



◆ STEP THREE

Choosing What Matters Most

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

MATTHEW 6:33 · ANCHOR VERSE - READ THIS ALOUD TOGETHER TO OPEN

Key Points

READ TOGETHER

- ◆ Prioritize: do the important stuff before the fun stuff.
- ◆ Learn self-control and time management. "Work first, then play."
- ◆ Do what needs to be done, even when you don't feel like it.
- ◆ Put God first, then your responsibilities, then recreation.

Story One: Jackson and the Fishing Trip

AGES 6-10

READ TOGETHER

Jackson had been looking forward to Saturday all week.

His grandfather had invited him to go fishing at the lake, and Jackson couldn't wait. On Friday afternoon, he raced home from school, tossed his backpack onto the floor, and started gathering his fishing gear.

As he was loading his tackle box, his mom asked, "Jackson, do you have everything ready for school on Monday?"

Jackson shrugged. "I'll do it Sunday night."

His mom raised an eyebrow. "Are you sure that's a good idea?"

"Yep!" Jackson replied confidently.

Saturday was filled with fishing, stories, and laughter. On Sunday he spent most of the day at church and playing basketball with friends.

Then Sunday night arrived.

Jackson suddenly remembered a science project due Monday morning. His stomach dropped.

He rushed to his room and started throwing things together. He worked late into the evening and became frustrated when he couldn't find some of the materials he needed. By bedtime, the project was incomplete, and Jackson was stressed and tired.

The next day, he received a poor grade.

That afternoon his grandfather called. "How was school?"

Jackson explained what happened.

His grandfather listened and then said, “Sounds like you put the fun things first and the important things last.”

“I guess I did.”

“There’s nothing wrong with fishing or basketball,” Grandpa said. “But successful people learn to handle their responsibilities first. Then they enjoy their free time without worry.”

The next week, Jackson had another project due. This time he completed it on Wednesday.

When Saturday arrived, he enjoyed fishing again, but this time without stress hanging over his head.

Jackson learned that putting first things first doesn’t take away your fun. It actually makes your fun more enjoyable.

Story Two: Ava and the Dance Recital

AGES 10–14

READ TOGETHER

Ava loved dance class.

Her recital was only a month away, and she had worked hard to learn every move.

One afternoon she came home from school and discovered that her favorite TV show was releasing a new season. She immediately wanted to start watching. But then she remembered her teacher had assigned a book report due the following week.

Ava sighed. “I really don’t want to do this right now.”

Her older sister Emma overheard. “Doing what’s important first isn’t always easy.”

Ava frowned. “Then why do it?”

Emma smiled. “Because discipline means doing what needs to be done, even when you don’t feel like it.”

Ava spent the next hour working on her report. When she finished, she felt proud of herself. Later that evening, she watched her show and enjoyed every minute of it.

The following week, while several students were rushing to finish their reports, Ava was relaxed and prepared. Her teacher praised her work, and Ava realized something important.

Feelings come and go. Responsibility stays.

Successful people don’t wait until they feel motivated. They do the right thing first.

Jesus' Example

READ TOGETHER

Jesus always put the most important things first - and He taught His friends to do the same.

Before busy days of teaching and healing, Jesus made time with His Father the first priority. Mark’s Gospel tells us, “*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed*” (Mark 1:35).

One day Jesus visited the home of two sisters, Mary and Martha. Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made, while Mary sat at the Lord’s feet listening to Him. When Martha complained, Jesus answered gently, “*Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed - or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better*” (Luke 10:41–42).

Martha’s work wasn’t bad. But Mary chose what mattered most.

Jesus even described doing the Father’s will as more important than a meal: “*My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work*” (John 4:34).

When we put God first, then our responsibilities, then our fun, we are ordering our lives the way Jesus ordered His.

Why This Matters

READ TOGETHER

One of the biggest lessons Jesus taught was about priorities.

Many things in life compete for our attention. Games, sports, television, hobbies, and friends can all be enjoyable and good. But if we place those things ahead of God and our responsibilities, life becomes disorganized and stressful.

God calls us to seek Him first. When we spend time with Him, obey our parents, complete our responsibilities, and care for others, we build habits that lead to success and wisdom.

Putting first things first means choosing what is most important, even when something else seems more fun in the moment. It is a sign of maturity, discipline, and obedience.

Bible Verses

READ TOGETHER

Matthew 6:33 - “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Colossians 3:23 - “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.”

Proverbs 21:5 - “The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance.”

Galatians 6:9 - “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

1 Corinthians 14:40 - “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”

Discussion Questions

PARENT LEADS

1. What is one responsibility you often put off until later?

2. Why is it sometimes hard to put important things before fun things?

3. What are some distractions that keep kids from completing their responsibilities?

4. What does it mean to “seek first the Kingdom of God”?

5. Can you think of a time when you finished your responsibilities first and felt glad you did?

6. What is one area of your life where you need more self-control this week?

7. Parent’s turn: what’s something you’re tempted to put off - and what happens when you do?

Vocabulary Words

READ TOGETHER

Priority: Something that is more important than other things and should be done first. *Example: Finishing your homework before playing video games.*

Self-Control: The ability to manage your actions, emotions, and desires, even when you want to do something else. *Example: Choosing not to eat all your Halloween candy in one day.*

Discipline: Training yourself to do what is right and necessary, even when it is difficult. *Example: Practicing an instrument every day to improve your skills.*

Time Management: Using your time wisely by planning and completing important tasks. *Example: Studying for a test over several days instead of waiting until the night before.*

Temptation: The desire to do something that may not be the best choice. *Example: Wanting to watch TV instead of finishing your chores or doing your homework.*

Stewardship: Taking good care of the time, talents, and resources God has given you. *Example: Using your time wisely and working hard at school.*

Faith Builder

YOUR MOVE

Choose one responsibility you've been delaying and complete it **before** doing your favorite activity.

Then, each day this week, practice the order: **God first, responsibilities second, recreation third.** Start the day with a short prayer or a verse, handle what needs to be done, and then enjoy your free time without anything hanging over your head.

At the end of the week, write down:

- What responsibility did you complete?
- How did it feel to finish it?
- Did you enjoy your free time more afterward?
- Which part of “God first, work second, play third” was hardest to keep?

Closing Prayer

READ TOGETHER

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for every good gift in my life - my family, my friends, and even the fun things I enjoy. Help me to keep them in the right order. Teach me to seek You first, to handle my responsibilities faithfully, and then to enjoy my free time with a clear mind and a thankful heart. When I don't feel like doing what needs to be done, give me the discipline to do it anyway. Help me choose what matters most, the way Mary chose to sit and listen to Jesus. Thank You for taking care of everything I need when I put You first.

In Jesus' name, Amen.