

Embracing God's Priorities



Agreeing With God (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

This week I'll be continuing with the theme that I commenced last week: Agreeing with God.

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write—even if it's only a brief personal note.

Now back to our theme: Agreeing with God.

I'd like to begin by outlining the substance of what I said on this topic last week.

Last week I said that we are invited, through the Gospel, to walk with God. But in order to do this, the Scripture says we have to agree with God. Amos 3:3 says: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed."

"Agreed," I understand, means "to harmonize." This means, then, that we have to bring our ways and our thoughts into line with God's, because God's ways and God's thoughts are far higher than ours. Now the way that we can do this is by receiving God's Word into our hearts and minds, for God's Word brings God's ways and thoughts down from the heavenly level to our level. And this involves a total change in our thinking. This change of thinking, in the Scripture, is called "repentance." That's what repentance really means—it means to change the way you think.

I've been pointing out that this change in our thinking covers four main areas which I have listed as follows. First, objectives; second, priorities; third, attitudes; and fourth, categories. Let me give you that list again. First, objectives; second, priorities; third, attitudes; and fourth, categories. I believe that in order to bring our ways and our thoughts into line with those of God, we have to change or let the Holy Spirit and the Word of God change us in each of those four

main areas that I've listed.

In my two last talks, the previous week, I shared on the first of those areas—God's objectives—and I stated that the two primary objectives of God, in all His dealings in the universe, are first of all, His own glory and satisfaction, and secondly, excellence. And I chose as an example of God's priority on excellence, the record of creation—that every stage in creation God checked to see that it came up to His standard. When He saw that it was good, then He continued. And, at the end, when He saw the whole of creation, He saw that it was very good. So, those are, I believe, God's two primary objectives that we need to understand, we need to embrace, we need to enter into—His own glory and satisfaction and excellence.

Today I'm going to deal with the second main area: God's priorities, which also, of course, are of tremendous importance, because unless our priorities are in line with God's, we cannot really agree with God; we cannot walk with God. I want to suggest to you that God's first priority centers in His kingdom. The first priority of God, in all His dealings with the human race and with this world of ours, is to bring God's kingdom into being on earth. And I want to emphasize "on earth," because I think many Christians have got a wrong priority. Their priority is to get to heaven. Well that's important but I don't believe that's really God's priority. It may be a stage in the process but God's real priority is to get heaven to earth. That's where the Bible is so different from the thinking of religious people. Most religious people, in one way or another, think in terms of escaping from the world situation. God thinks in terms of establishing His kingdom in the world situation.

This is exemplified by the Lord's Prayer. In Matthew 6, verses 9 and 10, Jesus told His disciples how to pray. He set them a pattern of prayer. I don't think necessarily He meant we have to pray exactly those words, but He said, "This is the pattern, and particularly, these are your priorities." And this is what He said:

> "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, [First of all we have to establish that relationship with God as our Father, not just my Father, but our Father. Then the next phrase:] Hallowed be Your name. [That involves identifying with God's objective of His own glory. Then Jesus said we are to go on:] Your kingdom come, [In saying that, we are identifying ourself with God's priority in the affairs of earth. God's priority is to establish His kingdom. And in the same verse, Jesus continues:] Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (NKJ)

And we see here that it's earth where the action is. It's not getting out of earth to some ethereal realm which is God's kingdom. It's bringing God's kingdom, in reality, down to earth and that involves God's will being done on earth just the way it is in heaven. Could you believe that God's will could be done in your life just as much as it is in heaven? That's what Jesus implies.

And then a little later on in the same sixth chapter of Matthew, in verse 33, He returns to this priority and states it so clearly.

> "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you." (NKJ)

So, before any of our own personal ambitions or needs, we are to put God's kingdom—the coming of God's kingdom, is priority number one for this earth and especially for God's servants on this earth. That's what we have to embrace before any of our own personal needs or ambitions or plans. And when we say, "Your kingdom come," we also say, "Your will be done on earth; [that is in me] as it is in heaven."

