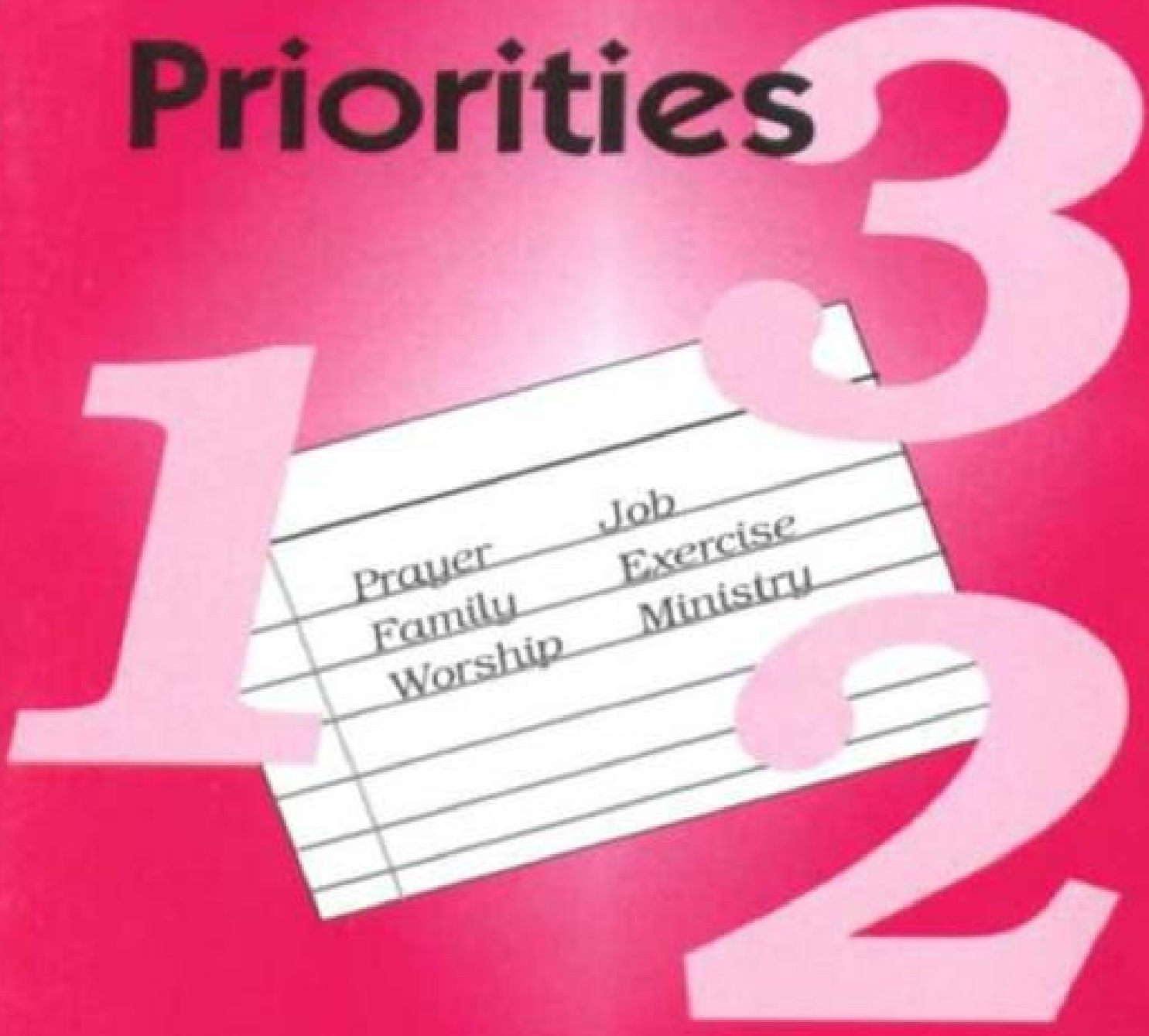
Juggling Your Priorities



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Chapter 1

God's Will for You Is Peace and Order

Today, most people need help to prioritize their obligations so they can seize the moment and perform to the maximum, both in their natural obligations and in their God-ordained assignments. To prioritize and balance your obligations properly, a divine order needs to be put in place in your life.

