

Built By the Lord

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Chapter 5

Family First

I. Which is it?

Yes... that title is used for alliteration. "Family Second" wouldn't have the same ring to it. Of course, God is first, Matthew 6:33.

A. The first place and the first relationship in which God wants us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness is in the family relationship.

1. We need to be sure we are obeying God first in our homes.
2. God has placed a priority on our families.
3. As we seek to serve and glorify God, the place to start is with our family.
4. Don't think that the only way to serve God is to go to a foreign land and evangelize the natives. We need to start in our homes and with our families.

B. Mark 5:18-20 – Jesus had cast out "Legion" from the man of the Gerasenes. He wanted to accompany Jesus. Jesus told him to go and tell his people.

C. John 1:40-41 – Andrew went and found his brother Simon Peter.
Family is where we need to start as well.

II. Family before self

A. Genesis 2:24

1. Note that this was even before there were fathers and mothers.
2. "Leave and cleave!" → Leave father and mother.
3. The principal is to "become one with your spouse... In the old days, they called it "cutting the apron strings."
4. The idea is to put your spouse before your parents. This does not mean to hate or abandon your parents... You put your spouse above your parents.

B. 1 Corinthians 7:32-34

1. Before marriage, our interests are solely focused on serving the Lord and being holy as individuals.
2. After marriage, part of our serving the Lord is being concerned about pleasing our spouse... and by extension our children when they come along.

III. Family before Career

A. 1 Timothy 5:1-14

1. What are the rules for how we should treat one another? v. 1-2
2. It is godliness (some translations say "piety") to care for your widowed mother. This is pleasing in the sight of God.

Remember at that time there was no: Social Security or Government assistance of any kind.

- a. Very often a widow could easily lose her house if she had no husband to care for her. She would be out on the streets. It was rare for a woman to have a career.

B. Family before career

1. This is true for our immediate family... and our parents and grandparents.
2. Ephesians 4:28 → We need to take care of our family!
3. What if it makes it difficult for me and my family? See v. 1 Tim. 5:8.
4. Ecclesiastes 5:18-20
5. Edwin Crozier goes on to say that there is nothing wrong with a good career and making lots of money. If God has blessed you in this way
 - a. Give thanks.
 - b. Remember that God has blessed you to be a blessing to others... primarily your family.

C. Always, family comes before career.

D. Taking care of my family is godliness.

E. We do honest work with our hands so that we will be able to share with others.

IV. Family and God

A. Family should not be placed above God.

1. Matthew 10:37 puts an end to that kind of thinking. See: Matthew 10:34-39
2. Putting God first means putting a priority on our family.
3. We are not allowed to use serving God as an excuse for not dealing with our family properly.
 - a. The Pharisees made this mistake and were rebuked.
 - b. Matthew 15:3-6

B. In Leviticus 27, God regulated devoting material possessions to God.

1. The Pharisees with their traditions, were using this “service to God” as a means to deny providing for their families.
2. “We cannot use service to God as a means to provide for our family... whether financially, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually.” Edwin Crozier

C. The writer tells of a deacon who was heavily involved in church work. He and his wife saw that this was causing problems... angry with one another, angry with God, and angry with the local congregation.

1. They chose to back off some of the church work to get their family life back in order.
2. Some people said they were “not being spiritual enough.” I think they made the right choice.”

D. No, he wasn’t saying to wait until your kids are grown to get involved in “church work.” We do need to maintain the balance of home responsibilities and congregational responsibilities... no matter our role in the congregation.

V. Prioritize family – The author has a great story about priorities.

VI. Today’s Response

- A. In your family, ask each other what the other thinks is the most important in your life.
- B. Seek to be honest and not defensive.
- C. Discuss what changes need to be made for improvement.
- D. Consider the roles in each of your lives and how you can have balance in your family lives.