

# CONFUSED PRIORITIES AND HOW TO FIX THEM

*See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. Colossians 2:8*

Survival is the basic principle of this world. Anyone who denies that has never look closely at Darwin. The entire Darwinian world view is built upon the idea of the survival of the fittest.

Am I saying Darwin is correct? No. I am saying Darwin defines what this world thinks is correct--the basic principle of this world referred to in the verse above.

As a Christian you know that this world and the kingdom of God operate in opposition to each other. The verse above commands Christians not to be taken into captivity by the survival principle that is the basic principle of this world.

That is easier said than done.

The drawing on the cover of this issue spotlights what we all know: some circumstances can force most all of us to make survival our first priority.

That is the slavery we must free ourselves from if we are to serve God in this generation.

## **CONFUSED PRIORITIES**

If you don't believe this generation of Christians is enslaved to the basic principles of this world rather than to Christ, go to any of the "obedient" Christians you know who are married and have a family and get them to drill down in the Bible and show you why they do what they do the way they do it. Nine out of ten, or more, will finally take you to this verse in the Bible as their root explanation: *"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."* 1 Tim. 5:8

If you don't believe me, go do your research. Ask the Christians around you and you will see that the 1 Timothy verse defines for this generation of Christians the First Priority, Job One, the Absolute Necessity that a Christian must fulfill in order to be seen to be in good standing as a Christian.

That opinion forms a consensus among Christians that is sacrosanct within this generation in the USA. And the consensus is perpetuated and reinforced in virtually every congregation in the nation. The teacher or Pastor will go to whatever lengths are required until a consensus has been reached within the particular body of Christians that agrees on this one thing: Christians who do not provide for their own as their first priority must be seen to be worse than an infidel.

But is the consensus true? Is Paul's instruction to Timothy defining every Christian's first priority? Or is Paul simply defining a natural necessity?

Read it again: *"...if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel..."*

If you will think about it, you will see that the text clearly defines a priority that every Christian must recognize and work toward, but the text says absolutely nothing about caring for our family as our first priority.

The text can be accurately paraphrased this way: Even infidels by nature look after their own. If a Christian tried to pretend they had no obligation to provide for their own, the Christian would prove they have learned nothing from the Holy Spirit of God and are acting worse than an infidel.

The Apostle Paul could have just as easily have substituted any creature for the "infidel" and said they were acting worse than a lion or a water buffalo or a rat because most brute beasts will by nature provide for their own.

Hopefully this much will now be clear: instead of being a sacrosanct statement about what God expects to be our first priority, the text tells us what we must normally do as a matter of course if we want to be understood to be better than infidels or brute beasts.

But, that said, we still are left with the question about what the Bible teaches about God's first priority.

What happens if in fact this generation has been misled about God's priorities and has therefore failed to obey God's first priority?

If we were surrounded by a rock solid consensus built upon a false teaching about God's first priority, it is likely we would find ourselves in a situation that looks exactly like the one around us today.

When a generation of Christians decides to forego fulfilling God's actual first priority and decides to teach the false doctrine that caring for our family is God's first priority in order to cover up their refusal to obey God's first priority, the door is opened for Satan to come in and abide among God's people. The Bible teaches clearly that those who look after themselves and their family as their first priority and refuse to do God's real first priority are literally exactly like everybody else in the world and in fact, instead of serving the God revealed in Holy Scripture, actually serve what the Bible calls "the god of this world."

Obviously I am making as serious an accusation as can be made about Christians. Such an accusation must be accompanied by incontrovertible proof or the accuser would clearly be guilty of false witness.

I bring such proof. This issue will provide clear evidence proving that this generation of Christians in the USA has become a central source of confusion in the world because it is implementing priorities that claim to be the first priorities of God but are in fact exactly the priorities that Satan, the god of this world, requires everyone in this world to implement.

*Continued On Next Page*

**READ  
THIS FIRST!**

# OUR CHOICE OF PRIORITIES DEFINES OUR GOD

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIORITIES

*"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25*

You can see the importance of priorities when you realize that people naturally do "what is right in their own eyes" when they lack a common priority that requires them to do the same thing at the same time.

If you read about the events surrounding the Judges passage cited above, you will see that without mutually shared priorities, society disintegrates into chaos, and death rules over all. For this reason in

Holy Scripture God does everything words can do to teach His people about the common priorities He requires us to implement together.

