

WORD

The Bible in many places tells us what God values. He values His creation and man is His prized possession of all creation. God is perfect so His values and His priorities line up perfectly. Since the fall of humanity into sin God has been working to save mankind from our own sinfulness. He made saving us His top priority. Why? John 3:16 says it this way, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." He values us so much that He was willing to work throughout time on providing us a way out of our sin, sent His only Son for us and is patient to help us. Truly God prioritizes His time and gave His very best, His Son Jesus, for us.

APPLICATION

- Be honest about what you truly find valuable to you, about what you are choosing to spend your time on and why you are making those choices.
- Work to prioritize your time and efforts around what you truly value.
- Prayerfully seek to align your values and priorities with God's values and priorities. Remember, He values people!
- Realize that God values you and makes a relationship with you His priority.

Prayer: God, help us to be honest with ourselves about what we value and how we prioritize our lives. Help us to always remember that You value people and that You value us! In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Freedom Groups were created with the belief that we are all on a journey through life and that our heart's desire is to be free to be all that we can be. We all want to find effective ways of living and be successful. Trying to overcome the challenges we face in life by ourselves just does not work. We are all the same, no one is different. We need others to help us successfully walk our journey to effective living.
Everyone is invited on this freedom journey. Join in!



Costly But Worth It!

NOTES

WARM-UP

- Vacations are a wonderful thing. They give us a break from the normal routine of life and often give us an opportunity to see a different area than our own.
- Can you share your favorite or possibly biggest vacation you have ever taken?
- Do you have a place that you would love to go but never have been able to?
- Is the vacation cost a factor as to why you have not gone yet?

It had been a number of years since we had been able to take a significant family vacation. We have been blessed each year to get away for a day or two here and there, but nothing more. So this year I wanted to take the whole family on a bigger vacation. If we were going to be able to do it, there is only one place that I really wanted to go -- Santa Rosa Beach on the western panhandle of Florida. We had been there several times over the past 12 years so we knew just how much we loved going there. It would be a sure "home run" type of vacation. That was my goal.

Since it had been a while since we went on a bigger vacation I wanted all my kids to be able to go too, even though two are out on their own now. Our family has grown this past year too, with the addition of a son-in-law and now a soon-to-be son-in-law. I also wanted them to experience this place we loved so much. So there was going to be 10 of us.

With school schedules and 5 different work schedules this would take some planning. We would have to take 2 or 3 vehicles. It takes about 16 hours to drive to the Santa Rosa Beach, so that means some hotel rooms on the way there and back. The vacation places we had stayed at before would not be big enough now. So we had to find a new place to stay. That was just the advanced planning necessary to make the trip possible. Then there was the packing, figuring out meal plans, determining what all we were going to do while we were there and more to actually go on the vacation. It would take some effort!

Needless to say, this was the biggest vacation we had ever undertaken. It took by far the most planning. It was also the best! It was well worth all the planning, effort and cost. We were in a place we love with the people we love. That is priceless!

1 - What Makes Something Valuable?

There are many different things that people value. Some value family, some value friends, some value fame, some value sports, some value homes, some value cars, some value antiques, some value faith and the list goes on and on. In fact, we all value a number of things to different degrees and levels. What makes something valuable? What makes something valuable to you?

2 - What Do You Value Most?

We all have our own list of things we value. Usually there is one or two things that we value the most. If we had to rank what we value we would be able to put them in some ranking order from the most important to us clear down to things we could honestly do without. This is a good exercise to do to help us think clearly about what we value and why we value it. What are the top 5 things you value the most? Of these, which is the most important to you?

3 - What Are Your Priorities?

I have done the exercise of ranking what I value several different times in my life and have lead others to do so as well. Each time, and with each person, the same problem arises. We tend to list our values based on what we think we should value, not what we actually value. To say it another way, what we say we value the most is often not what we prioritize in our lives. How do we know this? What we prioritize we spend our discretionary time on. What do you prioritize in your life? In other words, what do you choose to spend your time on? Be honest! Why do you have these priorities?

4 - Peace and Power!

This conflict between what we truly value and what we choose to prioritize our time around is what gives so many of us the tensions, stress, angst, frustrations and a sense of futility we have in life. If we would just be honest with ourselves about what we truly value and then prioritize as much of our time as possible around those values we would be much happier. When we stop striving for things that matter to others, but not truly to us, it is very freeing and powerful. Aligning our time with our values is not just powerful but fruitful as well. When we align our values with our time we find peace!