

INITIATING
GOD'S
PRIORITIES

DISCERNING GOD'S PRIORITIES

● Though there were many needs in the lives of those around Him, yet when Jesus Christ came to the cross of Calvary, he could say to his heavenly Father, "I have finished the work you gave me to do." This was because Jesus Christ operated on the basis of what was important rather than by the urgencies imposed on His life.

All too frequently parents wake up to the fact that their lives have not been given to what is important to God. They have allowed their own desires and ideas of what they wanted, or by pressures that seemed impossible to resist, to dictate their lives. The results - families broken, marriages dissolved, vital relationships disintegrated - clearly point out that the carrying out of their responsibilities was not based on God's priorities

Scripture clearly indicates that we are responsible for our lives and the days God has given us to live for Him. We have no basis for talking about priorities unless we can define our ultimate goal in life.

"The days of our years are three score and ten. . .so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto WISDOM. Ps. 90:10-12

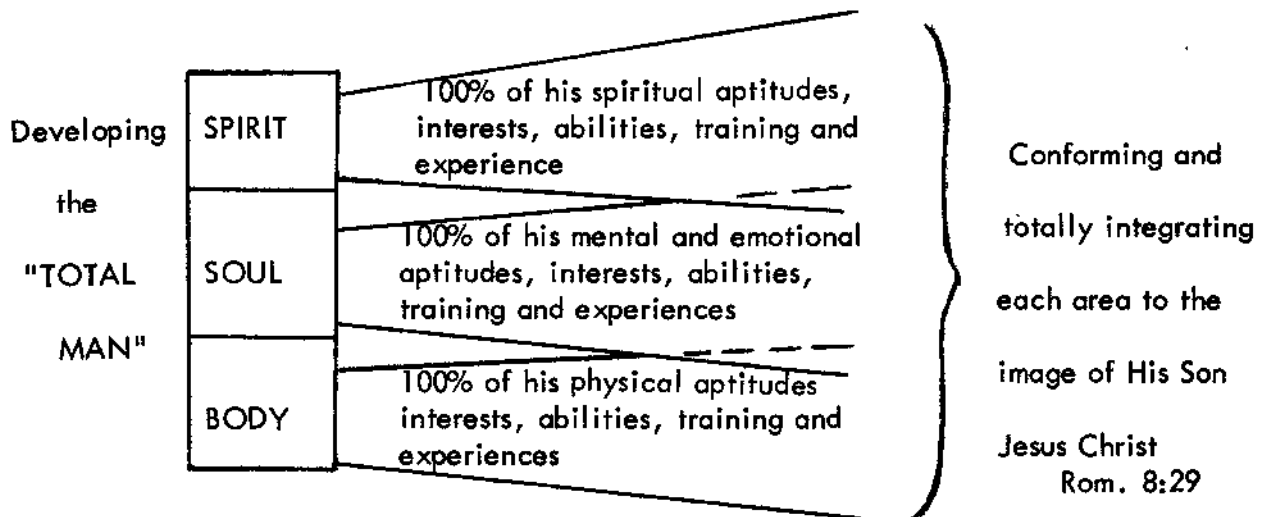
● Wisdom is our goal - to see life from God's point of view.

● To allow Jesus Christ to relive himself through my actions, words, motives and deeds and therefore affect all other key relationships in my life.

A BOREDOM / FRUSTRATION FACTOR

● WHEN OUR LIFE GOAL AND PRIORITIES ARE OUT OF ORDER, THERE IS A CORRESPONDING FRUSTRATION AND BOREDOM FACTOR IN OUR LIVES.

Our spiritual, psychological and physical aptitudes, interests and skills add up to 100% of our total capacities. God wants to develop and integrate 100% of these areas for his purposes. Failure to integrate the "total man" will result in frustrations and pressures.

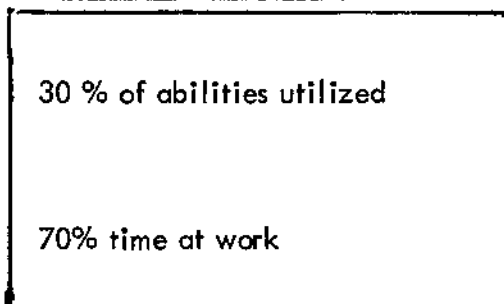


For example, if a man spends 70% of his time at his job and is only utilizing 30% of his abilities, skills, etc., then there is a subconscious attempt to integrate the remaining 70% of his aptitudes, interests, etc., into the remaining 30% of his time. This produces a 40% frustration factor.

