

**FIRST: GOD FIRST**  
**Pastor Dennis Rouse**  
**January 2-3, 2016**

**John 10:10 NKJ**

*“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”*

**Matthew 6:25-34 MSG**

*“If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don’t fuss about what’s on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds. Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? All this time and money wasted on fashion—do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them. If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don’t you think he’ll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I’m trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God’s giving. People who don’t know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don’t worry about missing out. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.”*

**Five Levels People Live On:**

1. Doing what you hate.
2. Doing what you do.
3. Doing what you love.
4. Doing what God loves.
5. Doing what you and God love.

### **Goals to Think About for 2016:**

1. I want to make a difference in other people's lives.
2. I want to have relationships with people who help me grow.
3. I want to accomplish something I've never done before.
4. I want to break free from any sin that's holding me captive.
5. I want to get my body and eating habits under control and live healthy.
6. I want to value people more.
7. I want to lead more people to the Lord.
8. I want to control my thoughts better and have a more positive attitude.
9. I want to have more clarity in the vision God has for my life.
10. I want to live a life of significance.

### **What You Discover When God is First:**

1. You discover your calling in life.

### **Three Questions to Answer in Life:**

1. Who am I?
2. Why am I?
3. What am I called to do?

### **Matthew 22:14 NKJ**

*"For many are called, but few are chosen."*

### **Romans 8:14 NKJ**

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

### **Romans 8:28 NKJ**

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

2. You discover your gifts.

**Romans 12:4-8 NLT**

*Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.*

**Mark 4:24-25 NKJ**

*Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure as you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."*

3. You discover God's love for others.

**Philippians 2:2-4 NIV**

*...then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*