

Study Series: When We Say Father

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 Lesson Title: “First Things First” (pp. 94-103)

Session 08

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The main point of this lesson is: God desires preeminence in your life, not prominence.

Focus on this goal: To help adults identify what has preeminence in their lives.

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 6:10

Before the Session

Create (or print from the Internet) a three-by-three grid handout with nine squares large enough in which to write one or two words. (Steps 1, 3, 7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Distribute the handouts and request participants write in each square an important aspect of their lives (marriage, work, parenting, etc.).

Ask: *If we put Jesus in the center square, are we making Him prominent or preeminent in our lives? Explain.*

Note that prominence means standing out, while preeminence is being superior over everything.

State: God doesn’t just want to be in the center square of our life, He desires and deserves to be superior over all of it.

Assert a powerful prayer life requires that we identify, and perhaps rearrange, what has preeminence in our lives.

Step 2. Day 1 – The Priority of the Prayer

**Note** our priorities reveal what is preeminent in our lives.

**State:** When we say Father, we focus on His priorities, putting first things first.

**Ask:** *According to Matthew 6:10, what is to be our first priority in prayer?*

**Discuss** Day One, activity 1 (p. 95).

**Explore** what we are praying for when we pray for God’s kingdom to come (**see** paragraph that begins, “What is the kingdom of God?” p. 95).

**Request** volunteers read Colossians 1:17-18 in several Bible translations.

**Determine** the different words that can go in the last blank of Day One, activity 2 (p. 95).

**Ask:** *How do each of those synonyms and the repeated use of the word “all” help you further understand Jesus’ preeminence?*

Step 3. Day 2 – The Principle of God’s Preeminence

**Read** the margin/pull quote in Day Two (p. 96).

**Inquire:** What is the best thing according to Colossians 1:18? What are some good things that might distract us from the goal of Christ having preeminence?

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 1 (p. 96).

**Read** 1 Corinthians 6:12 from Day Two (p. 96).

**Relay** the author’s explanation of expedient (p. 96).

**Request** adults consider what they wrote on their handout grid as you read the Day Two questions (p. 97): “Take anything and everything you do—your job, your pleasure, your friends, your family—and measure it by this standard: Is it helping me to be a better Christian?”

**Read** the question from Day Two, activity 2 (p. 97).

**Ask:** What would it take for us to be able to answer Yes to that question?

Step 4. Day 3 – The Practice of God’s Preeminence, Part 1

**Note** that Days Three and Four detail priorities that are required to seek God first, which would then lead to us being able to answer Yes to the Day Two, activity 2 question.

**Request** a volunteer identify the first priority.

**Ask:** *What if we’re night owls or desperately need sleep—why should, and how can, we give God the first thoughts of the day?*

**Relate** from Day Three (pp. 97-98) how the author “paces” himself for each new day.

**Request** volunteers share how they start off their days with God.

**Invite** participants to share how starting the week by observing the Lord’s Day helps start their week right.

**Read** Proverbs 3:9.

**Ask:** *What is wrong with the statement, “I’ll give God part of my money?”*

**Discuss** Day Three, activity 2 (p. 99).

**Evaluate** how believers can live out the priorities discussed in Day Three without those priorities becoming legalistic items checked off from a to-do list.

Step 5. Day 4 – The Practice of God’s Preeminence, Part 2

**Read** the first short paragraph of Day Four (p. 100).

**Explore** what it looks like on a practical basis to give God the first consideration in every decision.

**Discuss** Day Four, activity 1 (p. 101).

**Invite** a volunteer to read Revelation 2:1-4.

**Determine** all the good things believers in the church of Ephesus might have written in their priority grids.

**Determine** the problem with all those good things.

**Discuss** Day Four, activity 2 (p. 101).

Step 6. Day 5 – The Promise of God’s Preeminence

**Request** a volunteer read Matthew 6:30-34.

**Ask:** *What is the promise of God’s preeminence?*

**Determine** reasons believers worry.

Then **determine** logical reasons Jesus gives us to not worry (the subheadings in Day Five can help with that discussion).

**Note** many say prayer is the antidote to worry.

**Ask:** *How does the author give a slightly different take on how to cure worry?*

**Assert** the antidote to worry is not just to pray, but to pray putting God’s rule and will first above our own desires.

**Invite** a volunteer to read 1 Peter 5:6-7.

**Evaluate** how believers acknowledge the preeminence of God when we cast all our cares on Him.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Encourage** adults to review or complete Day Five, activity 2 (p. 103) this week.

**Request** they hold out their handout grids as an offering to God as you **pray** aloud: Lord, we seek Your preeminence in our lives and pray that in each of these areas of our lives, Your kingdom come and Your will be done.

After the Session