Listen to what the Apostle Paul tells the church at Corinth and you will see how important this is to God, "1 Cor 1:10 KJV: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

All you have to do to see the disintegration in this present generation of Christians is to realize that for the most part Christians have quit trying to find a way to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." It's as if the Apostles never beseeched us!

I suggest we have quit trying because we don't have a vision for a strategy that might offer even the possibility of finding a way to become of one mind and of one judgment. If we learn to understand God's priorities, we will find that strategy. If we who are in Christ will agree on God's priorities and begin to try to implement them together, there is nothing in the universe that can prevent us from being "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Why? To understand God's priorities together is to literally stand under the mind of God as He tells us the order He wants things to occur on earth.

Our present disintegration as a generation of Christians can be traced directly to the fact that we have

not found a way to agree on God's priorities. Not only that, we have not even been taught that our first priority as Christians must be understanding God's priorities!

All it takes for Christians to become the principle agents of death and destruction and hell is for Christians to do as the Pharisees did and ignore what the Bible teaches about God's priorities. Without the Bible as the objective standard that specifies priorities that everyone must implement together, people replay the scene described in the Judges passage above. Without the Bible to describe God's priorities, there is no King; Rex Lex is dead; And each

person becomes god unto himself. The world disintegrates into bestial chaos where the law of the jungle provides the only structuring principle.

I'm not saying we have failed to study the Bible. But we can learn everything else the Bible teaches yet if we fail to understand what the Bible teaches about God's priorities, it will be

worse than learning nothing about God at all. It will be worse because people who know nothing about God can do nothing to deceive people about God because their ignorance of God will be self-evident to any observer. It is the people who look and act and think they know about God but in fact do not understand God's priorities, people like the Pharisees, that literally lead the whole world astray.

For this reason, Jesus Christ made His primary enemies on earth the Pharisees. No wonder. The Pharisees were thought by themselves and by the world to be servants of God, but they actually failed to follow God's priorities at all and ended up crucifying and killing God incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## PRIORITIES IN ACTION

If enough of us decided to make the abolition of legalized abortion our first priority, it would be abolished.

**The abolition of legalized abortion is literally simply a matter of priorities.**

Even in a situation like Iraq, where the USA is the mightiest military force in the history of the world, if enough people in Iraq got together and decided to make one thing their common first priority, the USA

***I am come that  
they may have  
life and have it  
abundantly.*** John 10:10

**Does that sound to you  
like Jesus Christ is talking priorities?**

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would either adopt that priority or be forced to genocidally destroy the population of Iraq as Israel is presently being tempted to destroy the population of Palestine.

That's the power that manifests itself in reality when people agree on priorities.

### **ENTER THE FEAR OF DEATH**

But of course, even if the people of Iraq could miraculously all suddenly become of one mind and decide to throw the USA out of their country, there would be one more obstacle to overcome before the people could accomplish their goal: the fear of death. That is because, unless another miracle intervened, much death would have to occur before the USA withdrew from Iraq.

**Hebrews 2:<sup>14</sup>Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; <sup>15</sup>And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**

The Hebrews passage makes it clear that the fear of death, under ordinary circumstances, is the actual structuring principle and power in this world. And the fear of death is a double-edged sword. Just as the USA can use the fear of death to control our enemies in Iraq, so too can the fear of death be used to control us.

And therein we see the heart of the delimita faced by every person alive on the earth today.

Read the Hebrews 2 passage again and you will see it talks about the delimita I have spotlighted. The passage tells of two things: 1. the devil had the power of death; 2. the devil used the power of the fear of death to keep everyone on earth in slavery.

But the passage also tells us something else. Those things happened in the past: the devil "had" the power of death; the devil "used" the fear of death.

The passage is designed to tell us that what was once true in the past is no longer true in the present because God had done something to change things.

The passage specifies what God had done to change things: "*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil...*"

Then we are told the result: "<sup>8</sup>*Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. <sup>9</sup>But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

Few words in the Bible are more relevant to our situation today than these: "But now we see not yet all things put under him..."

If all things were under the power of the Jesus being discussed by the writer to the Hebrews, there would be no more pain, no suffering, no loneliness, no tears, no confusion, no rage, no panic...no death.

But those things are here.

Every true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ will be asking, "What am I supposed to do while we wait for "all things to be put under him...?"

