled because it had been putting itself first, rather than second to a higher good.

#### Woe to Second Thing Seekers

Jesus himself taught that seeking second things first results in losing both first and second things. And not only in this life (as Lewis emphasized), but forever. In [Luke 6:24–26](#), Jesus pronounced four woes.

"Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

"Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

"Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

"Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets."

These four woes match the four Beatitudes that come immediately before them, each of which describes future blessing from God in his eternal kingdom ("you shall be satisfied, you shall laugh"). Correspondingly, the woes describe an eternal state of divine judgment upon God's enemies.

It may appear, at first sight, as though Jesus warns his hearers not to be rich, full, happy, or well-regarded. But, as J.C. Ryle pointed out long ago, Abraham and Job were rich, with plenty to eat; King David laughed and rejoiced; and Timothy had a good reputation, as did the seven men appointed to serve the church in Acts 6. So, what is Jesus actually warning against?

## No Good Apart from God

The key is the last phrase of the fourth woe: “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, *for so their fathers did to the false prophets.*” Jesus warns not against a good reputation *per se*, but specifically the sort of good reputation enjoyed by the false prophets. We’re in danger of divine judgment when we’re well-thought-of *for ungodly reasons*, when we say what’s not true to gain the good opinion of others, sacrificing truth for popularity.

This helps us understand Jesus’s woes. Jesus doesn’t pronounce woe upon all who are rich, but upon those who find their consolation in riches rather than in God — who treasure their wealth above God. Jesus doesn’t pronounce woe upon all who are satisfied, but upon those who place the satisfaction of their appetites above God.

Jesus doesn’t pronounce woe upon all joyful people, but upon those who seek happiness apart from God. The problem is not wealth, food, laughter, or reputation in and of themselves. It’s the idolatry of elevating such things above God. When that happens, the law of firsts and seconds applies, forever.

## Do You Love It Enough to Love It Less?

Consider the first woe: “Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.” God is a first thing. Money is a second thing. Yet we know it’s easy to trust money more than God, pursue it harder than we pursue God, and use it for ourselves rather than for God. Wealth may become our protector and comforter.

Jesus says that if we put wealth above God, we’ve already received all the consolation we’ll ever get; namely, our present bank account, investment portfolio, and retirement plan. But this consolation will not last long, because God’s judgment will fall. If we pursue wealth more than God, we’ll lose God and also, eventually, our wealth.

In Luke 12, Jesus tells a parable about a rich man who trusts in his wealth, plans to build bigger barns to store his crops, and looks forward to relaxing, eating, drinking, and being merry. God calls him a fool and tells him he’ll die that night. Jesus says, “So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God” ([Luke 12:21](#)). He valued God’s gifts over God, and therefore, in the end, was left with neither God nor gift.

## What About Food?

The same is true in Jesus’s second woe: “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.” It’s wonderful to prepare and eat a delicious meal. When God is firmly first in our lives, a world of guilt-free, God-glorifying culinary pleasure opens before us. We enjoy food more because we know who made it and gave it. Putting first things first, we get second things thrown in.

But when we let our stomachs rule, we begin to live for meal times. We think about food too much. We draw too much comfort from it. We overeat. Thus, we minimize our present enjoyment of food, feeling stuffed, overweight, and enslaved. And in the end, we lose the enjoyment altogether. We’re hungry, dissatisfied, and empty forever.

## Love Everything for God’s Sake

No matter what gift you can think of — reputation, money, sex, influence, music, even the love of family and friends — the principle remains the same: the best way to destroy your joy in them (and, more importantly, your soul) is to seek them above or in place of God.

Jesus is most emphatically not against our enjoyment of God-given pleasures. But if we place gifts before God, he warns we will lose both.

Augustine prayed, “He loves Thee too little who loves anything together with Thee, which he loves not for Thy sake.” Jesus wants us to enjoy both God and his gifts. We will have both forever if — and only if — we keep God first.

<https://bit.ly/3a37bly>

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Priorities gone awry...

**A group of friends went deer hunting and paired off in two's for the day. That night one of the hunters returned alone, staggering under an eight point buck.**

**"Where's Harry?"**

**"Harry had a stroke of some kind. He's a couple of miles back up the trail."**

**"You left Harry laying there, and carried the deer back?"**

**"A tough call," nodded the hunter, "but I figured no one is going to steal Harry."**

*The Jokesmith, Christian Clippings, p. 27.*

## **"Me First"**

Albert Lee

*Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.*

Ephesians 4:22

A man once asked me, "What is your biggest problem?" I replied, "I see my biggest problem every day in the mirror." I am referring to those "me first" desires that lurk in my heart.

In James 4:1 we read: "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?" The words "desires for pleasure" refer to our self-serving desires. That's why in James 1:14 we are told: "Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed." James warns that such "me first" desires will destroy our friendship with God (4:4) and cause divisions, wars, and fights (vv.1-2).

Therefore, we are told to put off "me first" thinking. How do we do this? First, "Submit to God" (4:7). We need to get our ranking right—God is God and His will must always be first. Second, "Draw near to God" (v.8). Deal with those desires that lead to sin by going to God for cleansing. Don't be double-minded, desiring both evil and good. But rather desire to please God alone. Third, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord" (v.10). Then "He will lift you up."

Remember, "me first" living is not the key to success. Put God first.

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A lighthouse along a bleak coast was tended by a keeper who was given enough oil for one month and told to keep the light burning every night. One day a woman asked for oil so that her children could stay warm. Then a farmer came. His son needed oil for a lamp so he could read. Still another needed some for an engine. The keeper saw each as a worthy request and measured out just enough oil to satisfy all. Near the end of the month, the tank in the lighthouse ran dry. That night the beacon was dark and three ships crashed on the rocks. More than 100 lives were lost.

When a government official investigated, the man explained what he had done and why. "You were given one task alone," insisted the official. "It was to keep the light burning. Everything else was secondary. There is no defense."

## **May Birthdays & Anniversaries**

Tam Lee 6th  
Gloria Hale 7th  
Herbert Ragle 7th  
Sharon Kite 8th  
Cathy Gregory 12th  
Paul Buford 13th  
Jake Chisholm 14th  
Leo and Jackie Friend 15th  
Tim and Judy Bergen 16th  
Robert Hines 19th  
Carla Cooley 20th  
Katy Chisholm 21st  
L. Mechelle Burson 21st  
Carl Knudson 27th  
Avery Gregory 27th  
Caitrin Friend 30th  
Beau and Cathy Gregory 31<sup>st</sup>

## **Nursery Worker Schedule**

04/25 & 05/02 Judy Bergen & Teresa Smith  
05/09 & 05/16 Evelyn & Janice Smithkors  
05/23 & 05/30 Jessica Fontenot & Teresa Reeves

## **Elder/Deacon Schedule**

05/02 Derrall Cronce  
05/09 Justin Fontenot  
05/16 Herbert Ragle  
05/23 Tim Reeves  
05/30 David Smith

## **Activities**

**LEADERSHIP MEETING**—Friday, 05/14 @ 6:00 pm

**CHURCH WORKDAY**—Saturday, 05/15 @ 8:00 am

**CRAWFISH BOIL**—Sunday, 05/30 @ 5:00 pm

**VBS**—July 19-23

It is rather comical when the primary things are made secondary. Victor Borge told about a couple going on vacation, standing in line waiting to check their bags at the airline counter.

The husband said to the wife, "I wish we had brought the piano." The wife said, "Why? We've got sixteen bags already!" The husband said, "Yes, I know-- but the tickets are on the piano!"