

It is a question of priority

by Hendrik Joubert

An old friend used to say “a man will afford what he wants to afford.” It is interesting to notice where people will invest, not only their money, but also their time. While criticizing others of foolishness, an objective self-examination may reveal some foolishness of our own. The moral obligation for self criticism is mandated by the Lord: ***“Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴² “Or how can you say to your brother, “Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. (Luke 6:41-42)***

Hand-in-hand with the tendency to harshly judge others goes the notion to make light of, or even justify our weaknesses. Reminiscent of the temptation of the Lord, we will abuse Scriptures in an attempt to justify our weaknesses. When failing to make worshipping God my first priority in life, I may quote: ***But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8)*** Thus I will feel justified working overtime rather than attending worship; because of what God said.

Consider the most prominent test of faith often failed in our affluent society: ***But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)*** I do not believe a lack of faith that God would supply our needs is as much a problem as our dissatisfaction with what is promised. God promises us the bare necessities, but we desire lush. *I only want what everyone else has...*

It is often stated as a fact that we live in a time when a family cannot survive on the salary of the husband only. Mothers will fail in their duties towards their children, and anyone who dares to say this out loudly will draw criticism. It is archaic to suggest that a mother should be at home to take care of her family.

Consider for a moment the avenues through which God provides. Everyone wants it to be by His providence, miraculously that is. The church is not considered as an avenue for God's providence. We will decide that we cannot contribute to a brother's *laziness* by supplying him and his family with the necessities of life. We require his commitment, but fail to demonstrate the same urgency in fulfilling our duties.

Then there is the problem of pride. Some will not accept help. This is often true when we simply have to ask for a ride because we are determined to worship God. It is my duty to help you accomplish that, and yours to help me. What will it take for you to refrain from faithfully worshipping the God who allowed His Son to be brutally murdered for your sins?

How important do you consider each and every meeting of the saints? Admittedly the remembrance of Christ and the assembly for that is an extremely important part of our life of worship, but what about the other times the saints meet to learn more about our great Savior they intend spending eternity with? What does it mean to ***hunger and thirst for righteousness, (Matthew 5:6)*** or ***like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation? (1 Peter 2:2)***

What is the most important thing in your life? What could be more important than *working out your salvation with fear and trembling?* (Philippians 2:12) *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?* Matthew 16:26

What kind of commitment are we talking about? *And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. Luke 9:23.* Think about the relationship between denying self and self-control as we set our priorities each and every day.

Who should come first in my life? *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it. (Matthew 10:37-39)*

Do you want to rethink the whole thing? *"No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the ."* (Luke 9:62)

Self examination is not the solution; it is part of recognizing and acknowledging possible problems. It is the first step in the process of establishing proper priorities. An honest moment with yourself may prove to be quite telling about what your priorities are.