Paul dealt with "order" in relating to the operation of the gifts of the Spirit in the Church. He revealed something about the character and nature of God that is applicable to our individual lives as well. In 1 Corinthians 14:33, Paul said:

For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Confusion means "tumult, lack of quietness, torment, disorder, chaos, clutter, pandemonium, or commotion."

Then Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:40: **Let all things be done decently and in order.**

If God wants order and peace in the Church, He certainly wants order and peace in our personal lives. When our lives are operated in peace and divine order, then we carry that same peace and order, rather than chaos and confusion, into a corporate setting. Jesus said:

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27

God Brought Order Into Creation

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light”; and there was light.

Genesis 1:1-3

In the beginning, the earth was void, empty, without form and organization. Often, this is true of people's lives. When God's Spirit moves and the Word goes forth, however, light will come into your life and darkness will be removed.

It's time to prioritize every aspect of your life according to God's divine order.

God is not the author of confusion.

Chapter 2

God's Guideline for Success

God's guideline for real success in life is to do *joyfully* and *completely* what He has called you to do.

Charles Story is a personal friend who ministers to the prisoners, including the death row inmates, at the Oklahoma State Prison in McAlester, Oklahoma. This is success to Charles because it is God's calling upon his life. For you to attempt the same thing could be failure if God has not called you to do it.

Mark 8:36 says, **"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"** What if you reach the top of the corporate ladder, build an industry or a business and do what you want to do, yet you do not hear God's voice? Though it may look like total success in the eyes of the world, it will be complete failure to God if it's not His plan for you.

It's time to obey what God has called you to do. As you allow the Holy Spirit and the Word of

God to flow together in your life, you will move into the success God has planned for you.

Chapter 3

Jesus, Be the Lord of All

To have your priorities in divine order, God must be in charge of your life. To be fully in charge, He must be your first love.

When you respond positively to God as He speaks and as light and revelation come through His Word, chaos and disorder will be removed from your life. It starts with a heart that says, "Jesus, be the Lord of all. Be the Lord of my family, time, finances, work, play, thoughts and desires." When He is Lord of all these areas, then He can order your life with His priorities.

Matthew 6:33 says, **"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."** *"'All these things"* refer to all the things the world is consumed with getting—food, clothing, housing, vocation, entertainment, prestige, etc. Their time is prioritized and ruled by the temporal things of life. Jesus was saying, "It is not to be so with you."

According to Matthew 6:25-32, your life is not to be dictated by the pursuit of things:

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

"Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

"And yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

"For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

Our responsibility is to make sure Jesus is our first love. In speaking to the

church of the Laodiceans in Revelation 3, Jesus said:

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

"So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth."

Verses 15,16

The Laodiceans had done many good works, but they had lost the priority of fellowship with the

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The time you invest in the Word, in prayer and in fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit gives evidence of the first love of your life.

Let it be said of you and me, "They are on fire for God!"

Chapter 4

Be Led By the Spirit and the Word

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:5,6

God will direct your path by His Spirit and by His Word.

Led By God's Spirit

First Corinthians 6:17 says, **"But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him."** Romans 8:16 says, **"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."**

God will lead and guide you by an inner witness of the Holy Spirit in your spirit, by an inward knowing, or by a "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12).

Many people's lives are directed by the circumstances around them, Wall Street, Madison Avenue, the dictates and opinions of their friends, or by what is propagated in the media rather than by the Spirit of God.

You cannot allow the world's system to set your priorities. Instead, you need to ask, "What is the Spirit of God saying to me?"

Led By God's Word

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105

The more you let the Word of God dwell in you, it will become the guiding force in your life.

When you meditate continually in the Word, you won't have to pray whether or not to hook up with a shady deal. The Word has already illuminated that area, so avoid that pitfall.

People sometimes ask, "Should I marry this person who isn't a believer in Jesus Christ?" Or, "Should I marry this person who isn't sold out to Him?" Then they say, "Please pray with me so I will know what to do." No need to pray because the light of God's Word has already shined in that area in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer

with an unbeliever?

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.

Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.

"I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Many people are praying over things that God has already settled in His Word. If you are going to have your priorities set in divine order, you must listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and let the light of God's Word shine into you every day.

The Word is a searchlight that reveals wrong attitudes, motives and hidden agendas of the devil that have been planted by thoughts, people, or the world's system. When the Word shines into your life, you will be able to identify words, actions and attitudes that are not of God.

