

How to Discern Between Good and God's Best

"The enemy of the best is always the good." That's what one of my mentors, Dr. Charles Farah, would say. People who are popular will have many others pulling at them. Anyone with multiple responsibilities will daily face the decision to leave something undone.

What is the most important decision you will make every day? Is it what suit or outfit to put on? What engagement to say no to? Which calls to return? How to prioritize the many tasks pulling at your limited time? Or is it the decision to spend time with the Lord and pray the first thing in the day?

In my training as a school superintendent, one of the last exercises every new applicant faced was the "in-box" test. The challenge was to take an in-box of 10 items and prioritize them by importance, deciding which you would tackle first that day and which could wait to be addressed later. I learned that invariably, disguised in the 10 items, there was always a safety item that was difficult to identify. A safety item is something related to the safety of students, staff or patrons. Safety items always take priority above every other administrative task. And it is the same in our spiritual lives. The safety item for our relationship with Christ is having time alone with Him each day, preferably at the start of the day, in prayer and the Word.

There is a great contrast in Christ's public and private life. His public life was one filled with great crowds, the power of the Spirit in operation and teaching with authority. His private life was one of solitude, prayer and listening to the Father. How does your private life match up to your public life? Is there symmetry between the two?

My pastor is a man full of the grace and mercy of the Lord. He is known for being gracious in his dealings with others. He is not perfect; he makes mistakes like any of us. Our church had been working on a project, and I felt he had missed a point of information that would have helped make a better decision. I really felt like he needed to know what he had missed as it was important, but who wants to suggest a word of correction to your pastor? After much prayer, I decided to make him aware of his misstep.

His reaction was totally predictable. His immediate response was, "What do we need to do to correct my mistake? How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?" A few weeks later, I listened as my pastor revealed he has been fasting and praying every Monday for 15 years. This one statement told me a great deal about my pastor's private life. I have seen his public life, and believe me, his private life and public life are in symmetry with Christ. And as I always say, "You can tell everything about where a person stands spiritually by how he or she receives instruction or correction, no matter how gently suggested or given." Jesus prayed to His Father—we know that. He prayed for His disciples, because He was a man, He likely prayed for Himself, that He might be strengthened for service. The lesson Jesus teaches us is so clear. Prayer was His daily priority. He understood the need for time in the secret place to hear from the Father to start the day.

His life and the Word teach us about prayer. The teaching is so simple and clear: "He went out and departed to a solitary place. And there He prayed" and "He withdrew to the wilderness and prayed" (Mark 1:35b; Luke 5:16). Jesus chose the best over the good.

The question of the hour is: Do you pray? I don't mean a quick blessing at the dinner table, a traditional good-night prayer with your spouse or a child, or a rote prayer at church as the pastor leads the congregation. I mean do you have a consistent place where you go daily to wait on the Lord? A place where

you speak to Him and He speaks to you? A place where you are still and look deeply into the Lord as He looks into you? Are you intimate with the Lord in prayer daily? Is your public life a reflection of choosing the best in your private life?

✖ Adapted from *40 Days Through the Prayers of Jesus* by Tim Cameron, copyright 2017, published by Charisma House. This book will show you many of the secrets, mysteries and provoking lessons taught by Jesus prayer life. You will learn how to get answers to your prayers. To order your copy, click [this link](#).

Prayer Power for the Week of June 24, 2018

This week, focus on scheduling that special time alone with the Lord each day. Use the time to worship, give thanks and exalt His name before making any requests. Meditate, sit still and listen for His voice. Continue to thank Him for His soon return and for more workers for the worldwide harvest and revival. Pray for the president and all those working with him to ensure our protection, provision and peace. Read: Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16.