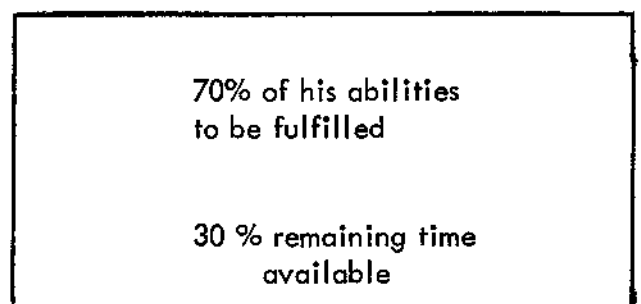
A 40% BOREDOM FACTOR

ABILITIES
APTITUDES
INTERESTS

TIME



A 40% FRUSTRATION FACTOR



DEFINITION:

Acting on a matter because of God's claim on my life which has precedence over all other human agencies.

DO I WANT MY PRIORITIES TO BE GOD'S PRIORITIES?

God wants to build a LIFE, MARRIAGE, FAMILY, VOCATION AND MINISTRY IN EACH MAN'S LIFE AND IN THAT ORDER! (Eph 5:18 - 6:7)

A LIFE:

• Ephesians 5: 18, 19 -
 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; "

A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE.

• There is a distinction between my personal daily relationship with Jesus Christ and Christian activities. Many Christians think of these as one and the same thing. My ministry begins with personal responsibility to God in which my goal is to apply my heart to wisdom, conforming to the image of His Son.
 Romans 8:28, 29

A MARRIAGE:

• Ephesians 5: 21 - 33
 "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the

AN INTIMACY AND SENSITIVITY OF SPIRIT TO THE NEEDS OF EACH OTHER.

• Scripture is clear that when a person marries, his primary ministry is his wife. "He that is married careth for the things that are of the world how he may please his wife."
 I Cor. 7 : 33

head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; . . . Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church; . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself . . ."

- It is essential that a married person recognize and assume his responsibilities to his wife and family along with other "outside the home" responsibilities, i.e., vocation, activities and ministries.

A FAMILY:

- Ephesians 6: 1, 4
"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

• SEEING LIFE FROM THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW WHILE WE TEACH HIM TO LOOK AT LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW.

- The responsibility for the children is the third priority. The urgencies all around us tempt us to focus on the job, outside activities, or ministry, but the priority of the family Paul emphasized in writing to Timothy, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

1 Timothy 3: 5

A VOCATION:

• Ephesians 6:5, 9

"Servants (employees), be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ.... And ye masters (employers), do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

• THE UTILIZATION OF SKILLS TO PROVIDE BASIC NEEDS FOR THE FAMILY.

• The vocation is the means to supply the physical needs of the family. In its proper perspective it is visualized as the means by which I support my family while I serve the Lord. "I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

Ephesians 4:1 and Romans 12:11

A MINISTRY:

• Ephesians 6: 10 - 12

"Finally, my brethern, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh..."

• REPRODUCING THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST IN OTHERS.

• The last priority is the expression of my life message in bringing others outside my family to their full maturity in Christ Jesus. (Col. 1:28-29 Phillips)

4 BENEFITS

OF APPLYING OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM (Psalm 90: 14 - 17)



- Psalm 90:14
"O satisfy us early with thy mercy;
and that we may rejoice and be glad
all our days."

- Psalm 90: 15
"Make us glad according to the
days wherein thou hast afflicted
us and the years wherein we have
seen evil."

- Psalm 90: 16
"Let thy work appear unto thy
servants and thy glory unto their
children."

- Psalm 90: 17
"And let the beauty of the Lord
our God be upon us: and establish
thou the work of our hands upon
us; yea the work of our hands
establish thou it."

1. EVERY DAY IS MEANINGFUL.
When priorities are in order, the pressures
on our lives are transformed into a
motivating tool for achievement.

2. THERE IS CONTINUOUS JOY
over past, present and future difficulty.
As we are able to visualize God's
purpose through trials and testings,
we are motivated to cooperate
with Him.

3. THERE WILL BE BLESSINGS -
FOR GENERATIONS to come. Just
as the sins of the fathers are visited unto
the 3rd and 4th generation of them who
hate Him, so righteousness is an
inheritance to the generations of those
who love Him. Exodus 20: 5,6

4. THERE WILL BE STABILITY AND
PERMANENT RESULTS. To observe to
do all that is written in the Word and
to make God's thoughts our thoughts will
guarantee prosperity and success.
Joshua 1:8

AN EXAMPLE OF

WISDOM APPLIED

REAL SPIRITUAL ACHIEVEMENT IN HIS PERSONAL LIFE :

An active layman was growing in his Christian life after making a new commitment to God and applying the biblical principles for success. However, he was continuing to have difficulty in communicating effectively with his wife and children.

DISHARMONY WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN

Despite this great personal development, "tremendous pressures from the job" made it impossible to give adequate time to his family! Discord with his wife was continuing and he sensed his children needed him desperately.

PHYSICAL ILLNESS AND LOSS OF WORK

He also suffered physical consequences which he attributed to his work load. He had missed work, been hospitalized and taken extensive leaves of absence because of his illness.

I had assumed that the responsibilities of his position demanded at least sixty or seventy hours a week.

