



PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

November 13, 2017

Put God First

by Frank Himmel

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The Bible puts God first. Do you?

First in Your Life

God is the foundation of the only life worth living. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7a). Serving Him is the sum of life (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Don't waste your time in other pursuits. They will disappoint, both now and in eternity. Godliness, on the other hand, "holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

First place is the only place for God. Jesus said the great commandment is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and will all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). Don't let anything else ever dethrone Him in your life, even temporarily.

First in Your Choices

Putting God first in your life means the first factor to consider in every choice is, what is God's will? That applies to moral choices, deciding what is right and wrong. Let God's word tell you. It applies to appearance choices. It applies to attitude choices: will I be happy, humble, and kind or discontent and disagreeable? (These, too, are moral choices.)

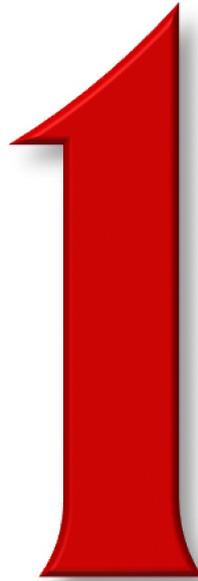
It applies to career choices. Making a living is necessary, but how much you earn is not nearly as important as the spiritual impact a particular job (including its location) might have on you. It applies to relationship choices. Will association with these friends help me be more godly? Will this individual I am considering marrying help me get to heaven? It applies to financial priorities, time priorities, and a host of other choices that confront us during a lifetime.

While some choices are between right and wrong, others are merely between what is wise and otherwise. Putting God's will first always helps us choose well.

First in Your Day

Mark reports, "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there" (Mark 1:35). Does that not explain how Jesus could be so successful in His work, so alert to opportunities, so steadfast in the face of distractions and opposition, so strong against temptation? If our Lord began His days by focusing on the Father and speaking to Him in prayer, how much more do we need to do that?

Remind yourself first thing each morning who and what you are. There is no better way to do that than with Bible reading and prayer. Even a brief time spent that way is helpful. Carry that focus with you throughout the day. Put God first. ■



When Church Is Boring

by Frank Himmel

What do you do when you find that church is boring? Most would say it's time for a change! Now the question is, change what?

Many folks think the answer is to change the church. I just read an article about a new church created for men only, men who find church boring. Discarding more traditional environments, they meet in a gymnasium one Saturday evening a month. A rock band provides the entertainment. The preacher speaks in front of the scoreboard, with the clock running. He guarantees to have them out in one hour! This sort of innovation is not unusual. Many religious leaders hail it as a positive development, a way to reach out to those who otherwise would have no interest in church.

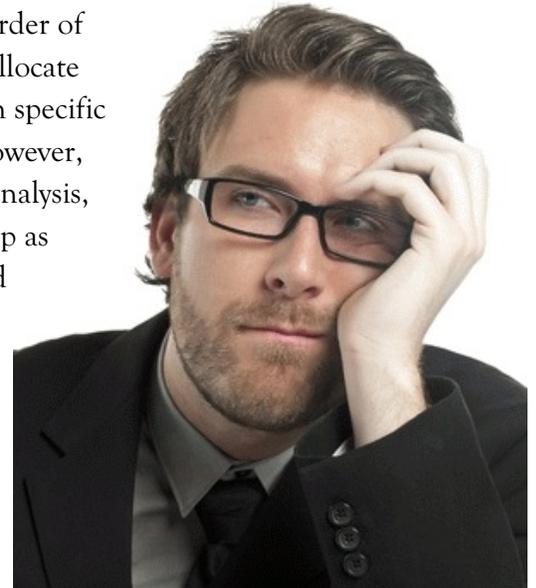
Some might not go that far, yet they still insist on change. Contemporary music, drama, and short sermons that are little more than pep talks are the order of the day. Clapping and cheering have replaced old-fashioned amens. *Celebration* and *praise* are the buzzwords, with the world's calendar dictating the subject celebrated.

Malachi lived at a time when people found "church" boring. Speaking of Israel's worship, God said through

the Prophet, "You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it" (Malachi 1:13).

God proposed two changes to these who turned up their noses at His worship. One was to just stay home. "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you" (v. 11). The better solution, the change He preferred, was to repent, to "take it to heart to give honor to My name." (2:2). The obvious omission, the change God did not approve, was altering the structure or activities of worship to accommodate individual tastes.

The preacher can work to make his sermons more interesting, the song leader can try to select more meaningful hymns, and the one who leads in prayer can give more thought to what he says. It may be refreshing to occasionally shuffle the order of things or reallocate time spent in specific activities. However, in the final analysis, when worship as God directed is boring, the main change that is needed is in the worshiper's heart. ■



Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Josh Baucom	Mark Clifton	Bruce Williams
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	Bruce Williams	John Baucom
OPENING PRAYER	Gary Hagler	Howard Moore	
LORD'S SUPPER			
BREAD	Mark Clifton	Mark Clifton	
CUP	Albert Lee Harrison	Albert Lee Harrison	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Daven Daniel		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	J B Williams
CLOSING PRAYER	Greg Winget	Brian Wilson	Kerry Gray