

Living in
PRIORITY
SEQUENCE

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For more information

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Dear Reader,

As Christians, we have a new life in Christ: the old has passed away and a new creation exists. As new creations, we have a new set of priorities that require a new framework for living. The *Living in Priority Sequence Planner*© helps us build such a framework. As a reference for aligning our beliefs with the Word of God, there are five qualities that set this planner apart.

- It places God at the centre of the details of our lives.
- It modifies the framework within which we function so that our priorities are always before us. This reminds us of the decision making process we have decided to follow as we make our choices.
- Because it establishes a way of life, new information can be integrated easily.
- It celebrates the positive aspects of our lives by tracking blessings, what we learn as we study our Bible, and so much more.
- It highlights our accomplishments instead of our shortcomings. At the end of the day, we may not have completed what we set out to do, but the *Planner*© helps us see what we did achieve. Sometimes it's surprising how much we really did do even though our "to do list" still has items on it.

The *Living in Priority Sequence Planner*© is a how-to planner we want to use if:

- we're not balancing our family, home, work, personal goals, and obligations.
- some days, our schedules overwhelm us.
- some days, no matter how hard we try, we can't get, or stay, organized.
- some days, it is difficult to make a decision.
- some days, we find that sticking with something until it's complete is difficult.
- we keep forgetting family birthdays, and missing special occasions.
- we've tried self-help books, but don't get lasting results.
- we suffer from depression, and want to be well permanently.
- our goal is to invite God into the events and details of our lives.

Please take a moment to answer this question: What would your reason for using this *Planner*© be?

It took too many years for me (Ann) to discover that I was labouring within a faulty framework. I developed this *Planner*© to lead myself out of depression.

In February, 2002, I was ingesting 200 mg of Zoloft every day. I had been on and off, mostly on, the drug from April, 1997. During that time, I observed that there were people all around me who were happy to get up in the morning, who smiled and laughed and took life as it came. They had their dark days, but they weren't mired in negative emotions, drowning in emotional pain, and crying miles of tears as they trudged through life. In 2002, I realized that the difference was their framework for living.

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:17

We don't have to suffer from depression to appreciate a planner that keeps our priorities in sight throughout the day. The *Living in Priority Sequence Planner*© encourages us to talk to God about the details and events that take place in our lives.

It encourages us to thank Him; to petition Him; to question Him; to praise Him; and to rest in Him. He is never too tired, or too busy to spend time with us.

We are created in His image. His breath is part of us. Here's a question: What difference does understanding the depth of His commitment to us make in our lives? Take a moment to answer it here.



Our interaction with our Heavenly Father is the framework for living that will bring us peace.

As an abused child, raised in a home where God was not welcomed, I know, without a doubt, that life apart from God is no life at all. The *Planner*©, and the materials that support it, promote God's love for us in every detail of our lives. It personifies a healthy, Biblical framework for living.



"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."



The Words of Jesus found in Matthew 11:28-30

When I first designed the *Planner*©, it allowed for six tasks to be listed each day – three in the morning and three in the afternoon. That seemed like a reasonable number to me. I felt like I was always trying to stuff too much into a day. I was searching for a way to reduce the stress of being over-burdened with trying to complete too many tasks in too little time.

Not long after, I discovered this story about Ivy Ledbetter Lee (considered to be the founder of Public Relations).

Charles Schwab, one of the first presidents of the Bethlehem Steel Company, once told efficiency expert Ivy Lee, "If you can give us something to pep us up to do the things we ought to do, I'll gladly pay you anything you ask within reason."

"Fine," Lee said. "I can give you something in twenty minutes that will step up your 'doing' by at least 50 percent." He handed Schwab a piece of paper and said, "Write down the six most important tasks you have to do tomorrow and number them in order of their importance."

Then Lee said, "Now put this paper in your pocket and first thing tomorrow morning, look at item one and start working on it until it is finished. Then tackle item two in the same way, then item three and so on. Do this until quitting time. Do this every working day. After you've convinced yourself of the value of this system, have your men try it. Then send me a cheque for what you think it is worth."

A few weeks later, Schwab sent Lee a cheque for \$25,000, calling his advice the most profitable lesson he had ever learned.

(Taken from God's Little Devotional Journal for Women c2000 Honor Books, October 20)

Once we have determined the six most important tasks we have for a day, we set time aside in the scheduling column to complete them. **This enables us to shape our day.** Remember, keeping an appointment is a task. Allow extra time for preparation, travel (if applicable) and post-meeting tasks that might be time sensitive.

