

1. **Introduction:** As we have seen, God’s overarching purpose for every believer is that they glorify and enjoy him forever. Paul gets even more specific.
 - We glorify God by believing Him, by confessing and repenting sin, gaining wisdom, practicing and defending His truth, being fruitful, walking cheerfully and lovingly, and praising him. A believers’ enjoyment of God increases as they become more like Christ.
 - Paul says, ***“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”*** (1Cor 10:31). If whatever you do is done according to God’s moral principles, done to the best of your abilities, and intended to please God, it is done for His glory.
 - Since we cannot grasp the whole Bible at once, we need an organizing principle.
2. **WSC Q 3** points the way: *“What do the Scriptures principally teach?”* That is, what are the dominant themes of Scripture? Answer: *“The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.”*
 - The details of *“What we are to believe concerning God”* and *“what duty he requires of us”* are essential to understanding how we are to live to please God.
 - When studying the Bible, organizing what we learn in these two categories will help fix God’s truth in our mind.
 - A French monk of the 17th century whose daily work was menial kitchen tasks, wrote a book titled **“The Practice of the Presence of God”** that was published after he died.
 - Brother Lawrence glorified God and enjoyed Him every day as He sensed God’s glory and enjoyed God’s presence amid his menial tasks. He said, *“We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed.”*
 - God designed both us and the world we live in. We honor and bring Him glory when we use what He has provided in the manner He intended, no matter what the world thinks.
 - Whatever we do in life – worship, work, care for family, and all the ordinary things of life – all can be done to God’s glory! How do we do that?
3. **First Priority:** Scripture tells us some things are to be priorities: Jesus said, ***“...seek first his (God’s) kingdom and his righteousness”*** (Mt 6:33).
4. **Jesus Identifies The Greatest Commandment:** ***“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”***
 - ***“All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments”*** (Mt 22:37- 40).
5. **Believer’s Love for each Other:** Jesus said: ***“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you (that is, with action in your best interest and sacrifice on your behalf), so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”*** (Jn 13:34-35).
6. **Believer’s Love for Jesus:** Jesus said: ***“If you love me you will obey what I command.”*** (Jn 14:15)

7. **Believer's Actions Toward Others:** Jesus said, *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets"* (Mt 7:12).
8. **Rm 13:9-10:** *"The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the Law"*.
- From these passages and their context, it is hard to miss the top priority placed on seeking God and His righteousness.
 - Or the dramatic importance of love and the fact that love properly understood and carried out is the fulfillment of the law.
 - Or Jesus' command to bring the truth of the gospel to the world, teaching others obedience to Christ, and bringing them into the fellowship of believers.
 - God provides great freedom for all who seek to glorify Him in their life – there's room for family, work, fun, and all the abundance of things that are good in God's sight.
 - But there is an order of priority – one to which we should pay careful attention.
 - Jesus said, *"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"* (Mt 16:26)
9. **More On The First Priority:** The first priority in our life is to first seek our Savior, the Lord Jesus, and His kingdom. The only entrance to the kingdom of God is through Jesus Christ.
- We are to seek God's righteousness which requires aligning our thoughts and behavior with God's revealed character and commands.
 - To be "in the kingdom of God" means that in His grace, God has given us the gift of new spiritual life and the gift of faith.
 - We are united with Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, justified before God, our sins forgiven, and adopted into God's family giving direct access to the Father.
 - Through these means we are provided with a fresh start so remarkable that Paul calls us a "new creation" (2Cor 5:17).
 - The change is so dramatic, Jesus called it being born again, *"born of the Spirit"* (Jn 3:8).
 - When a baby is physically born, initially they are only aware of "need" and of those who meet that need.
 - So it is with being "born again." Initially, we are aware of our need to be free of the penalty and the fact that need has been met by Jesus bearing the penalty for our sins.
 - Like a developing baby, we become steadily more capable of doing the things our Father wants us to do.
 - Thus, we have been given a new life to live. Paul says *"...I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received"* (Eph 4:1). Our Lord Jesus is our model.
 - We are to live in a manner pleasing to God both in our private life and our public life and gradually become an image of Christ.

- How do to please God? Paul provides our focus. *“... the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men”* (Rm 14:17-18).
 - *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him”* (Heb 11:6).
10. **Faith:** *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”* (Eph 2:8-9)
- God gives us the faith that enables us to receive his pardon from sin’s eternal penalty plus new life. Our conscious walk with God begins with and is sustained by faith.
 - Faith is believing God, trusting He is who He says He is and has done what He says He has done. Many people say faith is an illogical belief in the improbable – or that faith is wishful thinking – or credulity – or mere optimism.
 - To the contrary, the Bible presents faith as reasonable trust. Faith and rational thought belong together. Believing is impossible without thinking. Faith is meaningless without a foundation of reasons on which trust can stand.
 - Think about the message of Mt 6:25-34. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says the Lord’s teaching in this passage is that faith is primarily about thinking.
 - A person of no faith isn’t thinking – fails to be observant and draw logical conclusions.
 - The Bible is full of logic, and we must pay attention and think to receive its message.
 - Jesus says look at the birds and think about what you are seeing. Look at the grasses of the field and consider carefully what you observe.
 - Then, draw logical conclusions about God’s provision for you considering the relative importance of birds, grasses and people.
 - Sometime people and circumstances seem to so beat us up intellectually that our emotions dominate us, we forget the truths we know and become irrational in thought and behavior.
 - Faith brings our mind under control. God says “remember” and “think.” A person of little faith doesn’t control their own thoughts. Instead, they are tossed to and fro, controlled by circumstances, and they worry.
 - The essence of worry is to go around in circles. Worry is not rational thought, but a failure to think.
11. **Heb 11:1:** *“...faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*
12. **Rm 14:23:** *“...and everything that does not come from faith is sin.”*
13. **Gal 5:6:** *“...The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”*
14. **1Jn 5:4:** *“...This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”*
15. **James 2:15-17:** *“Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his*

physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

16. **Rm 1:17:** *“For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”*

- Faith’s importance is overwhelmingly evident. From Heb 11:1 and 11:6, we see that faith is related to belief, trust, confidence, and assurance.
- In broad terms, faith is a confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing. Every action must be taken in the present, but the results of that action always lie in the unknown future.
- Hence, every action requires commitment before knowing the outcome of that action. Therefore, all action involves an assumption of trust and the reality of risk-taking.
- Faith enables risk taking! Is all faith valid? What determines the validity of faith?
- Faith always has an object. All faith is “faith in something.” Faith’s validity depends on the trustworthiness of faith’s object (Ron Dunn’s story).
- God is trustworthy. Other objects of faith are not necessarily trustworthy. Not all risks are equal. Not all risk taking is reasonable.
- Prudent actions are actions compatible with the trustworthiness of the object of faith.
- Faith involves intellect (knowledge and wisdom), affections (emotions), and making decisions (will).
- The intellect must always have information it accepts as reasonable and sufficient evidence to justify trust in the object of faith, even if the information is known to be incomplete, not verifiable beyond reasonable doubt, or both.
- The affections add evidence for trustworthiness through a “feeling of rightness, a feeling that everything fits.”
- Based on the intellect’s sufficient reasonable evidence and the affections’ right “feelings,” the will inclines toward confident trust in the object of faith.
- Future contrary evidence may cause doubt about trust in the object of the faith.
- When circumstances cause doubt, God’s revealed character helps us to stand firm.

17. **Next Time:** Distinguishing between “biblical faith” and “natural faith”.