

Introduction:

Three reasons why most of us live with two sets of priorities:

1. We are _____. We honestly don't see the discrepancy between what we think and say, and how we actually live.
2. We are _____. Though we long to put "first things first," we simply do not believe that God will supply our needs if we give Him the first portion of our time, our lives, and our money.
3. We have _____ repeatedly. Our sincere and honest efforts to put "first things first" in the past lasted only a short time and ended with frustration and disillusionment with ourselves.

So, what's the "Missing Ingredient" to Living Out Our Priorities?

- It's a _____ word.
- It's a _____ of the Spirit.
- It comes to us by _____.
- We _____ it in others.
- It's _____ for putting "first things first."

❖ The Word = _____

Definition: Discipline is doing what needs to be done when it needs to be done.

- Discipline is the Spirit-empowered ability given by God's grace that allows us to say "no" to the quick fix and the easy road, and say "yes" to the harder but better way. Titus 2:11-12
- Discipline is a by-product of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Galatians 5:22-23
- We are commanded to live disciplined lives. 2 Peter 1:6
- Discipline is a process that is learned over time through training.

The *Dynamics* of Biblical Discipline Can Be Summed Up in 2 Words:

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Hebrews 12:11

The *Method* of Developing Biblical Discipline Can Be Summed Up in 3 Words:

_____ - _____.

- The Biblical Example – the Apostle Paul

²⁴Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but {only} one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. ²⁵And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then {do it} to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

- How Does It Work?

1. Advanced Decision Making begins with

_____ - _____.

2. Advanced Decision Making is reinforced by

_____ the _____.

3. Advanced Decision Making becomes a personal conviction when you

_____ the _____.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does living by "two sets" of priorities produce in our emotional and spiritual lives?
2. List two common reasons why we tend to avoid dealing deeply with priority issues even when we know it's important.
3. Define discipline. How does this definition differ from your thinking about "discipline" in the past?
4. Why is it critical to see discipline in a positive light?
5. Share some specific examples of how "advanced decision-making" has helped you become disciplined. How does it make you feel when you're disciplined?
6. Share one specific area (time, money, or relationships) that you believe God wants you to prioritize according to His design. Discuss what delayed gratification looks like and what advanced decision you will need to make.