



Place God First

?

WHEN HAS AN EASY FIX SURPRISED YOU?

The POINT >

God is to have first place in every aspect of life.

> EXODUS 20:1-6

¹And God spoke all these words, saying, ²“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³“You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

> PSALM 16:1-4a,9-11

¹Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. ² I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” ³ As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. ⁴ The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;

.....

⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. ¹⁰ For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. ¹¹ You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

Einstein was born with a part of his brain missing, and he couldn't speak until he was three years old. However, another part of his brain was unusually large and was responsible for his incredible mathematical skills.¹



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // GOD

Because God is holy, He is altogether separate from and infinitely above people who are sinful, and He deserves our reverence and obedience.

When I was in high school, there was a girl in our class who was incredibly smart and cared so much about doing well in school that it was rumored she buckled her backpack into her passenger seat both to and from school. Whether it's true or not, I'll never know for sure. Either way, her utter devotion to her studies was demonstrated in the ways she spent her time and energy. When there was reading to be done, she read every word—and made notes! When there was a test, she was always well-prepared, because she didn't even understand the meaning of cramming.

Let's be honest—people who live this way in high school aren't necessarily the most popular. In fact, making these kinds of choices day-in, day-out can lead to school's being pretty tough. Yet, as my friend pursued education beyond high school, her study habits and discipline paid off with a very successful career she had in her sights from early on.

When we choose to put God first, it won't always be the popular choice. More likely, when we live for Jesus, it will seem utterly strange to those around us, and the world will give us a hard time. But when we devote ourselves to God, putting Him first above all else, we can know it will lead to eternal rewards.

EXODUS 20:1-6

1 What does it look like to place God first in today's culture?

2 What are the consequences of putting other things before God?



*Jesus honored
God above all
else, and to follow
Christ means
to place God
first in our lives.
#GodsHeartBSFL*



PSALM 16:1-4a

- 3** When are you most tempted to put your trust in something besides the Lord?
- 4** What experiences from your life reflect the truth that God is good?
- 5** How can we know that God is good, even when life doesn't seem good?

PSALM 16:9-11

- 6** List some ways your church has helped you discover God's path for your life.
- 7** How did you reach the conclusion that Jesus is the only means of salvation?
- 8** What does it look like to place God first in your life?



LIVE IT OUT



GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // GOD

Because God is holy, He is altogether separate from and infinitely above people who are sinful, and He deserves our reverence and obedience.

Scripture teaches that the greatest commandment is that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength—with everything that we are. To some, this may sound like God is being prideful or selfish. However, this is not the case. Because God is holy and higher than we are in all His ways, not only does He deserve that we would love and honor Him above all else, but when we do, it works out for our greatest benefit, as well. God's calling us to honor Him first is an expression of His love and kindness to us.

>CHRIST

Through the first commandment, God revealed that we are to honor Him as first in our lives.

9 In honestly evaluating your life, are there areas where you fail to honor God above all else? Confess to God and pray that He would help you honor Him.

10 How will you actively seek to put God first in your life this week?

> COMMUNITY

Honoring God first isn't something we pursue all alone. We need the support and encouragement of Christian friends, and they need the same thing from us.

11 Who encourages you to honor God? How do they do this? Write a note of thanks for their support.



12 How will you encourage a friend to live to honor God this week?

> CULTURE

When God gave the law to Israel, it was that they would be a light to the nations. Today, when we fulfill God's commands, He uses us to reveal to the world the truth about Himself.

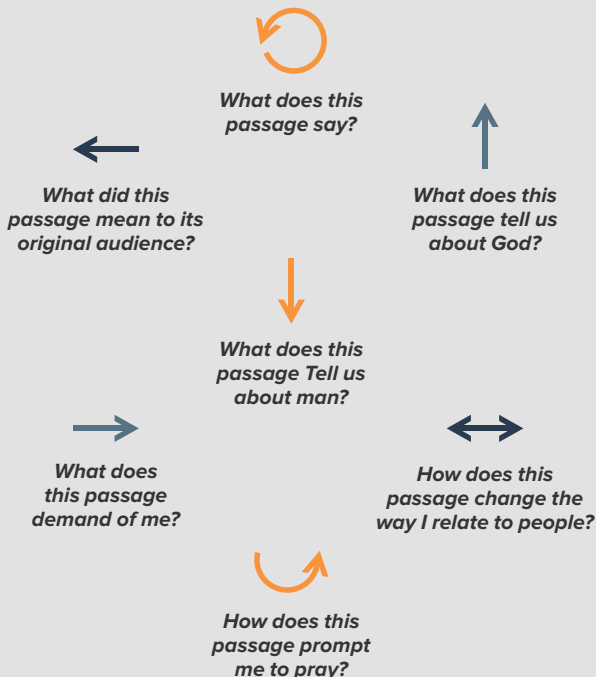
13 How have you seen honoring God lead others to Him?

