

PRAY FIRST Part 1

In the Beginning God

Here's a life rule: first 4 words of the Bible...

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God...

- Secret to a happy/fulfilled life (JOHN 10:10 life) – In the beginning God!
- Put God in the beginning of your marriage, relationships, job, education, interests...
- Everything in the Bible is built on this principle
- That's why it's the first of the 10 commandments

Exodus 20:1-3

And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me."

- "Gods" doesn't mean religions. He means your loves – passions – priorities
- He doesn't mind you having other loves. He just wants to be first!
- God is not asking anything from you that He hasn't first given to you- He gave you His first, Jesus, and it cost Him everything

The Principle of First

- The principle of "first" runs throughout the Bible
- Whether you're a Christian or not, your life is marked by your priorities
- First things have power!

2 Ways to Apply the Principle of Firsts:

- **GIVE GOD THE FIRST OF EVERYTHING**

- Most pastors will teach this about money (tithe) but it's bigger than money. It's about EVERYTHING!

Leviticus 27:30 NIV

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.

- Holy: set a part, worship, special
- Tithe: belongs to the Lord, first 10%, is about priority. Not about how much you give, but when you give it.

Deuteronomy 14:23 (LB)

The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God in first place in your life.

- The real principle is about First Things
- Let's look at 4 Places to put God first this year!

1. The First of My Year

Jeremiah 36:6

"Therefore, go, and read the scroll and the words of the Lord, in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day."

Matthew 6:16- Jesus said, "When you fast...", not "if" you fast.

Praying, Fasting, Giving = GOD FIRST LIFE

- In other words, God said, 'I want you to set aside a certain time every year that you fast and seek Me.' And here's the purpose for it – For self-examination and consecration. Spiritual check-up and refocus
- Here at LifeGate, we are starting out the year with 21 days of prayer and fasting, a tithe of our year
- This Year: January 8th-29th (Nights of Worship and Prayer 11th, 18th, 25th)
- We've provided lots of resources through our app. SCAN the PRAY FIRST square to get to join us.

Biblical Fasting:

- Complete Fast
 - This fast calls for drinking only liquids
 - Typically water with light juices as an option
 - Get medical supervision- some should never fast w/o medical supervision
 - Use good sense. The "spirit" of the fast (heart thing). Don't try to win the fast☺
 - Selective Fast
 - Removing certain things from diet
 - Best example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast (remove meat, sweets, or bread from your diet)
 - Consume water and juice and fruits and vegetables your diet
 - Partial Fast
 - Sometimes called the Jewish Fast: certain meals then eat the evening meals
 - Soul Fast
 - Any area of the soul: social media, news, movies
- Get away from life as usual
 - Special times of prayer and intercession
 - Replace meals with prayer and spend extra time in God's Word

2. The First of my Month.

Scheduling and Budgeting (Margin)

- Scheduling
 - If you don't set your schedule, it will set you (Meetings, travel, activities, people)
 - Don't do too much (Busy or full life?)
 - Always put God first!
- Budgeting (not a bad word)
 - Tithe for 1 year: Bring to God what's His FIRST
 - Try it and you'll see. (Mal 3 God says, "See if I won't...")

3. The First of my Week

Worshipping and Replenishing

Hebrews 10:25 (TPB)

This is not the time to pull away and neglect meeting together, as some have formed the habit of doing. In fact, we should come together even more frequently, eager to encourage and urge each other onward as we anticipate that day dawning.

- Make a commitment to go to church – don't miss. It's the best day of the week!
- Too many have lost the priority of church
- Set the whole day aside to rest, replenish, refocus. Prepare for the week- it will make a difference

4. The First of My Day

Psalms 5:3 (TPT)

At each and every sunrise you will hear my voice as I prepare my sacrifice of prayer to you. Every morning I lay out the pieces of my life on the altar and wait for your fire to fall upon my heart.

First 15 minutes a Day:

- 5 Minutes in the Word
- 5 Minutes in Worship
- 5 Minutes in Prayer

EXPECT GOD TO BLESS THE REST

- Mix your faith with focus
- Expect God!

Declaring a Personal Purpose!

Isaiah 58:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness^[a] will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.
⁹ Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I...

Healing: something broken, not right, needs to be healed (Body or Soul)

Holiness: righteousness, in order, not perfection, back on track, God's will

Help: the Lord will answer- God's favor and blessing!

Matthew 6:16-17 (TPT)

"When you fast, don't look gloomy and pretend to be spiritual. They want everyone to know they're fasting, so they appear in public looking miserable and disheveled. Believe me, they've already received their reward. When you fast, don't let it be obvious, but instead, wash your face and groom yourself and realize that your Father in the secret place is the one who is watching all that you do in secret and will continue to reward you."