By noting new tasks on the day they are identified, the *Planner*© enables us to keep track of them in the same place that we're planning to do them.

The *Planner*© enables us to create a Biblical approach to our lives, and to do so as we live our lives step by step, task by task. Think of the impact these statements will have if they become part of every day of our lives:

- I will enjoy the symmetry of completing the tasks I undertake today.
- I will exercise my sense of humour and my sense of fair play.
- I will watch for a delightfully unexpected blessing to occur.
- I will remember that God loves me and I am not alone.
- I will remember: I may take a day off; I may take a step back; but I will step through this!

Seven Steps to Completing Everything We Start

Decide

Decide to live our life in balance. Decide to plan our day-to-day living, and then work our plan. Before making a commitment to something new, decide to ask God if it's part of His plan for our life. Think of those whose lives we admire. Know that they have deliberately decided to live the way they do. We can too! Let's leave nothing to chance.

Delegate

Too often we try to do everything ourselves because we believe we are the only person who will do it right. We are the only person who will do it our way, that's for certain. However, most times, consultation and delegation produce superior results, results that could never be created by one person alone. Let's commit to learning this life skill.

Details

This is the time to examine the details. No more I'll figure it out when the time comes. No. We're making the commitment to live in balance. The time for details is now.

Design

Like a beautiful room, our lives should reflect the essence of who we were created to be; only you can be you! Let's plan our lives so that our priorities clearly resemble, reflect and reveal the character of God.

Daily

Be spiritually replenished. Eat nutritious foods. Advance our plan by one step. Discard something. File something. Tidy our workspace for 15 minutes. Tidy our home space for 15 minutes. Answer every message. Read and answer all correspondence. Define where we are and where we want, and need, to be. Devise a plan. Implement it. Discover the person that God created us to be, and the peace that passes all understanding.² It's this peace that guards our hearts and minds.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you³

Let's engage our sense of humour. Have fun. Smile often. Laugh just because. Sing as though no one is listening. Write in a journal as though no one is reading. Let's love others as God loves us. Let's ask God, in every circumstance, how to love each person with whom we come in contact.

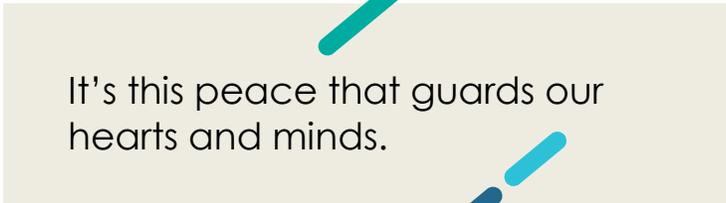
Draw on the grace and mercy and strength of God!

We have been given the gift of choice. This is why we have the ability to decide. The time to put our gift of choice into action is when the going gets tough. Our first choice should be to say, "By God's grace and mercy, for His glory as I draw on His strength, I will step through this."

Take a moment to complete this sentence: *I will step through things because ...*

² Philippians 4:7

³ Matthew 7:12



It's this peace that guards our hearts and minds.

Seven Segments in Our Day (that are common to many of us)

1. Wake up to arrival at work
2. Arrival at work to lunch
3. Lunch
4. After lunch to arrival at home
5. Arrival at home until dinner is complete
6. After dinner to 9:00 pm
7. From 9:00 pm to bedtime

- Have you thought of your day this way before?
- Analyze what you do now.
- Does it work?
- How can you improve what you accomplish in these time segments?

You may write your answers here.

The Seven Priorities for Living in Priority Sequence©

NOTE: These are just a few of the components of our lives that can be listed under the priority headings. Personalize the program by adding your own.

1. My Spiritual Well Being

As God's creation, made in His image, each day goes better when we include Him in our planning and our activities. How I do this is based upon my personal relationship with Him.

- At this moment, what does my relationship with God look like?
- Do I continually seek to deepen it?
- How do I maintain my relationship with Him?
- Do I meet my stewardship commitments?
- How do I resemble, reflect and reveal the character of God to the world around me?
- What do I want to add to this?

2. My Physical & Mental Well Being

- It isn't about food, water and rest. It's about nourishing my mind and body.
- What do I allow to touch my skin or enter my body?
- My Self-Care: hygiene; clothing style; hair cut; outlook; sense of humour; ability to forgive; regular eye exams; doctor, dentist and chiropractic care as required; etc.
- Activities and Exercise: indoors and outdoors
- On-going Study, Education, Self Development
- Choices: What priorities do I base them on?
- Hobbies: What do I do for fun?
- What do I want to add to this?

