

## How To: Prioritize Work

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Recently of one of the people, I coach asked me the following question and I thought I would share my response. Not because I'm so wise but because the question forced me to recognize a mistake I've been making in my leadership over the last few years.

**Question:** How do you know what parts of your job to prioritize?

I once had a friend tell me the first and most important thing to check off your to-do list each week should be the things that are seen as primary for your supervisor, boss or sr leadership. Because that is what they will be checking for first and foremost. However, when you get done what is most important first you get to move on to what you want to probably do. However, over time it will give you the credibility and freedom to be able to chase after what you feel is important because you will have a reputation for getting things done.

This was the mistake I often made over the last few years. I'm a person who always has a few projects on the go. I'm trying something new, writing out dreams, crafting a five-year plan etc... and because they were important to me they tended to take priority in my workday. However, they were not always important to my team, boss or sr leadership.

Here is the order of priority I wish someone had given me, and it's what I passed on to the person I'm coaching.

1. **Mission Critical** - These are the things that **MUST** be done this week for ministry to happen. Without them, someone will probably want to fire you. **Example:** Write the sermon you need for Youth Group before Youth Group.
2. **Boss Priorities** - These are the expectations of your leadership. They may not be daily things but they will probably be regular things. They may line up with MissionCritical stuff but not necessarily. **Example:** Filling out/submitting your timesheet on time
3. **Team Priorities** - Is there anything your work/ministry team is waiting on you to complete so they can move forward in their job. **Example:** Booking the park for the kick-off event so that team member whos running games knows how much space they have to play on.
4. **Leader/Student Priorities** - Has a student/leader asked you to do something for them this week, or do you need to get back someone about a question they had. **Example:** Sending a leader the spiritual gifts test (Sorry Heather) they asked for so they can follow up with a student.
5. **Personal Priorities** - This is the stuff you want to get done. They may fall into some of the same categories as above but I would make the distinction that these are probably passion projects. Things that make you love what you do every day. **Example:** Creating space to dream about the future of your ministry, or inventing a new game/event for youth that you will eventually do. It's important but it's not mission-critical.

The reality is the first three things on this list are probably weekly routine stuff that you just need to get done. If your responsible for all your administration then getting that stuff done (unless you're like me) is the **LAST** thing you want to do. However, the last two priorities are often very life-giving. They directly full our passions and are often a bit more exciting.

The reality once the first three priorities are out of the way you can get to the stuff that drives your passion and energizes you if the middle to end of the day when most of us are fighting the tendency to leave early.