Week 3: How Do We Live Together? August 31, 2015

Read Mark 12:28-30.

The start of a new year brings new assignments, new friends and new challenges. It’s easy to get overwhelmed. My wife and I tend to sit together at the breakfast table and say, “OK, today is Thursday. What is happening today?” Some of us would be lost without our monthly planners. I tend to be more left-brained, and use lists to get organized.

But with any list, the first question is what comes first? What is at the top of the list and why is it more important than all the other things on the list? This is the teacher’s question in Mark 12:28 and it should be the question we ask ourselves too: what is most important on my spiritual checklist? Is it how I worship, or when? Is it reading the latest religious best-seller? Interestingly, none of this is mentioned in Jesus’ response. Jesus refers to The Shema, a passage of verses found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, one of the first prayers learned by Jewish children. It was probably recited every morning by the local teacher. In other words, Jesus is saying to him, “You recite the prayer, but don’t you understand its importance?”

Love God. How can you mess that up, but do we? Often, “It can’t be that simple!” is our response and we slap on several coats of rules and regulations. Each “do” and “don’t” moving us further away from the real answer to the question. Love God.

This is a good time for new beginnings. Start by putting first things first and “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

Life Question: Reflect on your list of priorities. What needs to be changed?

Prayer: Father, give me the courage to put my love for you at the top of my list. Amen.

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