

STEPS TO ENSURE MORALS IN AN IMMORAL WORLD (Philippians 4:8)

I. Set our priorities.

- A. We understand the need for priorities in life.
 - 1. There are some things that are more important than others and they take precedence.
 - 2. People write and sell book about setting priorities and people buy them up as quickly as they are written.
 - 3. I did a google search of the phrase “importance of setting priorities” and it told me that there were about 79.4 million hits.
- B. The problem is that many of us Christians have the wrong priorities.
 - 1. Too many of us are like the world in this.
 - 2. We set priorities around work or our kids schedules.
- C. There is nothing wrong with working and the Bible tells us that if a man doesn’t work, he shouldn’t eat.
 - 1. The problems arise when we make work number one in our lives.
 - 2. When that takes place, we start worrying about money, position and promotion.
 - 3. Our spiritual lives are affected as well as our morals.
- D. Notice what Paul told the Colossians... (Colossians 3:1-2).
- E. Too many times our “affections” are on things of the earth.
 - 1. The word “affections” carries the idea of our will and moral considerations.
 - 2. What do I have to do to make more money?
 - 3. What do I have to do to move up in this company?
 - 4. What do I have to do to have more fun in life.
 - 5. On and on with questions like these we could go that are asked by people who have earthly things as their main priorities.
- F. As Christians, our priorities must based on what is spiritually important, not financially or socially important.
 - 1. We are to seek those things which are heavenly in nature.
 - 2. Our souls are to valuable to do anything else (Mark 8:36-37).
- G. The spirit is greater than the body because the spirit is eternal.
- H. We need to be concerned about the condition of our soul much more than the condition of our body.
- I. The idea of setting priorities must come first because the other steps we will mention will not be taken without the proper spiritual priorities.

II. Be Christ-like.

- A. 1 Peter 2:21.
 - 1. We are to follow in the steps of Jesus.
 - 2. In other words, we need to be like Him as much as we possibly can.
- B. There is no doubt we will fall far short of this goal.
 - 1. We aren’t deity.

- 2. We aren't sinless.
- C. However, we can learn from how He reacted to situations and strive to follow His example in that way.
 - 1. When He was persecuted, He didn't fight back.
 - 2. 1 Peter 2:22-23.
- D. When we keep our morality, we are going to suffer.
- E. We need to count that as a privilege and joy.
 - 1. 1 Peter 4:16.
 - 2. Matthew 5:10-12.
- F. This is something that we need to be teaching our children.
 - 1. We are different from the world in that we are truly striving to be Christ-like (Titus 2:14).
 - 2. Being like Christ will set us apart from the world, which is exactly what we are supposed to be (1 Peter 1:15-16).
- G. There are things to which we must say no in order to be like Christ.
- H. There are sacrifices we have to make in order to be like Christ.

III. **Get involved.**

- A. James 1:22.
- B. How many of us will be back to tonight?
 - 1. You know as well as I do that our numbers go down on Sunday night.
 - 2. How many will come back Wednesday evening?
 - 3. How many were here for Bible class this morning?
 - 4. How many didn't come to our meeting that could have come?
 - 5. How many of our young people who could be involved in Bible Bowl aren't?
 - 6. How many of our number aren't involved in our Christians In Action work teams that could be?
- C. The problem here, and in many congregations, is that we have what br. Highers calls "nominal Christians."
 - 1. I had to look nominal up in the dictionary.
 - 2. It means "in name only."
- D. These people are hearers of the word but not doers of it.
- E. Even of those who may be back tonight, how many of us are truly involved in the work of the congregation as we could be?
- F. The key is participation.
- G. Let's not lie to ourselves and say that the world's pull on us isn't strong.
 - 1. It is everywhere we turn.
 - 2. It is at work, at school and other places.
 - 3. The non-Christian friends we have exert this pull on us.
 - 4. We are pulled by it through all of the areas of media that are in our lives.
- H. When we are truly involved in different works of the church, we are much less likely to succumb to the pressure the world exerts on us.
 - 1. We are too busy with the work of the church to fall into temptations

- around us.
 - 2. We are busy for the Lord so we can't be useful to Satan.
- I. However, when we fail to be actively participating in true work, we are much more likely to give in to the world.
 - 1. We lack the strength we need to resist.
 - 2. Jesus said to His earthly parents, "I must be about my Father's business."
 - 3. God is our Father, and we need to be about His business, because oftentimes, be about His business will keep us out of trouble.

IV. Study the Bible.

- A. 2 Peter 3:18.
 - 1. We won't grow if we don't study.
 - 2. 1 Peter 2:2.
 - 3. If we want to be strong against temptation and immorality, we must be students of God's word (Ephesians 6:10-11).
- B. A long time ago, to God's people then, Hosea was inspired to write...(Hosea 4:6).
 - 1. God's people then were consumed by worldiness.
 - 2. Look at God's people today.
- C. Churches are drifting off into sin.
 - 1. Why is that?
 - 2. They have leaders and preachers that don't study the Bible.
- D. Christians are falling into worldly habits all around us.
 - 1. Why is that?
 - 2. There is a genuine lack of study.
- E. It is amazing that we live in a world that provides us with more avenues of study and more material that is of benefit to our study than at any other time in history.
 - 1. You can go online and find great material written by good, sound Christians.
 - 2. You can get the Bible for free in several different versions.
 - 3. You can access commentaries for free that, in the past, could not be gotten except with out a good sum of money being spent.
- F. Despite these facts, Christians are dumber than they've ever been spiritually speaking.
 - 1. This goes for elders and preachers as well.
 - 2. The spiritual dumbness knows no boundaries.
- G. We need to get back to being Bible students, not just Bible readers, if we even do that.
- H. There is no way we will overcome the world without being true students of God's word.
 - 1. 1 John 5:4.
 - 2. Faith will only come through a knowledge of God's word (Romans 10:17).

V. Make heaven your goal.

- A. If it were possible to gain a great amount of wealth by adhering to a strict way of life, but we knew we would obtain the wealth, how many of us would follow that strict plan?
 - 1. I dare say, a great many of us would.
 - 2. We, as humans, generally will go through anything if money is at the end of it for us.
- B. There is something far greater than money waiting for us.
 - 1. We oftentimes sing, "Heaven will surely be worth it all."
 - 2. Do we really believe that?
- C. There is a home of the soul that is far greater than anything man can fathom.
 - 1. It is prepared by deity.
 - 2. We believe the earth is beautiful, and it is, and it has been created by deity.
 - 3. The home of the faithful for all eternity will be far grander and much more beautiful than this earth because it will be eternal.
- D. This life and all that is in it is going to pass from existence at some future point.
- E. Are we tying ourselves to this world and missing out on heaven?
 - 1. If so, are we getting the better end of the deal?
 - 2. I think you and I know the answer to that question.
- F. Paul said it was "far better" to go and be with the Lord (Philippians 1:23).
- G. We will be the biggest fools if we shoot for this life and miss out on heaven in the next.

From an article by Alan Highers.