

Speaking to the soul



Priorities

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. 1 John 2:15

John's concern here was very similar to that of Jesus when, in the Sermon on the Mount, he said that it was impossible to serve both God and money (Matthew 6:24). We have a choice to make as to whether we will allow all our energy to be expended on worldly interests or on God's kingdom. We

cannot possibly do both. John encouraged his readers to focus their attention on loving God and not the temporary pleasures of the world.

Does that mean we should all leave our jobs and homes and sit on a park bench reading the Bible? No, far from it! We are called to enjoy God's world, to serve him in our jobs and homes and to live alongside those who know nothing of him, but, as we do so, we need to keep our focus on the things that last and not on those pleasures, possessions and achievements which have a very short shelf life.

John writes in very sharp language to encourage us to sort out our priorities. When our actions are shaped by our love of God, everything else will flow in the right way. We will see our achievements and possessions as a gift of God's grace and not as a sign of our brilliance and success. We will seek to use everything that God has given us to bless other people and to enhance their enjoyment of life, and in doing so we will please God.

When we focus all our attention on possessions and pleasure, we push God out, and we push life out in the process. John's language may be blunt, but this is because he wanted his readers to live their lives to the full, which will only happen if we live for God.

QUESTION

How do you seek to give God priority in your daily life?

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you for the life that you have given me.
Help me to live responsibly and carefully in this world and
never to fall in love with it. Amen

Photo - On the river Bann at Coleraine

