

## **Study Guide: Keeping First Things First**

This study guide provides a comprehensive review of the principles outlined in *Keeping First Things First* by Alan Drake. It focuses on the hierarchy of life priorities, the psychological and spiritual barriers to maintaining those priorities, and the scriptural foundations for living a life of world-changing impact.

### **Part 1: Short-Answer Quiz**

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in 2–3 sentences based on the information provided in the source text.

1. **What are the seven priorities of life identified by the author, and how are they ranked?**
2. **What scriptural example does the author use to justify placing God above family obligations?**
3. **According to the text, why do individuals often choose "shortcuts" or lower values over higher priorities?**
4. **How does the author characterize the nature and aftermath of Satan's temptations?**
5. **What is the "hidden cost" associated with choosing immediate rewards over God's path?**
6. **According to the writer of Hebrews, what was the specific "key" that allowed Jesus to endure the cross?**
7. **What role does faith play in the ability to reject "cheap, quick shortcuts"?**
8. **How does the author redefine the concept of a "world-changer"?**
9. **What is the significance of "asking" in the pursuit of one's destiny, according to the author's interpretation of James 4:2b?**
10. **Why does the author argue that life evaluation must be a "lifestyle" rather than a one-time event?**

## **Part 2: Quiz Answer Key**

- 1. The seven priorities are: 1. Relationship with God, 2. Character and personal development, 3. Family, 4. Outside relationships, 5. Health, 6. Work and ministry, and 7. Finances and possessions. The author believes these are ranked by importance, with those at the top taking precedence over those below.**
- 2. The author cites Exodus 4, where God sought to kill Moses because he listened to his wife instead of obeying a divine covenant. This serves as a "strong hint" that dedication to God must come before family, even if it results in domestic conflict.**
- 3. People are driven to satisfy their needs and mistakenly believe those needs can be met through something "cheap and quick." Consequently, they choose the easier shortcut and reject higher values that would provide deeper, long-term fulfillment.**
- 4. Satan's temptations provide short-term pleasure followed by a "crash" that leaves a person feeling worse than before, similar to a sugar rush. This cycle creates a craving for more sin and often leads to long-term or eternal consequences.**
- 5. The hidden cost is that the price is never worth the pleasure; short-term rewards lead to empty promises and the erosion of character. Ultimately, choosing these shortcuts can result in the loss of eternal rewards and a failure to reach one's full potential.**
- 6. Jesus was able to endure the cross "for the joy set before Him," maintaining an unshakable focus on the prize and His Father's promises. By fixing His eyes on the ultimate reward, He was able to despise the shame and resist the temptation of immediate relief.**
- 7. Faith is the belief that God will "liberally supply" every need according to His riches, making shortcuts unnecessary. Without the firm belief that God rewards those who seek Him, it becomes impossible to please Him or resist the allure of short-term substitutes.**

8. **The author suggests that any vision smaller than changing the entire world for the better is too small. He encourages readers to visualize a purpose that impacts future generations, realizing that God's plans are even greater than what one can ask or think.**
9. **The author notes that many people lack world-changing impact because they simply do not ask God for it. He advocates for "asking wildly for everything" and beyond, believing that God is able to do abundantly more than we can imagine.**
10. **Consistent evaluation is necessary to resist the daily temptations of short-term pleasures and to stay focused on the "real prize." To achieve one's best life and reach full potential, a person must make a continuous, conscious commitment to keep first things first.**

### **Part 3: Essay Questions**

**Instructions:** Use the themes and data points from the source context to develop comprehensive responses to the following prompts.

1. **The Hierarchy of Priorities:** Analyze the author's argument for the specific order of the seven priorities. How does the text suggest that the success of lower-ranked priorities (like health or finances) is dependent on the stability of the higher-ranked ones?
2. **The Psychology of the "Shortcut":** Discuss the author's comparison between short-term sin and a "sugar rush." How does this metaphor explain the difficulty of maintaining long-term spiritual discipline?
3. **The Christological Model of Focus:** Examine how the author uses the life of Jesus (specifically His 40-day fast and the crucifixion) as a blueprint for modern decision-making. What does it mean to "fix one's eyes" in a practical sense according to the text?
4. **Eternal vs. Temporary Rewards:** Compare and contrast the "treasures of Egypt" referenced in the story of Moses with the "eternal rewards" promised by God. How does the author suggest that a belief in the afterlife dictates one's behavior in the present?

5. **The Call to World-Changing Impact:** Evaluate the author's claim that individuals should "ask wildly for everything." How does this perspective on prayer and ambition reconcile with the book's emphasis on sacrifice and character development?

#### Part 4: Glossary of Key Terms

| Term                          | Definition                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Character</b>              | The second priority of life; the foundation of integrity that determines if an individual is "chosen" for God's purposes.        |
| <b>Eternal Rewards</b>        | Lasting, spiritual benefits received in the future or afterlife as a result of choosing God's path over "fleeting pleasures."    |
| <b>First Things First</b>     | The principle of maintaining the proper hierarchy of life priorities, specifically putting God and character above all else.     |
| <b>Hidden Cost</b>            | The long-term negative consequences, emptiness, and craving for more sin that follow the acceptance of a "shortcut."             |
| <b>Seven Priorities</b>       | A specific list of life areas arranged by importance: God, Character, Family, Outside Relationships, Health, Work, and Finances. |
| <b>Short-term Pleasure</b>    | A temporary "high" or satisfaction that promises quick relief but ultimately fails to satisfy long-term needs.                   |
| <b>Shortcut</b>               | A cheap or quick way to satisfy a need that bypasses higher values and results in long-term problems.                            |
| <b>Stewardship</b>            | The wise management of finances and possessions to fulfill life's purposes and help others fulfill theirs.                       |
| <b>Sugar Rush</b>             | A metaphor used to describe the brief spike of pleasure from sin followed by a crash and a craving for more.                     |
| <b>The Joy Set Before Him</b> | The phrase from Hebrews 12:2 describing the motive that allowed Jesus to endure the cross and maintain His focus.                |
| <b>World-Changing Impact</b>  | The intended destiny of every believer; a vision of purpose that affects future generations and exceeds one's own imagination.   |

