

Want the Lord Jesus Above All Things
(By Rev. Anthony Menzel, November 7, 2021)

1) More than people

***More than sex and the company of the opposite sex in general...

Women were Samson's downfall...

Judges 14:1-4

14 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. **2** So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."

3 Then his father and mother said to him, "*Is there* no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?"

And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for [a]she pleases me well."

4 But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

While God allowed Samson to seek a Philistine wife, Samson's pattern of making women more important than God would eventually destroy him.

We have to come to the place where we don't let sex and the opposite sex cause us to lose the blessings that God has for us.

Hebrews 12:14-17

14 Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: **15** looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; **16** lest there *be* any fornicator or [f]profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. **17** For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

In order to not let sexual pleasure and romantic love be idols that take us away from the Lord Jesus, we have to ask God to make us truly complete in Christ. We need to be complete in Christ not only as a spiritual principle but also as a day to day reality.

Colossians 2:8-10

8 Beware lest anyone [e]cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. **9** For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead [f]bodily; **10** and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all [g]principality and power.

***We have to want the Lord Jesus even more than the love of family members.

1 Samuel 2:22-25

22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, [i]and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. **23** So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. **24** No, my sons! For *it is* not a good report that I hear. You make the Lord’s people transgress. **25** If one man sins against another, God[j] will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?” Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the Lord desired to kill them.

At times we may have to take away responsibilities and positions from our own family members if they are not following God.

Eli’s inability to correct his children, even if he had to take drastic measures, destroyed his family and his own relationship with God.

1 Samuel 3:11-18

11 Then the Lord said to Samuel: “Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. **12** In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. **13** For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not [b]restrain them. **14** And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.”

15 So Samuel lay down until [c]morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. **16** Then Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son!”

He answered, "Here I am."

17 And he said, "What *is* the word that *the Lord* spoke to you? Please do not hide *it* from me. God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that He said to you." **18** Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It *is* the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him."

When God gives a negative prophecy, He often is trying to see if that prophecy will cause us to change our behavior.

Jonah 3:4-10

4 And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

The People of Nineveh Believe

5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. **6** Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes. **7** And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his [b]nobles, saying,

Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. **8** But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. **9** Who can tell *if* God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?

10 Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

Eli was foolish to continue to fail at disciplining his sons. He should have taken them out of the ministry if they refused to repent of their sinful behavior.

2) We have to want the Lord Jesus more than popularity, whether that be on the grand scale of fame or on the smaller level of being important within an organization.

1 Samuel 15:7-35

7 And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. **8** He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. **9** But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all *that was* good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

Saul Rejected as King

10 Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, **11** “I greatly regret that I have set up Saul *as* king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.” And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the Lord all night. **12** So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, “Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal.” **13** Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed *are* you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.”

14 But Samuel said, “What then *is* this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?”

15 And Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.”

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, “Be quiet! And I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night.”

And he said to him, “Speak on.”

17 So Samuel said, “When you *were* little in your own eyes, *were* you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel? **18** Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are [b]consumed.’ **19** Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop down on the [c]spoil, and do evil in the sight of the Lord?”

20 And Saul said to Samuel, “But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. **21** But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.”

22 So Samuel said:

“Has the Lord *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

As in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,

And to heed than the fat of rams.

23

For rebellion *is as* the sin of [d]witchcraft,

And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,

He also has rejected you from *being* king.”

24 Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. **25** Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord.”

26 But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.”

27 And as Samuel turned around to go away, *Saul* seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. **28** So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, *who is* better than you. **29** And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For *He is* not a man, that *He* should relent.”

30 Then he said, “I have sinned; *yet* honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God.” **31** So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.

32 Then Samuel said, “Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me.” So Agag came to him cautiously.

And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.”

33 But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. **35** And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death.

Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord regretted that *He* had made Saul king over Israel.

As leaders, whether it be of our households, church groups, or groups of colleagues on the job, we should put doing what God wants in front of people want.

When we make mistakes, we should also take responsibility for those mistakes.

David committed what seems to be even worse sins, namely adultery and murder, and God forgave him. This makes me believe that God would have forgiven Saul if he would just repented sincerely.

2 Samuel 12:7-14

7 Then Nathan said to David, “*You are* the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. **8** I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if *that had been* too little, I also would have given you much more! **9** Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in *His* sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his

wife *to be* your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. **10** Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ **11** Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. **12** For you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.’ ”
13 So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”
And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. **14** However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also *who is* born to you shall surely die.”

A significant difference between Saul and David is that Saul tried to justify his obedience, whereas David repented immediately when he was confronted with it.

3)More than money

Judas Iscariot lost his salvation because money was his idol.

Matthew 26:6-14

6 And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, **7** a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table*. **8** But when His disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? **9** For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the* poor.”

10 But when Jesus was aware of *it*, He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. **11** For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. **12** For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. **13** Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests **15** and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. **16** So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

John 12:4-8

4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, who would betray Him, said, **5** “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for [b]three hundred denarii and given to

the poor?” **6** This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

7 But Jesus said, “Let her alone; [c]she has kept this for the day of My burial. **8** For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.”

This passage affirms that money was the weakness that caused Judas Iscariot to turn away from the Lord Jesus and lose his salvation.

John 17:11-12

11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep[d] through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*. **12** While I was with them [e]in the world, I kept them in [f]Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is [g]lost except the son of [h]perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Even though he ended up being sorry for what he had done, Judas Iscariot went to hell because his repentance was incomplete. Sometimes people who commit suicide realize that they made a mistake by killing themselves and God can forgive them in their last moments. However, sometimes they don't get that chance. Because the Lord Jesus refers to Judas Iscariot as the son of perdition, he obviously didn't get that chance.

Acts 1:15-26

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the [f]disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, **16** “Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; **17** for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.”

18 (Now this man purchased a field with the [g]wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his [h]entrails gushed out. **19** And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

‘Let his dwelling place be [i]desolate,

And let no one live in it’;

and,

‘Let another take his [j]office.’

21 “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **22** beginning from the baptism of John to that day when

He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. **24** And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen **25** to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” **26** And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.