

THE VALUE OF THINGS

MANY BLESSINGS COME FROM GETTING YOUR PRIORITIES RIGHT

“In short, I conceiv’d that the great part of the miseries of mankind were brought upon them by the false estimates they had made of the value of things, and by their giving too much for the whistle” (Benjamin Franklin).

The whistle was a wooden whistle he paid too much for as a child—a painful lesson he often referred to in later life. I had to think about this quotation for awhile, and found it to be an astute observation that applies equally well to our spiritual lives. Underestimate God’s priorities and you suffer loss; accurately assess and implement his priorities and you gain more blessings in this life and greater rewards in the next. Let’s take a look at some priorities in the Bible.

1. Seeking and finding God is more important than anything else (“the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you” 2 Chron 15:2; cf. 1 Chron 28:9).
2. Loving God is more important than any other command (“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment” Matt 22:37–38).
3. Salvation is much better than earthly wealth (“What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?” Mark 8:36). “I delivered to you as of first importance . . . that Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor 15:3). Cf. 1 Cor 9:12c.
4. Love for Jesus is more important than love for your family (“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” Matt 10:37).
5. A knowledge of Jesus is better than all possessions and privileges in this life (“I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ” Phil 3:8).
6. Spiritual food is better than physical food (“man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD” Deut 8:3; cf. Matt 4:4). “Let all things be done for edification” (1 Cor 14:26c).
7. Knowledge, understanding, and wisdom are better than silver, gold, jewels, and all other desirable things (Prov 3:13–15; 8:10–11, 19; 16:16; Rev 3:17–18).
8. Hearing and obeying is better than ignoring God’s Word (“everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock” Matt 7:24–27; cf. Luke 6:46–49).
9. A good understanding of the basic doctrines of the Christian life (confession of sin, filling of, grieving, quenching, walking in, and the fruit of the Spirit, claiming promises, eating spiritual food such as the milk and meat of the Word) is more important than any other doctrine because without it there is no spirituality, spiritual growth, or spiritual maturity (“like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow” 1 Pet 2:2).
10. Doctrine is more important than service; or, Bible teaching is better than serving. Martha did good works in showing hospitality to and cooking for Jesus and his twelve hungry disciples, but Mary ‘chose the best portion (of Jesus’ inheritance)’ by listening to Jesus teach (“only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her” Luke 10:42). Her priorities were right, and she will be blessed more.
11. A knowledge of God, compassion, obedience, loyalty, doing righteousness and justice, and being reconciled to others are better than sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22; Prov 21:3; Hosea 6:6; Matt 5:23–24; 9:13; 12:7).
12. Serving God is better than serving yourself (Haggai 1–2). Serving God is better than loving money (“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” Matt 6:24). It’s better to leave everything and follow Jesus because “he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age . . . and in the age to come, eternal life (Mark 10:28–31). Faithfulness is the most important attitude in serving God (“Now what is sought in stewards is that one be found faithful” 1 Cor 4:2 NET; Luke 16:10–12). “. . . in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds” (Titus 2:7a).
13. Others are more important than yourself (“Let each of you regard one another as more important than himself” Phil 2:3b; cf. 1 Cor 10:33).
14. Pray for all men, including your leaders (“First of all . . . I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority” 1 Tim 2:1–2).
15. Love is better than the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, all knowledge, all faith, almsgiving, martyrdom, and hope (1 Cor 13: 1–13; cf. 1 Pet 4:8). Instruction and edification are better than the gift of tongues (1 Cor 14:1–19).
16. Faith is more important than any other act because without it there is no pleasing God (“without faith it is impossible to please Him” Heb 11:6) and no fruit of the Spirit (“He has given to us the valuable and very great promises, in order that by them you may become sharers of the divine nature” 2 Pet 1:4 RCL). Put your faith in a promise like Romans 8:28, for example, and immediately you will share God’s peace of mind and joy—both fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22).
17. Confession of sin is the most important daily decision because it provides forgiveness, cleansing, walking in the light, fellowship with God (1 John 1:7, 9), the filling of the Spirit (Eph 5:18), and walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:25).
18. Giving is better than receiving because it produces more happiness (“It is more blessed to give than to receive” Acts 20:35).
19. Give to God first before spending or saving (“Honor the LORD from your wealth, And from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine” Prov 3:9–10).
20. Storing up treasure in heaven is better than storing up treasure on earth (Matt 6:19–20; Luke 12:20–21, 33; 1 Tim 6:17–19). “I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one’s lifetime” (Eccl 3:12).
21. Integrity is better than wealth (“Better is a little with righteousness Than great income with injustice” Prov 16:8. “Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, Than great treasure and turmoil with it” Prov 15:16.).
22. A good name, favor in the eyes of men, and acceptance are better than great wealth (“A good name is to be more desired than great riches, Favor is better than silver and gold” Prov 22:1).
23. Becoming slow to anger (conquering anger) is better than the conquests of a great warrior; and ruling your spirit is better than ruling over a city you conquered (Prov 16:32). Why? Because inner conquests are harder to achieve!
24. An godly wife is better than jewels (“An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. . . . She does him good and not evil All the days of her life” Prov 31:10–12).
25. The needs of God’s kingdom are more important than the necessities of life (“seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you” Matt 6:33).
26. Better to sacrifice your life than to forsake your God (“we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up” Dan 3:17–18, 28). Great rewards are promised for martyrdom (Rev 2:10; 20:4).
27. A day in church is better than a thousand days elsewhere (applied to today from “a day in Thy courts [in Solomon’s Temple] is better than a thousand outside” Psa 84:10).
28. Humbling yourself is better than exalting yourself (“whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” Matt 23:12; “all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” 1 Pet 5:5; “The LORD will tear down the house of the proud” Prov 15:25a; “Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” Matt 18:4).
29. Better to be last in this life and first in the next (“If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all” Mark 9:35; cf. 10:28–31; Matt 19:29–30). Better to serve others than to serve yourself (“the greatest among you shall be your servant” Matt 23:11; “let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant” Luke 22:26).
30. Success in spiritual warfare by overcoming all spiritual enemies (world, flesh, Devil) is better than flight or defeat because victory is richly rewarded (John 16:33; Eph 6:10–17; 2 Tim 2:12a; 4:7–8; Rev 2:7, 10, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).
31. Better to glorify God in all things (1 Pet 4:11) than to cause him shame and give “occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme” (2 Sam 12:14). So, be diligent (2 Tim 2:15) and make the most of your time (Eph 5:16; Col 4:5).