

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

Question #1: Should we pay taxes to Caesar?

Mark 12:13 (NIV) *Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. ¹⁴ They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay or shouldn't we?"*

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." ¹⁶ They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. ¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him.

QUESTION #2: Who will we be married to in heaven?

Mark 12:18 (NIV) *Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ¹⁹ "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. ²¹ The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. ²² In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. ²³ At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?" ²⁴ Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.*

QUESTION #3: Which commandment is most important?

Mark 12:28 (NIV) *One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" ²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ^m ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁿ There is no commandment greater than these."*

³⁴ *When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.*

How do you keep going?

PRINCIPLE: PUT JESUS FIRST!

1). First as your Lord.

³⁵ *While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?”*

³⁶ *David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”*

³⁷ *David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?” The large crowd listened to him with delight.*

2). First over Yourself.

³⁸ *As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”*

3). First over your possessions

⁴¹ *Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.*

⁴³ *Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”*