

Spiritual Triage

by Steve Higginbotham

Several years ago, Matthew was in our bedroom practicing his "swordsmanship" with his plastic sword. As he was slaying dragons and other imaginary threats to his family, he made a mighty swing of his sword and connected just above the eyebrow of his unsuspecting sister who happened to walk around the corner. The result was a wide, one inch gash that needed medical attention.

We hurriedly took Anne Marie to the emergency room, only to discover that we had a long wait in front of us. A triage nurse evaluated Anne Marie, and we waited for two hours while other people, with more serious injuries were treated before her. Objectively, I know that's the way the emergency room works, and that's the way that I want it to work, except this was my little girl!

So while we sat and waited, I couldn't help but think of how we may need to have a little "spiritual triage" applied to our lives. I must wonder if we ever place too much emphasis on the wrong things. I wonder if we could be found treating scratches and bruises while other injuries that threaten our spiritual lives are left untreated. Not every command in God's word carries the same weight. Now, I didn't say that, Jesus did (Matthew 23:23). Of course, that is not to minimize some commandments, but rather it does teach the priority of others.

The Pharisees practiced tithing, as the law commanded, but had neglected such things as mercy, justice, and faith. In the Old Testament book of Hosea, the prophet said that the knowledge of God was more important than burnt offerings (Hosea 6:6). Isn't that interesting? Why? Because it is exactly opposite of what people think today. Modern thinking is that if I "go to church" (i.e. worship) I'm okay, even if I don't open my Bible through the week. While "going to church" is something you should do, according to Hosea, increasing your knowledge of God is better.

Friends, make sure you're priorities are right. Don't major in the minors. Take a little time to evaluate your priorities and do a little spiritual triage on yourself. You might just find that you've been treating scratches and bruises, when you have more critical needs to which you need to attend.