

Single-minded devotion

God first, then family, then work?

“There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God.” This line from an old hymn captures what Jesus meant when He said, “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light” (Mt 6:22). For our “eye to be single” is to have a single-minded focus in life. This single-minded focus makes life simple, joyful, energetic, and marked by quiet rest.

You have heard, no doubt, well-meaning people tell you that the priorities in life should be first, God, then family, then work. A good idea for sure, but not a very effective way to organize life. Yes, certainly there are times when family needs come before our job. But there are also times when the responsibilities of our job must take precedence over the family. Besides which, those of us who work full-time spend far more waking hours at work than we do with our families. So while it sounds nice in theory to put God first, then family, then job—it doesn’t actually work out that neatly.

Here’s the truth about priorities. There is just one. One priority only. No other priorities. The Lord God Almighty is the first priority and the second priority and the third and the fourth. There are no others. “Thou shalt have no other God’s before me,” is the first of the Ten Commandments. Jesus said, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’” (Mt 4:10). The disciple of Jesus Christ serves God only. God only.

Many of you reading this article are very busy people. Me too. But I tell you truthfully that I do not get “stressed out,” almost never have bad days, rarely find myself overwhelmed, and usually finish each day with satisfaction, looking forward to the next one. I have learned to walk in the power of God. Yes, I was filled with the Holy Spirit many years ago—but—it has taken me a long time to learn to walk in the Spirit. Here is the single-minded devotion. To walk in the power of God is to have absolutely surrendered your own personal agenda (and the ones others wish to impose upon you). There is a flow of direction, life and energy from the Spirit available to walk in. Doors open when they need to, things work as they should, “divine short-cuts” become routine, and most others treat us with favor.

The “death to self” seems hard at first, but later you will wonder “What took me so long?” Courage and faith are also required, because inevitably, you will need to gently but firmly say “no” to certain demands from others. Sometimes it’s your boss, sometimes it’s your family, sometimes it’s your church, and always it’s “no” to your flesh!

Having one boss only makes all the difference in the world. That is where that “place of quiet rest” is found. He leads us in paths of righteousness and beside still waters and into green pastures and He restores our soul.