

The Rule of Priority Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What do you like to do when you have a day off?
2. What are your favorite holidays?

Read the following passage: Matthew 6:25-33.

By our standards, most people in the ancient world were very poor. Just getting enough food, water, and clothing was a challenge. And they were worried about it. Our circumstances may be different, but our struggle with worry and anxiety is similar. Jesus's solution for our anxiety is a little surprising: the rule of priority. The key to peace is making God our priority. David's life shows us a number of ways this should play out: 1) We need to see God first; 2) We need to delight in God first; 3) We need to respond to God first; and 4) We need to give to God first.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Read Luke 10:38-42. Why do you think Martha was so concerned about making all the right preparations to properly host Jesus and his disciples? What are you prone to think you need in order to be okay? How might Jesus's response to Martha apply to your life?
2. The Philistine warrior, Goliath, was an intimidating figure. Are there any areas in your life in which you sometimes feel intimidated? What would it mean for you to "see God first" in these areas of your life? Has God been teaching you any lessons in any of these areas? Explain.
3. All of us experience desire in many different areas of our lives: the desire to be loved; the desire to do something meaningful; the desire for food; the desire for companionship, etc. How do we recognize when we are inappropriately fixating on a desire or inappropriately ignoring a desire? What should we do when we experience a really strong desire that we're not sure how to fulfill in a healthy way?
4. Read Psalm 27:4-8. Describe David's desire for God. How, practically, can we delight in God?
5. Read 2 Samuel 16:5-14. Absalom's attempted coup and public shaming of his father, David, was one of the most painful experiences in David's life. We know from Psalm 3 that David had strong feelings about what was happening and the people who were turning against him. What can we learn from David about responding to God first when we are angry, anxious, bitter, or ashamed? How did David's relationship with God impact how he responded to Shimei?

6. David saw the opportunity to give resources toward the building of a temple as a huge privilege. (See 1 Chronicles 29:14-20.) David's son, Solomon, eventually built the temple in Jerusalem. Read part of Solomon's prayer of dedication in 1 Kings 8:27-30. In what sense is "giving to God first" about our needs and not God's needs? What does giving to God first look like?

Pray