A FORTY-HOUR WORK WEEK!

One day I asked him, "How many hours a week do you work?" He replied, "Forty " "Forty", I replied. "Don't you work a lot of overtime?" He responded, "very seldom." I suggested that assess his schedule and see how his present time was prohibiting him from spending time with his wife and children.

- The following outlines his schedule:

<u>- ACTIVITY</u>	<u>- HOURS</u>	
Sleep	49	
Work (including lunch and travel)	47	
Church services (includes preparation for Sunday School Class)	12	168 hours in a week
Personal time in Word	5	<u>-120 hours</u>
Routine chores and meals	<u>7</u>	48 unclaimed hours !
	120 hours each week	

48 HOURS WASTED EACH WEEK !

After we had totalled up his hours, we went back through his week to see if we had missed anything. He assured me this included everything.

THE REWARD FOR OBEDIENCE ! A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS WIFE AND FAMILY.

He exclaimed, "I have the time but, it is all spent thinking about my responsibilities at work!" He put his priorities in order and followed the steps below; in a few months his health improved. The relationship with his wife deepened. His teenage son told me two years later, "You know there was a time when I wouldn't talk to my dad. Now there isn't anything I can't discuss with him!"

TO BEGIN

ASSESS PRESENT SCHEDULE

Project #1

It is important to get a realistic picture of how I spend my time each day:

STEP ONE

Realistically total up the hours you spend in the following areas of your life each week. (Block in the time on the schedule form provided.)

<u>• ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>• HOURS</u>
Sleep	_____
Meals	_____
Work	_____
Church	_____
Ministry	_____
Chores	_____
Hobby	_____
Family	_____
Physical Fitness	_____
Recreation	_____
Leisure Time	_____

NOTE: Do not list times as you think they should be; list what they actually are. If you find it difficult to remember how you spend your time, your mate will easily help you to recall !

Total -

There are 168 hours in one week.

☐ STEP TWO

Subtract total hours in step one from 168 hours in one week. The difference represents either unclaimed or overextended hours.

☐ STEP THREE

SETTING UP MY SCHEDULE

**BASED ON GOD'S
PRIORITIES**

Project #2

On the second schedule sheet that is provided:

1. Block in the times of your schedule based on your necessary physical needs (such as sleep and meals) and responsibilities which you cannot control (such as 40-hour work week, church services, regularly scheduled meetings, etc.)
2. Choose a specific time each day to spend in personal fellowship with God for Bible study and prayer. Select a time when you are most alert and the possibility of interruptions is least.
3. Next block out specific time to spend with your wife. (If you have children it would be unwise to schedule time with your wife at a time when the children are seeking your attention, such as prior to or after meals, or when your wife is occupied with some of her basic responsibilities.
4. Provide adequate time for the children. Discuss with your wife what the needs of the children are and when they need you most. You will be surprised how well children can adapt to whenever you are available!

5. The schedule is filling up! Is there still time available? If so, block out the time for specific Christian responsibilities you have assumed (such as boards, committees, etc.) There may not be enough time now to be involved in all these secondary things (from God's point of view at the present); thus prayer and discernment are necessary to determine what is important.

6. Have confidence to say No based on what is important. Eliminate the urgencies. If, on the other hand, there is too much wasted time, you need to become responsible and more involved in important areas.

For example, if the hours at the end of step four total up to 160, then there are only 8 hours available for commitments in the fifth step category.

When our priorities are based on God's priorities, we gain a new confidence to say "No." Our nays can confidently be nay.

☛ "But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matthew 5 : 37

☛ "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work." Exodus 20:9

(IF WE HAVE MORE TO DO AT THE END OF SIX DAYS THAN WE CAN POSSIBLY DO -)
THEN WE'RE TRYING TO DO MORE THAN GOD EVER INTENDED US TO DO.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	
11 pm - 12 am	← S	L	E	E	P	→		
12-1		This is how one man set up his initial schedule in order to get his priorities in order.						
1-2		After he had blocked out his basic necessities and committed responsibilities, he used the dotted areas to determine when he could schedule time for his wife and children, before taking on any other responsibilities.						
2-3								
3-4								
4-5	S	L	E	E	P			
5-6	↙	GET UP TRAVEL					↘	
6-7		WORKSHOP						
7-8		GET UP		&	TRAVEL			
8-9	C	W	← →				W	S
9-10	H	O				O	T	
10-11	U R	R				R	U	
11-12	C H	K	← →				K	D Y
12-1	LUNCH	← →					LUNCH	
1-2	W	← →				W
2-3	O				O	
3-4	R				R	
4-5	K	← →				K
5-6	DINNER	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	
6-7	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	
7-8	C	C	C	
8-9	H	H	H	
9-10	U	U	U	
10-11	R	R	R	
11-12	C	C	C	
12-1	H	H	H	

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE

	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
11 pm - 12 am							
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