

Priorities
Week 1: Time Management

Goal of this Lesson: To learn how to use our time in a way that glorifies God.

Introduction: Welcome everyone. Explain why you've chosen this topic to study, what the plan for this hour is, and how it may play a part in the preceding or upcoming weeks.

Potential Ice Breaker: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQL37ZvTrHg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5ZvL4as2y0>

*If you can do this, or a version of it, in person, it could be just as or more powerful!

Time Management Exercise with ping pong balls, rocks, sand, water, etc.

- Fill a clear jar half-way with sand.
- Put in small pebbles/marbles/etc. to about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full.
- Put in ping pong balls until they spill out the top.
- Explain that the ping pong balls are the *big* responsibilities in life. They are our first priority. The pebbles are important responsibilities, but they are not the biggest. The sand represents things we spend our time on that aren't necessary. The jar is a 24-hour day. When we put in the unnecessary things first, we don't have time for everything.
- Do the exercise again, but put in the ping pong balls first, then the pebbles, then the sand.
- When we put them in in the right order, everything that needs to fit, does.
- *If not all the sand fits the second time, that's okay!*

It's easy to lose sight of our priorities in the rush of day to day life. When we're under pressure, we tend to focus on the *urgent*, but not always the *important*.

Possible Discussion Questions: What are the *important* things in your life? What are the *urgent* things? (Urgent things can be menial tasks and/or things like Netflix binging and scrolling through social media.) What are some good guidelines we can use to classify the things that take our time?

Read Proverbs 6:6-11

- Looking to something as small as an ant is embarrassing if even he is a better workman than the recipient of this Proverb. ("sluggard" in ESV "lazybones" in NLT is the recipient of the Proverb) We don't want to be this person, but let's take an honest inventory—are we? Where do we struggle with laziness most in our life?
- The ants don't even need someone to tell them what to do. They just do what needs to be done.
- "Oh! It's just a little rest here and there" you say, but you'll be surprised how quickly failure and need come upon you. What excuses do we make?

Read Proverbs 14:23

- Take this lesson with you and apply it! There's no use talking about what Scripture says if we don't let it change us.

Closing/Response: Give each person in your group a ping pong ball and a small bag of sand. Have them write on each—

Ping Pong Ball: What do you need to work on this week? What do you need to spend more time on? What is a goal you want to devote more time to this week?

Bag of Sand: What do you need to avoid this week so you have time for something more important? What do you need to limit this week?

*You can include pebbles. You can have the questions be more specific. Modify this to meet the needs of your group in particular.

Close in prayer! (You could make this very specifically about each person's *important* goal for the week.)

Priorities
 Week 2: Prioritizing God's Priorities

Goal of the Lesson: To learn how to organize our priorities according to Scripture.

*Insert an ice-breaker here or after the introduction.

Introduction: Welcome everyone. Explain why you've chosen this topic to study, what the plan for this hour is, and how it may play a part in the preceding or upcoming weeks. Review the last week.

Read Matthew 6:33

- Review the context of this verse: We can be worried about a lot. We can even be concerned with good things like managing our time, but if we're not seeking the authority of God in our lives first, the rest is pointless.
- If we seek God's authority in our lives, everything else falls into place. What God's wants to do in us and through us are the most important "ping pong balls."

We are going to look at our priorities as God's people.

1. God's people must keep God central.

Read Revelation 2:2-5

- The Ephesian church had a lot of good things going for them—hard work, sound doctrine, endured hardships, etc. But He still says, "I have this against you, that you have left your first love."
- Love for Christ must be central. Our life can display this in two ways:
 - 1) Continually coming to Christ throughout the day (John 15:1-17)
 - 2) Allow God to change you from the inside out

Possible Discussion Questions: What does your personal devotional life look like? Does it display obligation to or love for God? How can we make it better? Why is it important to have a consistent, deep devotional life?

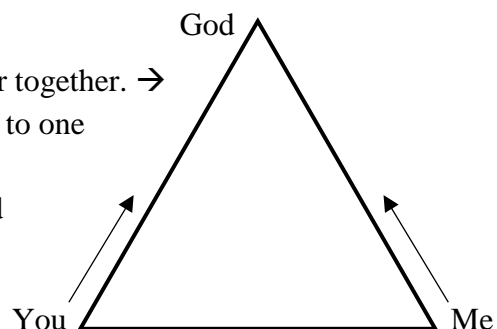
(Related Bible Passages: John 15:1-17, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Hebrews 13:15-16)

2. We must be built together as His people.

As we grow closer to God, we will naturally grow closer together. →

As separate musical instruments are all separately tuned to one key, they all work together.

Ask: What do you think it would look like if we stopped just going to church and started working together as one united church all growing closer to God?



Read Acts 2:42-47

Why is this important?

- For our own encouragement when we are in like-minded community.
- The Kingdom is built through relationship (see #3).

3. We must proclaim the excellencies of God to others.

Read 1 Peter 2:9

- God saved us from our sins.
- God saved us for a divine purpose. He called us out of the world as His people so we can go back into it to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.
- Jesus is a little offensive, so be prepared for the possibility of rejection.

Possible Discussion Questions: Is it easy or difficult to share God's goodness with others? Why?

These three priorities can be summed up as Real Devotional Life, Real Community, and Real Responsibility.

Closing/Response: Give each person three more ping pong balls. On each they will write one goal for the coming week. The goals should line up with the 3 Reals—how will they be intentional about implementing them in their lives this week?

Close in prayer!