Today we are surrounded by legions of Christian teachers all trying to answer that question. But they do not speak with one voice. Many Christians say we should just tell people about Jesus Christ--preach the gospel and that is all we need to do as we wait.

We say something else. As each day passes with the fear of death growing not only in the world but in the hearts and minds of people who have been trained to believe they are Christians, it is our prayer that this issue of The Abortion Abolitionist might be used by God to provide all God's people with a blueprint of action that, if followed, will still the fear of death in the elect and guide us to do those things we were created to do while we wait for "all things to be put under him."

As you seek to find the strategy God intends for you to implement, remember this guiding principle God gave to all His people:

<sup>2</sup> Cor 6:<sup>14</sup>Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>And what concord hath Christ with Belial? <sup>16</sup>And what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? <sup>16</sup>And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>17</sup>Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, <sup>18</sup>And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

**Romans 6:<sup>14</sup>For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.**

# God's Priorities Are The Opposite Of The World's Priorities

***For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*** Matthew 16:25

The verse above demonstrates that God's way of life is the opposite of the world's survival principle. Because God's definition of priorities conflicts with this world's "common sense" any study of priorities cannot be treated lightly or given short shrift.

On one level priorities are some of the easiest things in the world to understand: all it takes is the ability to understand simple arithmetic. If a person can see the difference between one and two or first and last--all those simple number relationships--then that person has enough knowledge to understand priorities.

But just because a person can understand *about* priorities does not mean that person can understand God's priorities. In fact the Bible tells us that some people cannot understand God's priorities at all..."But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14

It's easy to see why the natural man would think God's priorities are "foolishness." God's priorities are literally the opposite of the natural man's priorities.

If you are in Christ, you already know what I mean. The natural man depends on money and physical power and all the attributes of the flesh to provide survival and all the things that the natural man desires. The natural man fawns over those things and will do just about anything to get them.

But the Lord Jesus Christ teaches another priority structure. James described it this way, "1My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord of glory*, with respect of persons. 2For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" James 2:1-4

It is easy to become a judge with "evil thoughts" in this world today; it is easy to forget that the priorities of the Lord Jesus Christ are literally the opposite of what we expect in the flesh.

In the flesh we expect the first to be, well, *first*. With the priorities

of God, it is not always so.

Matthew tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ made sure His disciples would understand this. In Matthew 20 The Lord explains the kingdom of heaven by telling a story about a farmer who needed help. He hired people at different times to work in the fields but paid them all the same. When the farmer was challenged, he said, "15Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."

## **GOD DEFINES PRIORITIES FOR US, NOT VICE VERSA**

The preceding example gives us ample evidence to prove that not only does God have the right to define priorities according to His definition, but His priorities sometimes might not make "sense" to people.

Another example of how the Lord Jesus Christ turns the world's priorities upside down is seen when He said, "And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. Mark 9:35-37

All we've established up to this point is our need to study Holy Scripture before we make any decisions about God's priorities. The main question remains:

## **WHAT ARE GOD'S PRIORITIES?**

Given the fact that priorities are so important in everything human beings do, we should not be surprised that God defined His priorities so clearly in Holy Scripture that a person has to really work hard to ignore His meaning. See for yourself.

## **Luke 10:25-37: God's Priorities Defined**

*And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26He said unto him, What is written in the*

## **A Dying Man Delivered From Death**



law? how readest thou? <sup>27</sup>And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. <sup>28</sup>And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. <sup>29</sup>But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

It is most significant that this encounter with a lawyer is very similar to another encounter with a lawyer recorded in Matthew 22: 35ff. The similarity in the two passages is seen in that Jesus Christ gave essentially the same answer in both places. The only difference in the passages was the question asked. In the Matthew 22 passage the lawyer asked, "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law." The Matthew 22 questioner specified what the first questioner only implied when he asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life." Both questions were designed to get Jesus Christ to talk about God's priorities. Both lawyers were trying to get Jesus Christ to commit himself to answering the most important question that can be asked of God: What should I do first?

**DEFINITION OF NEIGHBOR SECOND IN IMPORTANCE ONLY TO DEFINITION OF GOD**

The man had to ask Jesus to define his neighbor because, even though every "expert in the law" knew what it meant to love God, there was then, as there is now, some lack of certainty about the referent for the word "neighbor." The lawyer knew that how Jesus Christ defined neighbor would determine whether Jesus Christ could be accused of a crime against God.

