



Pastor's Perspective – First Things First

By Dr. Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

Struggling to get those priorities in order? Three times in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount Jesus tells us what to do first.

"First go and be reconciled to your brother" (5:24). The Christian life has both horizontal and vertical responsibilities. We can't be right with God if we're not right with men—and we can't separate one from the other. If a man says he loves God, he will prove it by loving his brother. Jesus makes it clear that our acts of worship are of no value unless our hearts are right with each other. This is a reminder that the judge and only valid evaluator of our worship is the Lord, who looks on the heart.

"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" (6:33). The context has to do with worrying about and being consumed with the temporal things of life. Jesus is saying that these kinds of things are not to be at the center—God is. When He says, "and all of these things will be given to you as well," He's reminding us that



the things that typically occupy our centers are not unimportant to God. He wants us to know that God is already committed to providing those things—and that He will make room for them and help us to give them their proper place when we put Him first.

"First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (7:5). It never ceases to amaze me, at times, how ready I am to point out the flaws and failings of others, but how unprepared (and unwilling) I am to admit and correct my own. Have you ever noticed that we tend to be the harshest on others in those areas where we are weakest ourselves? Jesus uses the present tense. Next time you have that urge to offer a harsh critique, resist. You're probably overdue for a trip to the surgeon. We need unobstructed vision to do the gracious ministry of Christ.

Put first things first.

International Ministry at Purdue and DC

By the time this month is over, over 300 international students from Purdue University, in over a 15-year period, will have participated in an annual trip to the Washington D.C. area, hosted by families of Fellowship Baptist Church: seeing our nation's capital, staying in American homes, and hearing from the Bible the good news of Jesus Christ.

Fellowship's supported missionaries Paul and Geri Briggs, who serve with the Salt & Light team at Purdue, focus on the international population that comes to Purdue: the second largest group of international students and scholars in the United States, with nearly 8,000 students from over 125 countries.

These students are eager to not only know more about academics; they also are interested in what life in this country is like. Paul uses coming to the D.C. area as an opportunity to build friendships with the

students. Paul has calculated that over the 15 years they have traveled around 24,000 miles. "Worth every one of them!" he said.

Paul said the idea was not original to him. "I saw it modeled as I was growing up (in Northern Virginia)," he said. "My mom and another lady coordinated homes of families from our church for international studies from the University of Pittsburgh to stay in. A man doing ministry similar to ours would come on a Friday evening and leave on Sunday."

Paul added that before he and Geri returned to the United States from the mission field in Italy, he counseled with Pastor Lindholm.

"We discussed the possibility of a partnership. The very first year we were at Purdue, Pastor Lindholm asked if we were going to follow through on the idea...the rest is history!"

The results have been wonderful. Short-term results include having numerous deeper relationships with the students and scholars. They have had the privilege of studying the Bible with many who went with them on the trip. Paul wonders if those same people would have studied the Bible had they not had the opportunity to travel together.

But the long-term results are even better. Paul describes the experience as giving the students an unparalleled "life-on-life" experience which certainly has contributed to the students seeing the authenticity of the Christian faith.



2011 Purdue Visitors

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"When you travel together, face problems together, discuss life issues together, Christianity is seen...up close and personal," he said.

He added that they have seen students who have gone on the trip come to faith in Christ. They are still in contact with several who went on the very first trip.

"My son, Zach, is planning an internship this coming summer in Beijing," he said, "facilitated by one of the guys who went on the very first trip 15 years ago! It is quite encouraging to know that the guy who was on the D.C. trip and later became a Christian, later married a nice Christian Chinese gal (we got to go to the wedding in Iowa) and now lives in Beijing and works as a CEO for a company there, desires to be used of the Lord to reach his fellow countryman."

So, this month, while we have the opportunity to collaborate with Paul, pray we will show Christ's love to these friends. Pray they will understand the Bible studies they attend. Pray they will know the God Who loves them.



Architectural drawing of Crosswalk Commons

While many churches near Purdue are reaching out to these students, the Salt & Light team wants to be sure the truth of the Bible is proclaimed. The effort to begin construction on the Crosswalk Commons project—a new ministry center and student residence—is one of their top prayer requests. The need for the building is \$1.5 million and over \$1 million has now been pledged. They asked for prayer, as well, for the design phase of the project, which is underway.

Calendar



Mar. 3	"Fun with Fellowship" Movie 2:00 PM
Mar. 4	Lord's Table (AM Service)
Mar. 9	Women's Ministries Game Night 7:00 PM
Mar. 10-15	International Student Ministry
Mar 13	Nursing Home Ministry 2:00 PM
Mar. 18	Love Offering for Paul & Geri Briggs
Mar. 24	Men's Breakfast 8:00 AM
Mar. 31	Church Workday 8:00 AM

"Never Give Up" Philosophy Nets Another Win!



For the 15th year in a row, the T & T Awana team from Fellowship Baptist Church earned a first-place finish in the Awana Games, an annual event. The Sparks team participated, as well, with a third-place finish. Both

teams, headed by Coach Doug Mount and this year Assistant Coach John Wasserstein, had 14 members and both teams finished within a one-point margin. T & T won by one point, and the Sparks missed second place by one point. The event was held this year at Immanuel Bible Church and was an opportunity to both play games with clubbers from other area churches and to minister to families with a Bible message.

"We were losing by seven points going into the last event," said Doug, "but we won both those games and they were worth four points apiece." Doug said it was a great example to the kids to have perseverance and never give up. "Always finish strong," he said.

Doug was grateful, as well, for all those who helped at the games.



March Memory Challenge

*"Be still and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth." Psalm 46:10*

Money Matters

February Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$4530.97
Budgeted Needs Per Week	\$5,104.70
Budgeted Needs to Date	\$45,942.30
Budgeted Receipts to Date	\$41,275.39

Fellowship Baptist Church

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