Now I want to go on to what I believe is a second major priority of God and I'll express it this way—the eternal before the temporal. God always puts the eternal, in His priorities, before the temporal. But it's important that I've already stated that the coming of God's kingdom on earth is priority number one because if I talked about the priority of the eternal before the temporal, without having said that, many of you might conclude that I'm talking about getting out of the temporal into the eternal. That's not where it's at. It's getting the eternal into the temporal. But, we always have to bear in mind, that which is of ultimate importance is the eternal, not the temporal. And I believe it's true that God never sacrifices one fraction of eternity for the longest period of time, because eternity is of an altogether different value to time. No amount of time can equal in value the smallest fraction of eternity.

Paul speaks about this in Second Corinthians 4:17 and 18.

> "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, [or temporal] but

> the things which are not seen are eternal." (NKJ)

So Paul says there are two categories of things that come into our lives—the temporary and the eternal. And he says, "God is working in us His eternal purposes but only as long as we look, not at the things which are seen, the temporal, but at the things which are not seen, the eternal." So, where we focus our gaze makes all the difference on how God is able to deal with us. Only if we keep our gaze focused on the eternal, can God work out His eternal purposes in us.

And then again, in Romans 8:28, Paul says:

> "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (NIV)

So in all God's dealings in our lives, He's always working for the good. That's His ultimate aim. It comes up to His own standard of excellence that we're already seen exemplified in creation, where God did not pass anything or move onto the next phase until he saw that what was already created was good. God seeks and pursues excellence in every area, but particularly in the lives of us who are His servants and His people. But bear in mind, it's not just excellence in the temporal but far more, it's excellence in the eternal.

God wants to produce in us an eternal kind of goodness, primarily a moral goodness, something that will stand the test of eternity, something that will not fade and wither at the end of this life. He is always working in your life and in mine for results that are eternal. We have to bear that in mind. Many times we pass through troubles and problems and situations and we say, "God, I don't understand, how could you let this happen to me?" We don't understand because we're not doing it with God's priority. God says, "Whatever happens in time is of secondary importance to what happens in shaping your eternal character because time is going to end, but what you are in your character is eternal and you're going to live with that through eternity. So I always give priority," God says, "to the eternal above the temporal."

Well our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about Sharing God's Attitudes.

Radio Program

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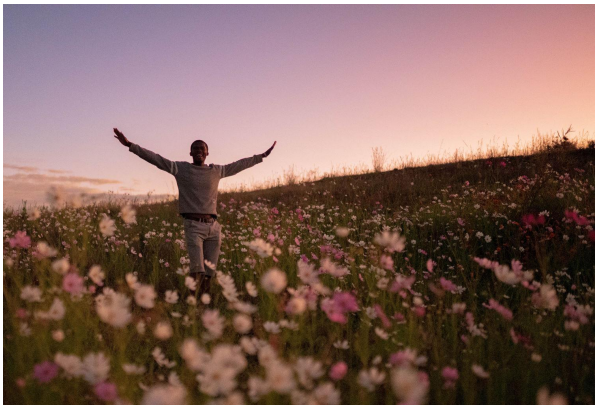

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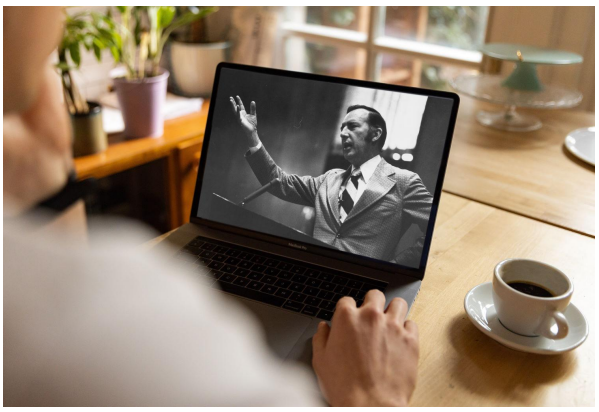

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