Christians today have fallen into the trap the lawyer originally tried to spring on Jesus Christ. People don't think about the question that was asked Jesus that day so long ago. *Everybody* knows who our neighbor is. If there is any doubt, all we have to do is open a dictionary and we'll find our definition: "a person who lives near another...a fellow man; as, love thy neighbor...any person..." (Webster's Unabridged).

**False Definition of Neighbor Is At Root Of Christian Failure To Understand or Obey God's Priorities**

Jesus Christ did not define

neighbor the way the dictionary does. One of the fundamental causes of our social disintegration can be traced to the fact that Christians do not understand how Jesus defined neighbor. Not only did Jesus' definition of neighbor not make it into our dictionaries, neither did it make it into our churches or our hearts. To prove what I'm saying, ask people who call themselves Christians how they define neighbor and they will give you the dictionary definition, not Jesus' definition. And the name of Jesus is blasphemed today because of it.

When asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus defined the word, not by looking in a dictionary, but by telling a story, a story about a Good Samaritan. It is a story so well known that hardly anyone actually thinks about the meaning of the story anymore. Like Little Red Riding Hood and Chicken Little and Humpty Dumpty, the story Jesus told has become a part of our folklore and like much of our folklore the original meaning of the story has been utterly forgotten by us folks.

**Jesus said our neighbor was the person dying in the ditch.**

Read the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37). Jesus did not say our neighbor was the person who lived near us; Jesus did not say our neighbor was everyone or anyone

who lived on the planet. Jesus said our neighbor was the person dying in the ditch. Jesus did everything words can do to explain it was that dying person who qualified for the name "neighbor." Furthermore, Jesus made it clear that **the only person who loved their neighbor was the person who stopped and helped that person dying in the ditch.**

Do you think Jesus had no specific meaning to communicate when he chose a person who was dying as the referent for the word neighbor? Do you think it was merely coincidence that he chose a dying person as his example of what the word neighbor means? Do you believe we could just as easily substitute any other person for the example chosen by Jesus Christ and we would still be obedient to God's definition of priorities? If you think that, you must think that Jesus Christ tossed words around with no more care for their meaning than a child learning to talk.

No Christian would blaspheme the Lord Jesus Christ like that.

**People Who Did Not Love Their Neighbor**

In addition to the Good Samaritan, there were two other people Jesus mentioned when He defined His priorities.

<sup>31</sup>And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side."

In the picture you can see them fleeing. Both of those people were the exact Jewish equivalent of Christian pastors or teachers or elders in this nation today.



See The People Who Did Not Love Their Neighbor?

## Christian Pastors and Teachers Leave The Babies Dying In The Ditch

Jesus made it clear that the Priest who refused to stop and help the person dying in the ditch did not love their neighbor. Neither did the Levite on his way to work in the Temple as all Levites were born to do (no doubt to minister and worship there). By ignoring the person dying in the ditch, the Priest and Levite became examples of people who do not love their neighbor.

**Are you beginning to see why so many Christians hate what we are doing with The Abortion Abolitionist?**



### BOOKS LIKE THIS CONFUSE GOD'S PRIORITIES

The book was written by Garth L. Hallett, a d j u n c t professor of philosophy and Dean of the College of Philosophy and Letters at St. Louis University, and was published by Cambridge University Press in 2001. Its title

**Priorities and Christian Ethics** proves its relevance here.

This is what the publishers say about the book, "This book provides the fullest contemporary treatment of an issue which is particularly pressing today: when the claims of the nearest (e.g. parents, children, spouses, friends) conflict with the claims of the neediest, as they constantly do, where should preference go? Professor Hallett focuses first on a specific, representative case, pitting the lesser need of a son against the greater need of starving strangers. He brings to bear on this single paradigm all the resources of theological and philosophical reflection - scriptures, patristic teaching, the Thomistic tradition, current debates - and from this single example he sheds light on a wide range of comparable cases, both private and public. This distinctive strategy leads to distinctive and challenging results, and at the same time helps to clarify the traditional 'order of charity' and the celebrated 'preferential option for the poor'."

