

My Second Hope for 2021: Put God First!

I) Why?

A) Because that is God's greatest commandment!

“And He said to him, “ ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

B) Because the Kingdom of God is like a treasure and like a precious pearl!

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matthew 13:44-46)

C) Because to put God second is to worship other gods as first!

“You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Exodus 20:3)

II) How? “Not seek first..., but...!”

A) Not people’s comfort, but God’s comfort first! Not people’s words, but God’s Word first!

“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”
(Acts 17:11)

B) Not hopes and desires for this life, but God’s eternal hope and His plan for my life first!

“For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

C) Not automatically pursue my plan A, B, C, but seek God’s will to trust and obey first!

“Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you... (Jeremiah 29:12-14)

D) Not career, degrees, connections, but the Sovereign Lord of open/closed doors, my true “back!”

“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help And rely on horses, And trust in chariots because they are many And in horsemen because they are very strong, But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!” (Isaiah 31:1)

E) Not after all my options come, but be committed to obeying God first before better options come!

“for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica;” (2 Timothy 4:10)

F) Not when things get better and die down, but God first now!

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

G) Not giving my leftovers, but my best to God first!

“Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will overflow with new wine.” (Proverbs 3:9-10)

H) Not held back by unbelief and past failures, but put God first by pressing on toward the upward call and hoping for impossible and new things!

“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude;” (Philippians 3:14-15)

“Do not call to mind the former things, Or ponder things of the past. “Behold, I will do something new Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:18-19)

I) Not looking through your own eyes, but looking at your new identity in Christ first!

“But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;” (1 Peter 2:9)

III) More why?

D) Because you have the power to “PUT GOD FIRST”!

“For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” (2 Peter 1:4)

E) Because of the terrible consequences of putting God second!

“while it is said, ‘TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.’” (Hebrews 3:15)

F) Because of Joshua’s excellent example!

“If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15)

It is that “today” ...
who will you choose?