

ESSENTIALS FOR A NEW YEAR

Definition of Essential: Absolutely Necessary; extremely important

- To God, **you** are essential.

Your **priorities** define what is essential in your life.

- Priorities are more than a list in our head; priorities are about what we **do first**.

- Priorities are about **how** we **engage** in what we value.

One of the teachers of religion who was standing there listening to the discussion realized that Jesus had answered well. So he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Mark 12:28 (TLB)

...love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'... Mark 12:30-31 (NLT)

This is essential:

- Love **God** completely and love **others** intentionally.

Loving God completely means:

- We're taking steps to become **completely His**.

Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. James 4:8 (NLT)

- **Reorder** our lives to show that God has **first place**.

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me. Exodus 20:2-3 (NIV)

In putting God first:

- We **give** God the **first** of **everything**.

A **Tithe** = A **tenth**; The **first and the best**

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. Leviticus 27:30 (NIV)

The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives.

Deuteronomy 14:23 (TLB)

We give God:

- The first of my year with **prayer** and **fasting**.

Prayer **connects** us to **God**.

Fasting **disconnects** us from the **world**.

- The first of my month with my **tithe**.

Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in my Temple. Test me in this and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams. Malachi 3:10 (MSG)

"You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both. Matthew 6:24 (MSG)

- The first of our week with my **worship**.

Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big

Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25 (MSG)

- The first of my day with my **time**.

Time in the **Bible**.

Time in **worship**.

Time in **prayer**.

When we put God First:

- Expect God to **bless the rest**.

Listen for GOD's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. Don't assume that you know it all. Run to GOD! Run from evil! Your body will glow with health, your very bones will vibrate with life! Honor GOD with everything you own; give him the first and the best. Your barns will burst, your wine vats will brim over. Proverbs 3:6-10 (MSG)



**TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE
IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.**

Questions for Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain why?
- Are you looking forward to a new year? Why?
- How do you make your relationship with God a priority? What are some ways we can make God our daily priority?
- What does it mean to take steps to become completely His?
- What does it mean to give God our "first" and our "best"?
- How is tithing a life principle and not just a money principle?
- How does fasting put God first in our life? Are you going to participate in our church fast?
- How does tithing put God first in our life?
- How does worship put God first? What does worship look like in your life? (BTW- Worship is more than singing.)
- How does giving God out time put Him first in our life? How do you give God your time?
- Do you expect God to bless your life because you put Him first?

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