This book spotlights exactly how every Christian in every developed country in the world has managed to go about their business as legalized

abortion created rivers of human blood around them. The author's premise is clear in the publisher's book notes. At the very least a reasonable person must understand that the "claims of the nearest (e.g. parents, children, spouses, friends)" can be arguably defended as a godly goal in "Christian Ethics" when the claims of the "nearest" are balanced against the claims of the "neediest."

### THE FALSE FIRST PRIORITY: WORSE THAN AN INFIDEL

Among this generation of Christians, the argument has been made over and over again in pulpit and seminary and Sunday School room and Bible study that the claims of the "nearest" must win out over the claims of the "neediest." The proof text invariably lands on 1 Timothy 5:<sup>8</sup>*But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

As was said in another article, that proof text has led to a consensus among Christians that is sacrosanct. The teacher or Pastor will go to whatever lengths are required until a consensus has been reached within the particular body of Christians that agrees on this one thing: Christians who do not provide for their own *as their first priority* must be seen to be worse than an infidel.

That particular consensus presently rules the conscience of this generation of Christians. Unless that consensus was firmly in place, there would be no way whatsoever for Christians to justify standing idly by as millions of little babies are being legally butchered around them.

Look closely at the text and you will see that it says literally nothing about God's first priority and says everything about how people can be expected to act naturally when they are forced to make decisions about priorities. When the text says that a person who does not provide for his own has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel, the text is merely stating that even infidels will naturally understand that looking after our own family is a priority that God expects Christians to attend to. But is the text saying that looking after our family is to be understood to be God's first priority?

In fact if this text was teaching that looking after our family was to be considered by God to be the first priority of a Christian, it would directly contradict the point of the story about the Good Samaritan. <sup>27</sup>*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.* <sup>28</sup>*And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*

It cannot be repeated enough that all that is being said when Paul told Timothy that "...if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel..." is this: even infidels by nature look after their own. For a Christian to ignore that obligation would be for the Christian to prove they have learned nothing from the

Holy Spirit of God and are acting worse than an infidel. The Apostle Paul could have just as easily said they were acting worse than a lion or a water buffalo because even many brute beasts will by nature provide for their own.

The point should be clear: instead of being a sacrosanct statement about what God expects to be our first priority, the text tells us what we must normally do as a matter of course if we want to be understood to be better than infidels or brute beasts. But, that said, that still leaves us with the question of how we go about fulfilling God's priorities.

It is impossible to escape the dilemma that occurs when the neediest intrude into our ordinary responsibility to provide for the nearest: our own family. There is no doubt that under ordinary situations we would never be justified in sacrificing the needs of our family to go out and try to satisfy the needs of the the neediest. **B u t** there is one exception to that rule. The story of the Good Samaritan demonstrates that exception. The Lord Jesus Christ made it clear that the Priest and the Levite who passed by the man dying in the ditch, no matter where they were going and no matter what they has scheduled to do, did not love their neighbor. Period.

### **WHEN PEOPLE ARE IN DANGER OF IMMINENT DEATH, ORDINARY PRIORITIES CHANGE TO GOD'S PRIORITIES**

One of the ways God has to show us His priorities is to tell us about the things that will cause us to be cast away from Him. He does that because God understands that avoiding those things that can cause us to lose access to God will be high on the list of priorities for those who know His grace.

Matthew 25 is one of those places. As you reread what the Lord Jesus Christ says there, please pay attention to the fact that the things he is talking about are things that bring people into the presence of imminent death. Look closely and you will see that he was talking about how we are to respond to people in danger of imminent death.

Matthew 25:31ff, " <sup>31</sup>When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: <sup>32</sup>And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: <sup>33</sup>And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup>Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup>For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: <sup>36</sup>Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. <sup>37</sup>Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? <sup>38</sup>When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

<sup>39</sup>Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? <sup>40</sup>And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. <sup>41</sup>Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup>For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. <sup>44</sup>Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? <sup>45</sup>Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. <sup>46</sup>And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF "THE LEAST"**

The words Jesus Christ uses above in defining God's priorities make it clear that, insofar as serving human beings is concerned, God will always have only one first priority and that priority will always be the one that qualifies as the least. Since that is the case, we must make understanding "least" our first priority as well.