Prioritize your life with God's Word and by His Spirit.

Chapter 5

Moving in God's Seasons

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

It's good to be in the right place at the right time, moving in the seasons of God and in cooperation with Him. Sometimes our timing is ahead of God's timing. Frustration comes when we attempt to do things that are out of sync with God's timing.

For each of the twenty-four golden box cars in your day, God has a purpose. There is time for everything that you are to do in your day because you aren't an accident or a mistake. You are on the earth at this time by God's eternal plan. If He planned for you, then He didn't miss planning a day for you. When you realize that, then every morning you will get up with excitement, because you have divine appointments to keep.

Many people are wasting their lives one day at a time. They look back over their day, and there is nothing of value in it. They didn't render any service or goodness to mankind or to God. The big reason is because of their attitude and lack of perspective about God's eternal plans.

You are valuable to God. Wherever God has placed you, He has a plan for you in that place. God has a purpose for your life.

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal.

Ecclesiastes 3:2,3

You may be thinking, "I didn't know there was a time to kill." Colossians 3:5 AMP says, **"So kill (deaden, deprive of power) the evil desire lurking in your members [those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you that is employed in sin]: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, for that is idolatry (the deifying of self and other created things instead of God)."**

A time to break down, and a time to build up.

Ecclesiastes 3:3

Second Corinthians 10:5 KJV says there is a time to cast down. **"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the**

obedience of Christ."

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Ecclesiastes 3:4

There is a time to weep in sorrow over sin and repent of it. After genuine repentance comes victory!

Examples of "a time to mourn" are when a person is in intercession for the unborn who are being slaughtered in our country and for the unsaved all over the world.

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away.

Ecclesiastes 3:5,6

An example of "a time to lose" is to lose your life for Jesus and give up your own selfish desires to choose God's ways. There is a time to keep, but there is also a time to throw away those things that are not of Him.

A time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

What profit has the worker from that in which he labors?

I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied.

He has made everything beautiful in its time.

Ecclesiastes 3:7-11

When God orders your life, everything will be beautiful in His time.

One of the greatest dangers is to live with your mind in the future or in the past. Many people are going to have a great life when they get to a certain place, obtain a certain thing, or marry a certain person. Yet, when they get to that time, person, thing, or place, something else comes to their mind.

Don't miss your life for tomorrow or yesterday. Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day to hear and obey God's voice.

Perhaps you have to work double jobs or you have multiple involvements in your church and community. What is the key to balancing all of these things so you aren't a wreck and so you don't wreck other people; so you are not tormented, oppressed, beaten down and life isn't just a treadmill experience? The key is, "What or who is ruling you?"

If Christ is ruling in your spirit, then the fruit of the Spirit will be produced on the inside of you —love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. If the Spirit of God is ruling, your busy days can be beautiful days. In every twenty-four hour time frame, if God has ordered every hour of that day, He will make beautiful what He has planned for you.

If your spirit isn't under the control of the Holy Spirit, in today's world with all of its obligations and demands, you will be like a ping pong ball in an Oklahoma tornado! That's exactly how many people feel. Their lives are in a whirlwind, bouncing around with no order, organization, or peace.

Jesus wasn't bent out of shape as He walked through each day. He lived an ordered, disciplined life and fulfilled the destiny to which He was called. *He is our example.*

Chapter 6

Discerning the "Urgent" and the "Important"

In order for your priorities to be in divine order, you must understand what is urgent and what is important. Urgent things yell the loudest and often give immediate satisfaction. In contrast, important things often speak softly and give longterm rewards rather than immediate satisfaction.

It's important to encourage a friend who is discouraged. That seldom shouts to you on your "to do" list! It's important to eat the right kind of food. You only have one body, and what you put in it is going to affect your health. Your diet is strategic to living in divine health, but it won't shout too loud at you. Reading the Word of God won't shout at you nearly as loud as reading the newspaper. Talking to your mate and children is important, but it seldom shouts as loud as the people with whom you work.

To order your priorities, there must be planning and communication. Jesus said, **"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it"** (Luke 14:28). Jesus didn't come without a plan. He knew His purpose.

It's time for you to evaluate your priorities, not only once a year, once a month, or once a week, but on a daily basis.

