

Live Out Loud



Setting Our Priorities

Webster's dictionary defines priority as "something that you do or deal with first because it is more important or urgent than other things." We prioritize our to-do list at work so our boss is happy, and our "honey-do" checklist at home records items needing repair or completion to make our home more efficient and comfortable. We determine what is most important, tackle that task first, and work our way down the list.

My husband is a master list maker from way back. I think he may have invented the making of lists! Unfortunately, he has, after more than 40 years of marriage, failed to convert me to the joy of said lists. Although, as I get older, I find if something is not noted on my calendar or on my phone, it just may become a distant memory. There is, as my husband often tells me, a great feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment when we can mark items off our list as completed.

What about our priorities as it pertains to our Christian life? Have you ever thought about what your to-do list would look like? You do realize that Christ has given us a "honey-do" list too, right? God's Word is full of things He wants us to do in order to make our Christian life more effective and fulfilling.

Take a moment and write yourself a spiritual to-do list for one day.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now think about what Christ might place on His list for us. Find and list Scripture references for each task.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Keep these lists handy because we will refer back to them later in the study. Feel free to use another sheet of paper to add more to your lists.

Getting our priorities in line with God's Word is crucial to living a faithful and successful Christian life. We are called to be faithful to God and our relationship to Him, and we must be faithful to our calling in Christ and the mission He has entrusted to us. Faithfulness grows as we get our priorities aligned with God's Word and how He commands us to conduct ourselves. Our priorities should parallel what God desires for us and how He wants us to live.

It is so important to establish certain habits from the very beginning of our relationship with the Lord, such as daily prayer and time of devotion, studying Scripture, and staying involved with a community of believers. We all know how hard the devil

tempts to keep us from praying and reading the Bible.

You can drink a Mountain Dew or Monster Energy and your eyes bug out of your head—until you close your eyes to pray. *You know that's the truth!* All at once, your brain turns to mush, and you can't remember one single prayer request from Sunday.

In addition, just try to keep your mind from wandering when you open your Bible. Everything you did that day dances back through your mind, and you read the same verse three times and still can't remember what it says.

I'm 'fessing up, and I am confident I'm not alone (except my poison is Dr. Pepper instead of Mountain Dew or Monster Energy).

But, ladies, we must persevere! Prayer and Bible study is so very important, and we must make it a priority every single day.

Loyal Living

Our priorities will reveal where our loyalties lie. If we seek to honor our Lord, we will be loyal to the work of the Kingdom and to God's people. We will be loyal to Christian brothers

and sisters. We will be faithful to our commitments and obligations. Most importantly, we will be loyal to the King of Kings who alone deserves our unhindered allegiance and devotion. Oswald

Chambers wrote, “Beware of anything that competes with your loyalty to Jesus Christ.” As much as we love our families, they can never have a higher place in our hearts than Christ. Our loyalty and faithfulness to Christ must shine through in every aspect of our lives and in the way we conduct ourselves in the world.

What type of loyalty is shown in Proverbs 17:17?

Read 2 Samuel 23:15-17. What did David’s loyal fighters do for their king?

How do you rate on the loyalty scale?

Loyalty is unwavering in good times and bad.

Loyalty sometimes requires sacrifice.

This lost world will never be reached and brought back to loyalty to God, until the children of God wake up to the fact that they have a mission in the world. If we are true Christians we should all be missionaries.

— D.L. Moody

The Lordship of Christ

When you look back on your lists from earlier, what determined what you included? Were you influenced by what you thought was the “Sunday School answer?”

The deciding factor of your priorities is to what extent Jesus Christ has lordship over your life. Yes, He’s our Savior...but is He also our Lord to Whom we have sworn unwavering loyalty and given complete control of every single thing in our lives?

If Christ has lordship over us, our priorities and lifestyle probably look very different than someone who is content to ask Him for salvation but refuses to

abdicate all authority to Him. In order to have a close relationship with our Lord, we must relinquish control of every secret place in our hearts—not just the

“The terrible thing, the almost impossible thing, is to hand over your whole self—all your wishes and precautions—to Christ.” (C.S. Lewis)

huge dining room and ballroom, but the tiny closet in the attic and the dark and dirty root cellar in the basement. Take inventory of your “house” and see if all the doors and windows are open to allow God to flood it with His Holy Spirit and take complete control.

What priorities do you need to surrender to the lordship of Christ?

