



The Faithful Steward

A Texico Conference Stewardship Publication

January 2005

Making God First in Everything

One of the greatest secrets of successful living is to restore God to first place in our lives. **The primary principle of stewardship is that God should be first in everything.** It sounds easy at first, but putting it into practice can be very difficult and not always convenient.

Making God central and foremost in their lives was one of the first requirements of the angels. But slowly Lucifer began to ignore this obligation. Imperceptibly, he grew self-centered. Instead of placing God first in his life, Lucifer allowed self to take the primary residence. In a limited way, he had reached his main goal of being first - he became first among the fallen angels.

Adam and Eve were also required to have God at the very core of their existence. The words that Jesus spoke to us in the gospel of Matthew cut at the very fabric of our society today. *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*¹ God is simply asking us to put Him first in our lives. Even the most spiritually-minded person may think, "But I must live; I must have a certain amount of money; I must be clothed; I must be fed." This shows that the greatest concern of our daily lives is NOT the kingdom of God, but how we are going to take care of ourselves and our needs. When we trust God to take care of our basic needs and seek His kingdom first, He will take care of all our other needs.

Stewardship, then, is simply trusting God more fully and putting Him first in our lives. If we do our part faithfully, if we make the kingdom of heaven first in our thoughts and lives, God will take care of our walk through life. Seek first His kingdom; seek first to be righteous; seek first to be right with God and to become interested in His favor, and all the necessary things of life will be added to you. "Jesus tells us to get the right relationship with God first, maintaining it as the primary concern of our lives, and never to place our concern on taking care of the other things of life."² God will supply our needs WHEN we trust Him.

One of the foundations upon which the universe rests is that God was first and is always to be first. That is why the prophet Isaiah said, *"Thus saith the LORD, the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I [am] the first, and I [am] the last; and beside me [there is] no God."*³ Conflicts will arise whenever anyone attempts to put themselves in God's position or role. Lucifer's attempt to establish a throne above God's failed. So it is in our lives if we do not give God control. Conflicts, tensions and unhappiness will plague any life where God does NOT reign supreme.

Is God First?

Putting our own interests before God is an attempt to establish ourselves above God. The basis of God's government is embodied in the first commandment, *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."*⁴ Applying this to practical life means that in everything we do, God must be first.

"The true Christian will make God first and last and best in everything" (Ellen G. White, *God's Amazing Grace*, page 105).

This Month's Features:

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BUT SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU. MATTHEW 6:33

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¹ Matthew 6:33

² Chambers, Owsald, *My Utmost for His Highest*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 1992), comment on May 21.

³ Isaiah 44:6

⁴ Exodus 20:3

We as individuals often unwittingly attempt to set up our own gods. "Man is forbidden to give any other object the first place in his affection or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or interfere with the service due Him, of that we make a god."⁵

God is loving, forbearing, understanding, compassionate and kind. But that does not mean that He can permit us to rank Him as second place in our lives. He, who created everything, including us, knows that in our universe NO ONE can be secure unless God is first in every aspect. God created the universe and is the One permanent force around which it exists. Since the fall, He has been seeking to reveal that man's only hope rests in God and God alone. Once He becomes

"Should not Christ have our first and highest consideration? Should He not demand this token of our respect and loyalty? These very things underlie our heart life, in the home circle, and in the church life. If the heart, the soul, the strength, the life, is surrendered wholly to God, if the affection is given wholly to Him, you will make God supreme in all your service. The result will be that you will have a sense of what it means to be a partner with Jesus Christ ... (Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, page 260).

the supreme force in our lives, He can then re-create our life and restore it back to His image and ideal.

To the individual that places self above God, God can only say, "Ye, are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."⁶ Paul Smith

⁵ Patriarchs and Prophets, page 305.

⁶ Malachi 3:9

puts it this way, "Putting anyone or anything before God is a form of robbery."⁷

We often think of ourselves first and demand prime attention. Even as Christians, we sometimes leave aside the interests of God until last or completely ignore them altogether.

The diagram at the top right illustrates the self-centered concept of living that all humans have. When self reigns supreme, God cannot add His blessing. We have relegated His portion to the bottom. Many times we have nothing left over for God. The second diagram demonstrates the place where we should be in our relationship with God.

How could God, through Elijah, ask the widow to give the last

"The cause of God is to hold the first place in our plans and affections" (Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, page 105).

food she had for herself and her son? Just as surely as God honored His promise to the widow of Zarephath, He will keep his promises to us. Does not her experience reveal the importance and validity of God's request to His people in all countries and in all economic conditions to put Him first? He longs to demonstrate that He is God, and that He is able to sustain those who do His will and put their trust in Him. It takes great faith to put God first in ALL circumstances of life. It is the secret of true happiness, Christian living and successful Christian witnessing to those around us.

Don't you think God wants us to give over our will to Him first and then to our family? "Only those who give all they have and all they are to God are really His children."⁸ God

⁷ Smith, Paul G., *Managing God's Goods* (Southern Publishing Association, Nashville, Tennessee).

⁸ Thomas, Jerry D., *Messiah* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho) page 289.



should be first and all other things second.

Let us dedicate our lives to God in the following manner. "Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your first work. Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.' This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ."⁹

May this be our daily prayer; to put God first in our lives.

⁹ White, Ellen, *Steps to Christ*, page 70.