3. My Family

- Spouse
- Children
- Extended Family
- What is my approach to love?
- How do I reduce and resolve conflicts?
- Good relationships require effort. Do I regularly do something that advances my relationship with my spouse, children and extended family?
- What do I want to add to this?

4. My Environment

- What do I surround myself with: space or clutter?
- What do I touch, see, taste, smell and hear in my environment?
- Rent or buy my residence?
- Understanding the legal framework within which I operate
- Establishing & maintaining my credit rating
- Protecting my assets: life & health insurance
- Investing to maintain financial stability and security
- Household and automobile maintenance: which products?
- What do I want to add to this?

5. Work Responsibilities

- Planning
- Record keeping
- Phone calls, messages, correspondence, etc.
- Doing the work
- Relationships with our boss, co-workers and clients
- Stay tidy
- Personal habits: on time and positive to name a few
- What do I want to add to this?

6. Social Environment

- Who are my friends?
- What is my commitment to them?
- Good relationships require effort. Do I regularly do something that advances my relationships with my friends?
- What do I want to add to this?

7. Civic Responsibilities

- What are my civic responsibilities?
- How have I been giving back to my community?
- How will I give back to my community now? Who will receive it?
- What will it be? Time? Money? Something else?
- How do my actions impact the world around me?
- What do I want to add to this?

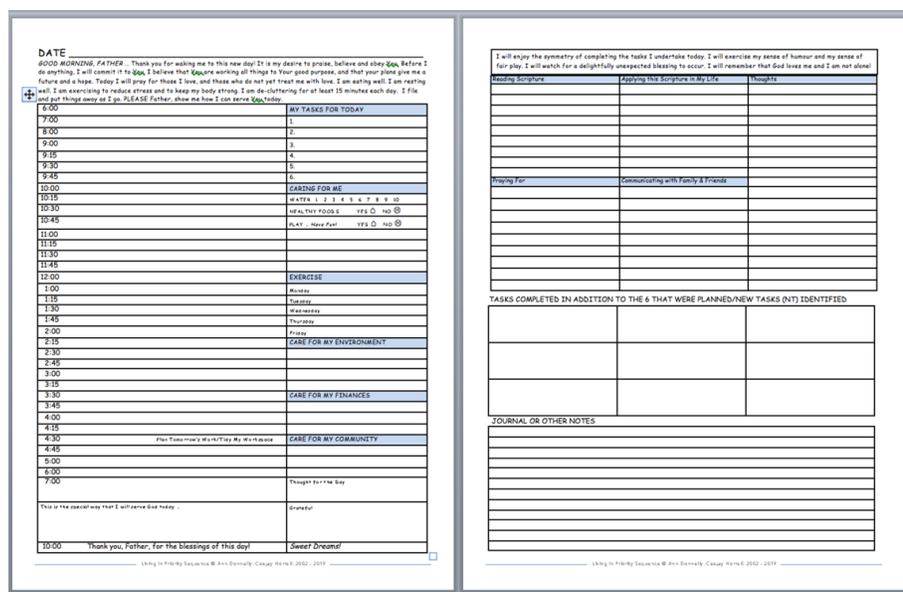
Taking the Next Step

Ceejay and I invite you to journey with us as we take the steps that lead us ever closer to becoming the person God created us to be.

Let's come to Jesus, and take His yoke upon us. Let's learn from Him for He is gentle and lowly in heart, and we will find rest for our souls. Let's believe that His yoke is easy and His burden is light because that's what His word says.

Living in Priority Sequence Planner© pages can be downloaded for free on the internet at www.takingthenextstep.ca.

Each day, you should see two pages like this when your Planner© is open.



[CLICK HERE FOR PLANNER](#)

Each week, *Planner*© users receive, by email, something we call *Stepping Stones*©. These provide information that helps us as we meet the challenges of day-to-day living. They strengthen our framework for living and encourage us to step through things. At the www.takingthenextstep.ca website, you will find other resources that we have found helpful.

May we all find rest for our souls as we choose to begin *Living in Priority Sequence*©. May God bless us as we shape our days, and may He guide us as we plan to serve Him. May we find a new peace in these pages.

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 TAKING THE
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