Least is a term from simple arithmetic. The concept of least is used in discussing an array of numbers, or a list of items of any type. **In any given array there will always only be one item or number that can be accurately called the "least."** (If the preceding sentence were to be given the emphasis it deserves because of the importance it has in explaining this article, the font would be eight times larger and flash different colors constantly so the words would be etched into the reader's consciousness like an implanted microbe chip.) For instance, in a list containing the numbers 2, 3, 5, 2 and 7. The single number 2 will be the least even though there are multiple instances of that number. It is that one number that will be the least in that array and there is nothing in the universe that logically or truthfully defines a different "least."

Unless we grasp the point that there can never be more than one "least" we can never hear what Jesus Christ was trying to tell us in Matthew 25. In that passage, Jesus Christ is discussing an array composed of categories or types of human beings. He tells us that as we do it unto the least in that array containing all the categories of human beings, we do it unto Him.

## SUMMARIZING WHAT WE HAVE SEEN

So in addition to the priority principle Jesus revealed in His story about the good Samaritan, Jesus Christ revealed another Priority Principle in Matthew 25: **not only are we required to make our first priority the reaching out to people who are dying, within that category of people dying we are to reach out to the least before we reach out to any of the others.**

In other words, by identifying Himself with the least of these, and then by further amplifying His priorities by telling us about the Good Samaritan, **Jesus Christ created a teaching that requires His obedient servants to make their first priority the protection of the least among those people who are scheduled to unjustly die today.**

A simple glance at what Jesus had in mind makes His point clear. Even when people are dying and all need help, the least of them will be the most vulnerable, the most likely to die first without help. Those who are not the least are by definition better equipped than the least to fend for themselves. Of course, as soon as the least is helped, they no longer qualify as the least who are unjustly dying because they will have been delivered from death. At that point, the next least will become the least and will then be the first priority for help.

So that is the process of priorities defined by the Lord Jesus Christ. After serving the least, then we go to the next least, on up the line of leasts until everyone that we can serve that day has been served in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this definition of God's priorities, the serious intent of God to resist death and show us how to resist death is defined and clarified so that every category of human being is seen to be the object of God's desire for life beginning with the "last" and "least" and ending with the "first" and "greatest."

## **BIBLICAL PRIORITY PRINCIPLES LEADS TO A QUESTION: HOW DO WE HELP THE LEAST AMONG US WHO IS DYING?**

The answer to the question posed above is not necessarily obvious. Since any action taken in defense of a person who is dying can carry risks, significant risks, to the person trying to help, left to settle the matter for themselves the recipe for helping the dying person will vary depending on how much risk the prospective helper is willing to face.

Jesus Christ understood that people naturally value themselves above other people. He knew that people are naturally unwilling to risk doing anything that might jeopardize their personal safety, or peace, or prosperity. Because of these things, Jesus Christ took great pains to tell His followers how exactly they were to go about helping the least among us who is dying.

## **THE LAW OF JESUS CHRIST**

Most people have heard the following words of

Jesus Christ, but most people, Christians included, have not seen their significance. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matthew 7:12

An enormously important significance must be seen in the fact that Jesus Christ called this particular saying, "...the law and the prophets." In other words, calling something "the law and the prophets" must be seen to be a signal event with startling priority significance.

You can understand the significance Jesus Christ was trying to communicate by looking at Luke 24 and analyzing there how the same "law and prophets" concept was used in other places in Scripture. Luke 24:27 "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself..." Then later in the same chapter, we are told, Luke 24:44 "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures..."

The point should be clear: numerous examples can prove that Scripture often uses the concept of "the law" to refer to the five books understood by the Apostles to be written by Moses, and "the prophets" was often understood to refer to all the other old testament books with the exception of the "poetry books," Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes.

So when Jesus Christ called this commandment, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them..." the "law and the prophets" He was telling His disciples that this particular commandment was a summary statement of all the statements in the Bible designed to tell people how to treat other people.

If you didn't know it prior to reading this and you actually understand what I am trying to say, your mouth should flop open in amazement. I have just made either one of the most stupid statements you have ever heard or one of the most important. The accurate judgment of what I am doing will all depend on whether or not Jesus Christ actually found one sentence that summarizes the meaning of everything that God had tried to teach people in the Old Testament about how to treat their fellowman/woman/child.

So look at what He said. If we do unto other people the things that we would want to have done to us, will we fulfill everything God wants people to do in their relationship with other people? Examine the matter in detail and you will prove you want to obey the commandment Jesus Christ called "the law and the prophets."