Garbage In, Garbage Out

Our faithfulness, loyalty, priorities, and lordship of Christ is plainly seen in our everyday moments—when the kids won't get ready for school... when a tire blows on the way to work...when there's a disagreement with your spouse...when you burn supper... again. How we handle these moments will spotlight how healthy our prayer life and commitment to devotion time is. It doesn't matter how many Sunday school classes you attend, VBS crazies you survive, Bible studies you do, or sermons you hear—those may be faithfulness to your church, but

*“Delight thyself also
in the Lord; and He shall
give thee the desires of
thine heart.”*

Psalm 37:4

not necessarily faithfulness to God. How we conduct ourselves daily, especially when we don't think anyone is watching, shows our commitment and desire to be faithful and loyal, with our priorities in order.

The Lordship of Christ in our lives demands sacrifice. Learn to set aside ambitions and passions in order to allow God to be the Supreme Commander of who we are.

I have a canvas in my bedroom of Psalm 37:4, which has long been my life verse. I purchased it on October 24, 2016, while on vacation. Later that same day, our truck became the white filling in a 5-car Oreo pile-up, which included us being rear-ended by a car who was rear-ended by a dump truck and we were pushed up on two wheels and almost turned over.

“Grizzly,” our Ford F-150, did its job of protecting us, and we all

escaped relatively unharmed except for my broken rib. Unfortunately, my newly purchased canvas was in the covered bed of said F-150! When we got home, my

husband worked on the frame and glued it back together. It's not perfect, but it serves as a poignant daily reminder that life can drastically change with one car ride, one doctor visit, or one random encounter with an armed person intent to bring harm.

It is so critical to live every single day fully sold out to God, delighting ourselves in *His* plan for our lives. And, if we are delighting in and embracing the

things of the Lord, the desires of our hearts will be the same as the Lord's desires for us. His priorities will be our priorities.

We've all heard the saying, "garbage in, garbage out." So true! Why does the beer commercial always have the catchy tune that you find yourself humming? Once we have seen or heard something, it's in our brains forever. Memories of things we have seen, heard, or read that were not so nice will surface at the worst times—during a sermon or while you are reading your Bible—because the devil will use our mistakes to trip us up as much as he possibly can.

Why then are we so careless about our viewing and listening habits? It is getting more and more difficult to find anything uplifting to view on television (well, there is Hallmark), and, Christian stations aside, radio is pretty much a sewer of celebrating immoral lifestyles in song. Let's stop and do a little self-examination—I'm doing it, too.

What station is your car radio on right now?

What was the last book you read, excluding the Bible?

What was the last non-Christian book you read?

What song do you belt out rolling down the highway?

What book did you read on vacation?

What magazines do you subscribe to or buy in a store?

What are your five favorite TV shows?


Now, think back through your answers. There is probably not one of us that can honestly say every answer was totally pleasing to God. We are not perfect, and He knows that very well. But it is up to us to make the effort to keep our minds and hearts as pure as possible, even in our depraved world. We can't completely protect ourselves and our families from hearing filthy talk or seeing vile images, but we can ensure we don't subject ourselves on purpose.

The Lordship of Christ and our loyalty to Him will determine our priorities. Do we want to live holy? Do we strive to present ourselves as a Christ-follower in the way we dress, our speech, and with what we choose to fill our minds? I don't want to sound legalistic, because it's not a matter of rules as to how long our dresses should be or if it's okay to go to movies or play cards. Nope, not about that at all. It's about having a mindset that compels us to present ourselves to the world as someone who wants to honor God above all else. No matter how cute the dress is on the sale rack, if it's too short, it's too short! If body parts hang out that aren't supposed to hang out, it's not for you! Seriously, it's just common sense if we are viewing everything through the lens of God's Word. If you are truly striving to be loyal to God and His Word, it's not that hard to realize what is appropriate and pleasing to Him and what's not. Always remember that we are Christ's representation here on earth.

"When we Christians behave badly, or fail to behave well, we are making Christianity unbelievable to the outside world" (*Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis).

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Look back over the to-do lists you made at the beginning. Would you change anything on your list? Would anything be different on Christ's list to you?

Stay in the Word and determine each day to surrender to the Lordship of Christ. Let's set our priorities in line with His Word, be loyal to His desires and plans, and be a shining example of God's love in everything we do and say. Then, at the end, we will hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant..." 

About the Writer: Amanda Kilgore, wife of James, mother to Jamie, and grandmother to Jett, resides in northeast Tennessee. Besides writing, she enjoys singing with the worship team, traveling, and, of course, spoiling Jett.