There are urgent things to be done—dishes to be washed, papers to be signed, leaves to be raked and things that need to be organized. Don't discount them, but review them in light of what is important and see where each one fits.

I want to encourage you to write down your priorities. I have used a DayTimer for years. It has been a tremendous help to me, because it lays out every hour of the day and provides room to write things down. Many people have a lot of things to do, but it's all in their head. Keeping everything in your head is an open door to unnecessary challenges and disorder.

Give priority to that which is important. Often, that which is important is put last, because people usually do the urgent, which screams the loudest.

Once you know God's plans for you, communicate with those closest to you to avoid a clash in schedules. Jesus planned ahead and communicated His plans to those who followed Him. One example of Jesus communicating with His disciples is found in Matthew 16:21:

Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and

suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Jesus told the disciples what they were to do. He gave them an exact plan.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Acts 1:8

Take time to listen to your spirit. Otherwise, most of your life will be ruled by doing the urgent things and neglecting the important things. It's your spirit that keeps telling you, "Call this person, minister to them and reach out to them."

Recently, I had something which kept going through my spirit, but I was so wrapped up in doing the urgent things that I neglected it for several days. Finally, I said, "I am going." I went to see a couple who didn't ask me to come and didn't really want me to come. Because the man had been hurt in ministry, he left the ministry, God and the church.

As I began to minister and pray for him, he turned his life back to God and prayed in the Spirit. My obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading became a stepping stone for this man's healing and restoration. This is why it is so critical to let the Holy Spirit prioritize each day.

Put the important things first.

Chapter 7

Ten Helps To Eliminate Frustration in Prioritizing Your Obligations

Here are ten helps to eliminate frustration in prioritizing your goals.

1. *Be disciplined.* Organize your time by starting where you are with your room, apartment, desk, or office.

Lazy, unorganized, scattered people are constantly frustrated with the demands of life. Lack of order continually keeps them from doing what needs to be done. Determine, "I am going to be a disciplined person."

2. *Be flexible.* Some of the most miserable people in the world are those who are so highly disciplined and rigid that they allow no room for God's divine interruptions. Plan for your goals to be adjusted daily by the Holy Spirit.

3. *Allow for divine interventions.* Through the years, I have helped organize and coordinate the International Charismatic Bible Ministries Conference at Oral Roberts University. On Wednesday afternoon, fourteen workshops are held, which are led by some of the seventy-seven trustees. We usually have as many as five speakers lined up for one workshop to insure quality leadership. Part of my responsibility is to check each workshop as it begins to make sure an assigned leader is present.

One year I had checked on each of the workshops going on in the Mabee Center and was headed to Christ's Chapel to check on the workshops being held there. Because of being in such a hurry, I took the elevator from the Mezzanine to the first floor. The moment I stepped out of the elevator, five people greeted me as if they were waiting just for me. One of the five people had come for a miracle of healing, so when they saw me, they asked me to pray for him. At that moment, God gave me a holy relaxation to cool my jets to minister to that man. Amazingly, I also made it to the workshops and fulfilled my responsibilities.

I believe the Levite and the priest faced a similar situation on the road to Jericho. They were so busy with ministry obligations they wouldn't take the time to help the wounded man. They were inflexible. Another person came along, the Good Samaritan, and I believe his schedule was just as busy, but he took the time to bind up the man's wounds and make provision for his care. He allowed time in his schedule for a divine interruption!

4. *Follow peace.* If you will follow the principles of God's Word, He will

lead you by His Word and by His Spirit in the order that you need for your life on a daily basis. One of the key principles is found in Colossians 3:15 AMP:

And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds, in that peaceful state] to which as [members of Christ's] one body you were also called [to live]. And be thankful (appreciative), [giving praise to God always].

Many days I face stacks of things to be done in my office, but I don't always have full peace to do these things first. One such time happened in August, 1992, so I began to walk around my office and pray in the Spirit. We were desperate for more space to house our Bible Institute and ministry operations. There seemed to be nowhere to go.

As I prayed, the Lord spoke to me that the Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association building was going to sell. He said, "Buy it." Thank God for the moments when He interrupts us and leads us by His peace!

