

## First and Foremost!

Mark N. Posey

The word "first" pinpoints priority; it identifies the importance of success and happiness. Remember, **success is getting what you want while happiness is wanting what you get.** The "first things" in life declare what's most important. Thus, what are the most important things to a Christian; what's first?

**Give God the first hour of each day.** Begin each day listening to God (i.e., reading the Bible) and talking to God (i.e., praying to God through Jesus). Prayer and Bible study are irreplaceable. They are **not** mutually exclusive; they are totally and completely dependent one upon the other. Thus, meditate daily on God's Word (Psalm 1:2) and pray with priority (1 Timothy 2:1).

**Give God the first day of each week.** Christians honor the day of Jesus' resurrection: Sunday (John 20:1). We assemble on the "first day of the week" (Acts 20:7) as did the early church. We assemble each Sunday and remember what the Lord has done for us (1 Corinthians 11:24-25); we honor, praise and glorify Him (Revelation 4:11; 5:12). The exhortation we receive from regular and consistent assembling is strengthening (Hebrews 10:24-25).

**Give God the first portion of your pay.** Every blessing, physical or spiritual, is from God (James 1:17). He requires that we live as "faithful stewards" of all He gives us (1 Corinthians 4:2). Proverbs 3:9-10 communicates a powerful principle of priority: "Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine." God deserves our best, and our best are the firstfruits.

**Give God the first consideration in every decision.** Decisions are inevitable, and thus each one must be made with care. Joshua is exemplary in personal and collective decisions. In Joshua 24:15, he first chose for himself. Personal choice is decisive and influential. His first duty was for himself, and then he chose for his family. It is a powerful example when a man is able to speak for the decisions of his home. The greatest choice we can make, whether personal or domestic, is to obey Jesus.

**Give God the first place in your heart.** The object of our complete love (i.e., heart, mind, soul and strength) is God (Mark 12:30). Since God is in heaven, our affections (e.g., mind and heart) must be there centered (Colossians 3:1-4). As we deposit treasures in heaven, our hearts will focus less on earth (Matthew 6:19-21). If God does not occupy first place in our lives, He occupies no place.

In conclusion, be cautious and diligent to understand what God's priorities are. Then, make sure they are the priorities you hold most dear.

- Gospel Gazette Online -

*The fear of God reigning in the heart is the beauty of the soul. - Matthew Henry*

## News & Notes

**BAPTISMS: Jim & Sharon Martin**, 1574 Wylie Ridge Road, New Cumberland, WV 26047. Phone: (304) 748-6362. Welcome to our church family.

**COVERED DISH DINNER: TODAY about noon** at the Fellowship Building followed by our **early afternoon service at 2:00 p.m.** at the church building.

**LABOR DAY COOKOUT & PICNIC: TOMORROW, 1:00 p.m.** at Thompson Park, Pavilion 1. Meats and beverages provided. Take a covered dish and/or a dessert. Sponsored by the Chester and St. Clair Avenue Congregations.

**YOUNG ADULT RETREAT: Sept. 8-10** at Northeast Christian Youth Camp, Lisbon, OH. For ages 18-35, \$25 fee. Food, Fellowship, and Fun. Register at NOCYC.com.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST: Next Saturday, Sept. 9th, 8:30 a.m.** at the Columbian Church of Christ. Hosted by the men of the McGuffey Road Congregation. RSVP by Thursday, Sept. 7th by calling (330) 482-0953.

**SECRET SISTER REVEAL: Next Sunday, Sept. 10th** following the morning worship.

**GOSPEL MEETING: Sept. 10-13**, St. Clair Ave. Church of Christ. Studies in Philipians. **Speaker:** Steve Stevens. Details on the bulletin board.

**The Chester congregation will go as a group to support this meeting, Monday, September 11th, 7:00 p.m.**

**LADIES DAY: Saturday, Sept. 23rd, 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**, McGuffey Road Church of Christ, Youngstown, OH. Additional details on the bulletin board.

**OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING: Sept. 24-28** with Charles Pugh. **Three weeks from today.** Plan to be here for every service and invite others. Printed meeting fliers are on the desk in the foyer.

**OPEN HOUSE:** In celebration of **Donna Stevens' 90th Birthday, Saturday, September 30th, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.** at the Fellowship Building.

**QUESTIONS/MALAWI PROJECT:** Contact **Bill Miller (765) 418-2183** or **Kita Miller (765) 418-2160.** **Our Elders are asking our input on this work.**

**PANTRY:** Corn muffin mix.

**SICK & SHUT-IN: Weirton Medical (Skilled):** Melissa Rosohac. **At Home:** Nancy Hadley, Linda Parkes, Becky McKitrick, Glenn McMahan, Peggy Linger, Nancy Cox, Blondenia Orr, Barbara DeLong, David Strum, Cheryl Renfro Walker, Lori Rowand (John Sprout's niece). **Fox - Chester:** Mary Johnson (Lois Hissom's sister). **In Ohio:** Herman McHan, 7401 Elmwood Drive, Lisbon, OH 44432.

