

God's Instruction for Women to Seek Him First

Our author, Diana Scallion begins this lesson or chapter with the statement, GOD SHOULD BE OUR MOST IMPORTANT TREASURE—more than our comfort, security, or hearts' ambitions. When it is obvious to others that God is not most important in our lives, we minimize our ability to radiate His character. She could have listed so many other words there, but she chose...than our comfort, security, or hearts' ambition. So I was wondering for myself, what is it that I TRULY treasure? Is it those things? Or is it something else? Maybe a successful career? "Good" kids? (You can define what "good" means there.) A successful husband? Enough money to have the same kind of house my friends have? Or a newer car? You fill in the blank. What is it that drives you? What is it that YOU treasure? By the way you live, what would other people maybe think that you truly treasure? Whatever it is that vies for the throne of your heart, that is what she is talking about in this lesson.

Philippians 3:7-14 Paul says **"But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."** What a challenging passage for me! Do I consider all things in this life loss when it comes to the surpassing knowledge of knowing Jesus Christ and where I will be spending eternity.

SEEK HIM ABOVE SUCCESS AND MONEY

She mentions that our world emphasizes being successful and having enough money to do whatever one wants as a priority. In fact, a large part of people's joy and satisfaction comes from having success. Really, God calls us to seek Him first and foremost. Everything else is blessings! As Matthew 6:24 says...**we cannot serve two masters. Our hearts cannot belong to both God and to money** (or the pursuit of money).

Why do you think that most people want more money? To have more stuff? To live comfortably? To have money to travel? To be able to have the things that their friends have? The Bible says in I Timothy 6: 10 that **the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith because of their greediness.**

My friend, God wants you to have everything you need! I love the way that the CSB puts it (similar to the English Bible) The Lord is my Shepherd. (Ps.23) The Lord is my Shepherd. I have all that I need. He lets me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He renews my life. He leads me along the right paths for His name's sake. I have everything I need. God is the Greatest Provider! And He knows us so deeply... He knows exactly what we need. We can trust Him in this very moment of our lives and in our next one, that we are going to have what we need because He is our Father; He is our Shepherd.

Matthew 6:25-34 talks about how God loves us so much and because of His great love, He provides everything that we need. God has provided for the birds of the air, for the lilies of the field....Why would He not more so care deeply over me, His child! I think that is so wonderful. He mentions also in that passage, you will remember about the one that says they are too short. He says what can worrying do for the one who says they are too short. It is not going to gain even one inch. So DON'T WORRY! Trust God. He has your future! You can trust Him! God commands, "Do not worry"! So much easier said than done!

Also....We should

SEEK HIM ABOVE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Question No. 5 on page 70 asks...Other than God, who do you depend on most? And Why? I had to stop there and ask myself, do I actually depend on God more than anyone? I know for me, it is easy to depend on those around me when I need to work something out or figure something out. It is easy to call on those in my family, or my friends. Or people I work with and depend on them to help me when I should be trusting or calling on my Heavenly Father, who is my Great Provider! Who can do ANYTHING! And wants to! The Bible says in Proverbs 8:17 that **He loves those who seek Him**. And He tells them in that verse **those who seek Him...they will find Him!** It is a promise that we can bank on!

Our earthly relationships reflect our relationship with God....the more we cultivate our relationship with God, the more we will evidence the fruit of the Spirit in our relationships here on earth.

In John 15:1-8, Jesus is talking about **The True Vine**. He says that He is the True Vine and God the Father is the Vinedresser. He talks about how we...as part of the VINE...should remain in the VINE, remain in HIM, ABIDING IN (remaining, living, staying alive, or getting life from) the Vine. That is how we bear fruit because we are sustained by...get life from abiding in the Vine. If we do not abide in the Vine, verse 5 says **we can do nothing**. The Vine's roots transmit food through the vine. Those nutrients then support the leaves, stems, flowers and fruits of the Vine. That's how we get the "nutrients" we need. As believers we cannot bear fruit if we are not attached to...or getting our nutrients from Jesus, The Vine.

How do we cultivate a relationship with Jesus so that we can abide in Christ, our Vine? Abiding with God is crucial in our daily walk with the Lord. In fact, the love, priority, and devotion we have for God is part of abiding in Him. As we abide in Him, we radiate His love toward others. Remember that placing God above our earthly relationships will have a positive impact. As we fall in love with God more, we are better able to love those around us.

SEEK HIM ABOVE YOUR DESIRES

In Matthew 6:33, we are commanded....*commanded to seek God first*. As we do, blessings will flow. How do we seek Him first? What vehicles can we use to help us, to train us to seek Him? ~~Certainly as encouraged by Renny as she taught Lesson 9, we can do so by spending time with Him both in prayer and in His Word.~~ Our writer suggests we should be constantly seeking God in all that we do and dwelling in His presence. Until we make spending time with Him important, we are missing out on the joy. I often wonder what joy I have forfeited because I have been too busy to delve into His Word with the same hunger with which I pursue my passions. Ezra Taft Benson says, "When we put God first, all other things fall into proper place OR drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities."

These passions....while not necessarily evil, or bad, or of the Devil...even in and of themselves maybe good things, but do they take valuable time away from time I could spend with My Lord? There is a fine line that needs drawn between doing things I enjoy with people I love, but not allowing those to cause me to forsake valuable time with my Savior. He **died** for me! He is my Comfort, my Peace...He is where I get my peace. He is my Joy, my First Love.

Is He that? My First Love? I need to challenge myself regularly with making sure that I keep Him as the Priority or on the throne of my heart? Do I seek Him above money, success, relationships, and desires? Does the time I spend with Him reflect that I love Him more than those things? A couple of Sundays ago, Dr. Tillotson reminded us that we should be following the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Do I love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all of my soul, with all of my mind, and with all of my strength? The second commandment is like unto it.... do I love my neighbor as I love myself? That will be shown if I am part of the Great Commission? Dr. Tillotson reminded us of the Great Commission. Am I passionately striving to bring others to Him? Do my priorities reflect that I love the Lord and that I have a desire to bring others to Him?

Our writer ends the lesson with an admonition to remember that our hearts should belong to Jesus first. We are most effective when we are dwelling in God's ways rather than our own. We are most joyful when we are daily surrendering

to God our comfort, our security, and the ambitions that He has for us. After all He is our Father! He wants the best for us. Do you remember the song we used to sing? Is my all on the alter of sacrifice laid? My heart does the Spirit control? That was a great song and a challenge to me today.

I so wish I could be with you listen in as you move into a discussion on this lesson and of the questions under the application section. I pray you have a wonderful week as you work your way **against the tide** toward **holiness**. God bless you.