In order to obey that commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ it is necessary to first put ourselves in the position of the person we are required to judge. In other words, we cannot decide what we would want men to

do to us unless we put ourselves in their shoes first. For example, before we can judge a rapist, we must ask ourselves what would we want done to ourselves were we to be a rapist.

It is necessary to issue a disclaimer right here. Now obviously the Lord Jesus Christ is talking in Matt 7:12 not to a reprobate sinner but to a disciple of Jesus Christ who has access to the mind of Christ who would guide them to understand what they should do to rightly fulfill what the Lord called "the law". He is not saying do unto others as a reprobate rapist would want done unto him, but do unto the rapist as we would want done were we to be a rapist yet somehow still have access to the mind of Christ. I know this sounds strange and hard to understand. But I have seen convicts who met the Lord Jesus Christ while in prison, and I have seen those convicts decide to confess crimes they had never been convicted of because they would want others to do that for them. In that example, that unsaved sinner was saved and came to receive access to the mind of Christ and could actually understand what men "should" do to him given the crimes he had actually committed.

Even though what I am discussing is hard to get into focus and understand, we must exert whatever effort is required. To fail to do so is to break the law and to become disobedient to everything God tried to instruct His people insofar as their interactions with other people are concerned.

So when we ask ourselves what would we want to have done to us, or to make the matter even more close to home, to one of our beloved children should such and such a situation occur, we are defining the prerequisite necessary to obey the Lord's command in Matt. 7:12.

### **WORDS OF JESUS CHRIST NOT TO BE IGNORED OR TWISTED**

"Beware lest any man spoil you [take you into captivity, NIV] through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Colossian 2:8

Think about the Christian leaders who head the myriad Christian organizations in this nation? Are the actions of this generation of Christians helping people understand the priorities defined by Jesus Christ?

All we have to do is open our eyes and we can watch thousands of babies being led to the slaughter in the United States of America each day that passes. But the vast throng of Christians are turning their heads away as they go about fulfilling a definition of God's priorities that is the direct opposite of the Biblical exegesis explained here.

Is it not clear that the Christians who turn their heads away from the babies being killed are not implementing the priorities taught by the Lord Jesus Christ in the story of the Good Samaritan? Instead this generation of Christians is implementing today exactly the same definition of priorities demonstrated by the Priest and the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan.

**Our Priorities Prove Who Loves Their Neighbor**

Repeat: Look closely at the two other people mentioned in the story who passed by the man dying in the ditch. <sup>31</sup>And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side."

Both of those people were the exact Jewish equivalent of Christian pastors or teachers or elders in this nation today. Jesus made it clear that the Priest who refused to stop and help the person dying in the ditch did not love their neighbor. Neither did the Levite on his way to work in the Temple as all Levites were born to do (no doubt to minister and worship there). By ignoring the person dying in the ditch, the Priest and Levite became examples of people who do not love their neighbor.

As we walk by the babies dying in the ditch created by the Supreme Court of the United States of America, we the people, each and every one of us, treat dying people exactly the way the Priest and Levite treated the man dying in the ditch.

### **PRIORITIES ARE WORSHIP!**

Any person who claimed to want to serve the Lord Jesus Christ but spent 3/4 of their waking hours standing before a mirror putting on makeup, then spent the other 1/4 of their time eating would be easily dismissed as one whose priorities proved that the only god they truly worshipped was the one they saw in the mirror. Since worship is nothing more than showing God how we feel about Him, the priorities we choose are the essence of our true worship of God, all formalities notwithstanding.

The example above is so perfectly clear and indisputable because the Bible makes it a priority to define God's priorities. Even though there might be serious dispute about what the Bible teaches about God's priorities, no one would teach that the Bible wants people to make it a priority to spend all their time looking into a mirror or feeding their faces.

There is a conclusion that grows logically out of everything revealed in this article; it is a conclusion that no one should ever have to utter about a generation of Christians. But the conclusion, like all true conclusions, grows inescapably out of an accurate analysis of the evidence at hand and therefore will be said sooner or later.

And the conclusion is this: As far as helping people understand God's priorities, the leaders of Christians in this generation would serve God better, like the person above, spending all their time standing before a mirror putting on makeup or feeding their faces. At least then nobody would be misled into thinking they were fulfilling God's priorities! God deliver us from such leaders so that we can worship you as you deserve to be worshipped! End