

WARM UP | During the past year I have experienced two major events in my life. During the middle of March I experienced a life-threatening heart illness. This resulted in major heart surgery that did not go completely to plan, causing me to experience a real fight for life. What sustained me through this fight were the faithful prayers of the community of faith. This was a battle not only of a physical nature but also in the spiritual dimension.

Prayer is an essential priority in our Christian walk as it helps us overcome the forces of evil that at times are out to destroy us physically, and at all times to destroy us spiritually.

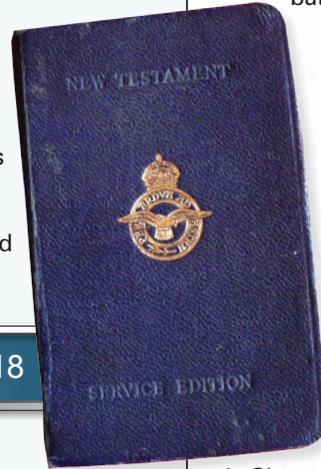
The second important event was just a few weeks ago when Barbara and I celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary. As Christian men we have to take seriously the importance of the commitments we make in life, especially our marriage vows.

READ | 1 Corinthians 12:31 to 13:8,13; Ephesians 6:10-18

BACKGROUND | It is quite likely that Paul is writing this passage whilst he is in prison in Rome. He is writing to the Church of Corinth because as a church they have become divided amongst themselves. The key to understanding this passage is to emphasise the need to be ambitious for the higher gifts - faith, hope and love. This raises the question for us, what are our ambitions? Paul is telling us that even inherently good things should not be our primary ambition. Being able to speak with great eloquence or having an amazing amount of knowledge or being very generous are great things to aim for in life, but they are not as important as the gift of love. Ephesus was an ancient city full of Roman and Greek temples, a place of great spiritual conflict. In the passage from Ephesians 6 Paul is reminding us that we are involved in a spiritual battle. This spiritual battle can often express itself in terms of the physical trials we may face. The only way to combat these trials is through a life of prayer.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What is most important to you in life? Share with one another how this affects the decisions you make.
- 2 What formal commitments have you made in life? Discuss what you have put in place to remain faithful to these commitments.



CONSIDER THIS

"Life must be based on positive and permanent values. The value of love will always be stronger than the value of hate; since any nation which employs hatred is eventually torn to pieces by hatred within itself. The value of truth and sincerity is always stronger than the value of lies and cynicism. No process has been invented which can permanently separate men from their own hearts and consciences or prevent them from seeing the results of their own false ideas. You cannot make men believe that a way of life is good when it spreads poverty, misery, disease and death. Men cannot be everlastingly loyal unless they are free."
 Franklin D Roosevelt

3 What spiritual battles have you faced in life? Explain how others have helped you win these battles.

4 Share with one another your order of priorities in life.

MY RESPONSE AS A PROMISE KEEPER

What do I need to apply from what I have learned from this study?

IT'S TIME FOR PRAYER

MAXIMUM CONTINUOUS RPM	
ALTITUDE	RPM
SL	2100
2000'	2150
4000'	2200
6000'	2250
8000'	2300
10000'	2350
12000'	2400

WRAP UP

Each one of us as men must work out what comes first in life and avoid allowing other things to take priority over this. When we get this wrong life will never be truly fulfilled. Share how you can support each other to keep your priorities in perspective.