

Putting Christ First

by Bill Crews

That the above statement is true should be manifestly clear to anyone who does very much reading in the New Testament. Consider:

Jesus said: *"But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things (sufficient food, drink and clothing — BC) shall be added unto you"* (Matthew 6:33) And: *"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me"* (Matthew 10:37). And: *"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"* (Matthew 16:24).

The apostle Paul wrote: *"If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind (or affections — BC) on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth"* (Colossians 3:1-2). And: *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me"* (Galatians 2:22). And: *"But present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members (the members of your physical bodies — BC) as instruments of righteousness unto God"* (Romans 6:13). Paul said of the Christians in Macedonia: *"But first they gave their own selves to the Lord"* (2 Corinthians 8:5).

Becoming and **being** a Christian involves being saved from our sins, continuing to be pleasing to God, and living with the hope of eternal life. It demands a faith that works by love (Galatians 5:6), obedience from the heart (Romans 6:17-18), doing the will of the Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21), being *"stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 15:58), continuing *"in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel"* (Colossians 1 :23).

To put the Lord **first** is to put the Lord *before* self, family, job or business, school or college, social activities, citizenship, recreation and pleasure. The Lord must come before all others, and spiritual things must come before all other things.

We should become and be Christians because of the nature and consequences of our sins, because of the preciousness of our immortal souls, because of the eternal Father, because of the everlasting Lord, because of the forever Holy Spirit, because of the brevity and uncertainty of life, because of the certainty and finality of death, because of the coming resurrection and judgment, because of the destiny that awaits us in either an unending hell or an eternal heaven. And we should become and be Christians because of the benefits and blessings that will bring us in this life, and because of our influence upon and obligations toward the people that surround us on this earth and in this life.

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