The company that owned the 102,000 square foot building on fourteen acres had just decided to sell it because they had a big need for immediate cash. We agreed on a price and bought the facility within forty-nine days with cash. One day after our agreement was made, other companies heard the building was going to sell and they made much higher offers to purchase it. Praise God that we were twenty-four hours ahead of them because God told us by revelation. To buy the land and build the building today would cost over $7 million. We bought it for $1.6 million.

5. *Say "no" when necessary.* One of the things that causes frustration is over-commitment—when people say "yes" to so many things their time is completely bottled up and they have strings pulling on them from all directions. Learn to say "no" to some obligations to keep a balance in your commitments.

6. *Recognize time robbers.* Some people have their priorities out of order and they ignore and neglect the important things because of time robbers.

Soap operas are one of the greatest time robbers. People used to spend a lot of time in the pool halls. Now it's with the video machines. Some people spend hours at such non-productive things.

Years ago, I knew a man who had a beautiful wife and family and a wonderful job. He loved to go fishing, but with this man it was more than an outing. It was an obsession involving several times a week and every week-end. He never took his wife or his three children with him.

After a few years, his wife said, "Goodbye." It was over, and a beautiful

home and family were ripped apart. The bass boat was not the real problem. It was a symptom of a much deeper problem—Christ wasn't first.

I remember another Spirit-filled young man who had a lovely new bride and wonderful ministry opportunities. He was a great athlete and loved to play softball. He worked long hours during the day and played softball every night.

One day his wife said, "Good-bye." A beautiful marriage ended because night after night he fellowshipped with his beer-drinking, cussing softball buddies and let his marriage and spiritual life be robbed.

Don't allow time robbers to steal that which is important in your life.

7. *Avoid comparisons.* If you are going to set divine priorities in your life, don't try to be like someone else or compare yourself to them. It's okay to be you!

Whether you are a man or a woman, you have only one person to compare yourself to and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't measure yourself by someone else's accomplishments, but only by God's call upon your life.

8. *Relax and exercise as part of your schedule.* There's a time for fishing, golfing, softball, or whatever may be relaxing to you, but it should not be an obsession.

Just as daily intake of the Word is necessary to keep your spirit alert and fit, daily exercise will help to keep your body fit. Exercise and relaxation are great stress busters. Find something that gives you some quality time with your family if possible.

9. *Rest.* When you sleep right and exercise right, you will be more productive in your life for Christ. Many people are grumpy, gripy and they don't have the energy to serve God or the temperament to love their family properly because their bodies are so burned out by improper diet and a lack of exercise and good rest.

It's time to make room in your schedule for exercise, relaxation and proper rest.

10. *Invest yourself, your time and your money in eternal things.* Ministering to hurting people is one type of investment in eternal things.

Some people feel it is a weighty obligation to be involved with teaching a Sunday school class, leading little children, or working with a youth group.

The greatest investment you will ever make is *not* in a CD making 7 to 8 percent interest or in some corporation that will double your money in five years. The greatest investment you can make is in your family and in the lives of other people.

My dad never became involved in sports that didn't include his three sons. He could have gone fishing or hunting with his buddies, because we lived in an area where there were all types of wild life and lakes. Whatever he did, he included us. It made a big difference in my life and in my two brothers.

Sharon and I invest time in our children, ministering to them and loving them, because one of the greatest joys you will ever have is with your family.

Make a decision now to invest quality time in your daily schedule for God, family and others. What you do for others will come back to you in multiplied form.

Put God first.

Invest time in your family.

Obey God's Word.

Listen to and heed the Holy Spirit.

Focus on what is important.

PERSONAL PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Father, I desire to have quality relationships in my life. I now realize that the greatest relationship I can ever have is with Jesus Christ, the Friend Who sticks closer than a brother. I want to know Him, to fellowship with Him, to listen to Him, to spend time with Him and to allow Him to speak the truth into my life.

To have this type of relationship, I first renounce every work of darkness and repent of all sin. Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God and that You died on Calvary as my Substitute, paying in full for all of my sin, sickness, poverty and spiritual death. I receive you today as my personal Lord and Savior.

Lord Jesus, empower me with the Holy Spirit so I will first be an effective witness of You. Secondly, I need the Holy Spirit to strengthen me to be a strong builder of quality relationships, not only in my own life, but in the lives of others.

Thank You, Father, for perfecting me and everything that concerns me in Jesus' name. Amen.

Signature

Date



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