

4 Nonnegotiable Priorities for Believers in 2020

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you” (Matt. 6:33).

As a new year and a new decade begin, and many people prepare for the next 12 months and beyond, it is important for us to take stock of our lives and evaluate how we steward or manage our daily activities.

In the life of a follower of Jesus, there is a natural tension between who we are because of God’s love for us and what we do as a result of that love.

The outcome is that oftentimes, we equate godly actions with the reason for the actions, which is Jesus Himself.

The danger of this mindset is that we can find ourselves replacing a true relationship with the Lord with good and noble works that we do for Him. Therefore, we must be careful not to allow good things to overshadow or even take the place of the best thing, which is an ongoing and always deepening relationship with Jesus Christ.

In our day-to-day lives, it is vital to steward or prioritize our schedules so primary things take precedence. The most urgent and important aspect about seeking God’s will is to make Him the center of our lives; He must be our first priority. As someone once said, “He takes first place in life, and there is no second or third place that compares with Him.”

There are some who have a desire for the Lord in their lives so they can simply have a source of help in times of need, salvation and assurance of escaping eternal punishment, a quick fix to life’s problems and so forth. However, this is not a biblical paradigm of being a true follower of Jesus. He

wants all of our hearts and passions, not just our list of needs and wants. "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me. Where I am, there will My servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26).

The truth is that we will never learn to prioritize our relationship with the Lord if we don't first of all learn to give it away to Him fully. This dynamic is truly the foundation of spiritual maturity. "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 10:39).

As we all take stock of our spiritual lives during this season of a new year and a new decade, let me encourage you with four nonnegotiable priorities:

1. **Initiate and sustain a devotion life.** Oftentimes we find ourselves compromising the "secret place" in exchange for Christian activity. It is good and right to engage in godly activity; however, if we neglect Jesus Himself, we can be deceived into thinking that all is well when in fact we have become a people motivated by religious zeal void of divine intimacy with the Lord.

A true devotional life is one that experiences Jesus over and over again; it is an ongoing, glorious pursuit. Scripture reveals that the Lord is a pursuer, but He also loves to be pursued. "Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His presence continuously" (Ps. 105:4).

2. **Read and memorize the Word of God regularly.** Many people are continually weak in their faith and some are even destroyed spiritually due to the fact that they do not know God's Word.

The Word of God provides us with guidance, encouragement, identity, warning, wisdom and so on. When we neglect it, we are refusing God's ultimate and divine instruction manual that He has preserved throughout the generations. As a result, our

spiritual growth is stunted.

The Bible is to the Spirit man what food and water are to the natural man. It is required for proper spiritual health. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105).

3. Develop and maintain healthy relationships. We will never develop into who God desires for us to be as His church if we neglect or compromise when it comes to interpersonal relationships.

I have often been amazed at how the apostle Paul spent so much time dealing with how we treat one another as believers. Despite the fact that He espouses deep theology so eloquently, he seems to bring it back to relationships in a very deliberate manner. Let me encourage you to read Ephesians 1-3 and then 4-6. Here you will see what I am referring to.

4. Embrace and cultivate a lifestyle of giving. Our giving or lack thereof is directly connected to our walk with God.

One cannot grow in their relationship with the Lord and neglect or compromise the kingdom principle of giving. This principle is not just a mandate from Scripture; it is a principle that is innate in the character of God Himself. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Giving is not optional; it is necessary if we are to truly have a daily walk with God characterized by spiritual maturity. It is also important to understand that the concept of giving goes beyond money and touches every area of our lives. "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6).

Closing Quotes

–“The will of God is not something you add to your life. It’s a course you choose. You either line yourself up with the Son of God ... or you capitulate to the principle which governs the rest of the world.” –Elisabeth Elliot

–“Business is not a reason for not getting other things done. It is an excuse for not claiming your true priorities.” –Alan Cohen

–“Your choices and decisions are a reflection of how well you’ve set and followed your priorities.” –Elizabeth George

–“Whoever has Christ in his heart, so that no earthly or temporal things—not even those that are legitimate and allowed—are preferred to Him, has Christ as a foundation. But if these things be preferred, then even though a man seems to have faith in Christ, yet Christ is not the foundation to that man.” –Augustine {eo}

Keith Collins is the founder and president of *Generation Impact Ministries*. He is actively involved in itinerant ministry and writing and speaks in various settings nationally and internationally on a regular basis. In recent years, Keith served as the president of the *Brownsville Revival School of Ministry* and as the director of *FIRE School of Ministry*, which were both born out of *The Brownsville Revival in Pensacola, Florida*. His recent book, *Samuel’s Arising: Waking Up to God’s Prophetic Call*, is now available on Amazon. You can contact Keith via his website at .