

# DAY 14 God First

**TODAY'S READING: 1 Corinthians 7:29-35 (NIV)**

by Mark Breitreuz

*"We often hear the phrase 'God first, family second' in church circles. While we say it a lot, I don't see how this phrase is actually impacting anyone. Think about it. What if you were to switch to a 'family first' mentality? What actions would you really have to change?"*

—Francis Chan

*"I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord."*

—1 Corinthians 7:35

In this passage I've chosen, we are reminded by Paul that time is short. There are many distractions – even good things: from the blessings of material things from God, to our spouses. Paul then says we should be on guard – not so that we're restricted, rather, that our loyalty to the Lord would remain first and foremost.

I would encourage you to take on the challenge from Francis Chan in the context of our Bible reading, as a practical example.

I, too, would declare, "God first, family second". Does God get first place or second place to my family when it comes to my quiet time? Fittingly enough, we're focusing on the significance and importance of God's Word.

And while I'd say I'm pretty good regarding my time with the Lord, I looked at it from this vantage point: "Would there be family situations/circumstances that from time to time would disrupt or displace my quiet time?" The answer is yes – although far from regularly, it can happen. Then I asked myself, "Would there be times in my day where I would disrupt family time, and interrupt a 'scheduled family event' to carve some time away with the Lord?" The answer is no. My kids, for example, would not be mid-sentence at the supper table telling me about their days, when I'd interrupt them and say, "tell me later, I'm going to read my Bible and pray".

It seems silly to consider interrupting our kids that way. Yet we can be in mid-conversation with the Lord, and a distraction can have us "leave the table". Or worse yet, intercept our time that is normally spent with Him, altogether.

In lives with numerous "seconds" vying for first place; may you spend some time right now evaluating whether God is actually first in practice, or word only.

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**An undivided devotion to the Lord helps us  
keep Him first in our lives.**

## A few final thoughts...

# Sola Scriptura

by François Turcotte

**A**s we mark the anniversary of the Reformation, it is good for us to reflect on the meaning of the long-standing expression: “sola Scriptura”. Despite being an ancient Latin expression, it bears one of the fundamental truths of our protestant identity, which offers us very useful, practical applications for our everyday lives.

When we declare: “Scriptures only”, we affirm that we believe in its authority, clarity, sufficiency, necessity and its perfection. The Reformation Fathers were dealing with a medieval Church that had slipped into only granting partial authority to Scripture and adding to its ecclesiastic traditions. It had granted the same authority to ecclesiastic traditions and Scripture. Facing this fact, Luther wanted to return to the Word alone as the sole divine authority. This was the beginning of a long sequence of understanding as consequences.

It is the unique authority of Scripture that led the Reformation Fathers to declare that “Scripture is its only interpreter.” As F. Hammann emphasizes:

*This interpretative principle clearly illustrates the Reformation Fathers' attitude about the Holy Scriptures, highlighting the clarity and self-sufficiency of the Biblical revelation. It also emphasizes that no human authority can be the judge of the Holy Scriptures, since it is in the mystery of inspiration and through the human authors' achievements, of divine origins. Of course, this doesn't mean that all Scripture's passages are clear and easily understood; this means that it is within the Scripture that one must seek the texts' meaning, which appears obscure to our limited and fallen understanding. It should be noted that even this understanding of Sola Scriptura implies the respect of Tota Scriptura, that it is necessary to take into account the Biblical revelation as a whole in the Christian doctrine's establishment. (In this particular context, we could also speak of the analogy of Scripture and the Faith.)*

This truth led the Reformation Fathers to speak about the Gospel as the hermeneutic key of the Scriptures. The Gospel allows us to understand Scripture's emphasis on salvation through Jesus Christ. Indeed, the rule that states “Scripture is its own interpreter” implies that the Biblical text presents not only facts, but also interpreted facts. Thus, we cannot use verses as we please, indiscriminately, and the text must be respected without neglecting the eschatological key, which remains essential to it: Christ's death and resurrection. (Christ-centered historical and redemptive hermeneutic.)

## A Major Implication

Several implications could result from what has just been stated. Let's choose one.

In an attempt to ensure that the catholic tradition is not given more authority than the evangelical tradition, some believers consider that not using any tools for Scripture interpretation is more spiritual. A quiet moment in the Word seems purer without any human influence. Our Reformation Fathers did not agree with such a thought. To the contrary, for them, as well as for us, our Word's appreciation needs to be within the Church and its 2000-year history. The fact that we need to examine our interpretation of the Scripture with the teachings of those believers who have gone before us, and with the aid of contemporary tools, doesn't deny the SOLA SCRIPTURA. To the contrary, this prevents us from relying on our own interpretation alone, which can produce unfortunate results for our own spiritual growth and, at times, for an entire congregation. “Scripture only” does not mean “only Scripture”.

“Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good,” (1 Thess. 5:20-21). Don't deprive yourself of the remarkable richness that the Holy Spirit left us throughout the church's history so that we may enjoy this unmistakably, extraordinary BOOK.

—François served for 15 years in pastoral ministry before joining the SEMBEQ team as Executive Director, and, more recently as President. He has been married to Nathalie for 25 years and has two children, Andrea and Samuel.