14 How will you intentionally honor God as first place in order to draw lost friends to Christ?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One COLOSSIANS 1:15

Many people refuse to follow Christ because they deny that He is God. It's definitely a concept that's difficult to grasp—that there is one God, and Jesus, the Son of God, is Himself God. Yet this is absolutely true! In fact, that Jesus is God and, at the same time, man is one of the most important truths of our faith. In the Old Testament, God revealed Himself to His people, but they didn't see Him as clearly as we do today. In Hebrews 1, we learn that Jesus is better than the law, better than the prophets, and better than the angels because, in Him, we have the perfect picture of the character and person of God. Further, He is the “firstborn” who is over all creation. This doesn't mean He was born first in the sense of time. Instead, it means that He is first-place—highest in rank—and the one with the right to inherit all creation. Following Christ requires that we acknowledge Him as God and place Him first in our lives.

➤ **Why is it so important for us to believe that Jesus is God?**

➤ **How do your choices show that Jesus is first in your life?**

Day Two

COLOSSIANS 1:16



In Genesis 1, we read that God created all that exists in six days. Because Jesus is God, He was involved in this. Here, we read that *everything* was created not only by Jesus, but also through Him and even for Him. Jesus' involvement in creation reveals to us that He is powerful in ways that we could never truly grasp. That He walked on water is absolutely incredible. That He raised the dead is even harder to imagine. But His creating the universe out of nothing—that's simply outside our capacity to comprehend. And don't miss this. It was all created for Him, so we would understand His power and greatness.

➤ **What words would you use to describe Jesus' power?**

➤ **How does creation bring glory to Jesus?**

Day Three

COLOSSIANS 1:17

In verse 15, we read that Jesus is the firstborn over all creation. Here, Paul wrote to the Colossian church that Jesus is before all things. Whereas Christ's being firstborn speaks to His right to inherit, *before* speaks to Jesus' existing before all the universe came to be. Just as God revealed Himself to Moses as *I Am*, *He is* refers emphatically to Jesus' eternally existing as God. And with the same power He used in establishing the heavens and earth, He continues to hold the world together. It is Christ who sustains us, not only in our faith as we walk in the ways God has called us, but literally and physically as well. Without Jesus' sustaining power, all that is would simply cease to be. But because of the power of Jesus, space and time continue on, and all for the glory of God.

➤ **In your own words, what does it mean that Jesus is before all things?**

➤ **How do you sense Christ's sustaining power in your life?**

Day Four

COLOSSIANS 1:18

Jesus is the beginning, not just in terms of the physical universe, but in the spiritual realm as well. Because of sin, all people must die. The price for sin is death, and because God is just, He couldn't simply ignore our rebellion against Him. However, all along God had a plan to deal with our sin. He sent Jesus to live the perfect life that we never could and to die as the payment for our sins. Still, these things weren't enough to deal with our sins. Thankfully, death was not strong enough to hold Jesus, and He was walked out of the tomb on the third day. He is, by virtue of His resurrection, the firstborn from the dead. He is first place in everything, and because of His resurrection, we are raised with Him to eternal life.

➤ **Why did Jesus have to die?**

➤ **What does it take that we would be raised with Jesus?**

Day Five

COLOSSIANS 1:19-20



“For God was pleased”—it’s not difficult to grasp that God was pleased to have His full character dwell in Jesus, so people could clearly see God. It also makes sense that God was pleased to, through Christ, reconcile lost people to Himself. However, it’s not easy at all to grasp that God was pleased that these involved Jesus’ blood being shed on the cross. The truth is that God’s character was most clearly displayed in the sacrifice of Jesus, and this was the only way to redeem sinful people from sin. Even Jesus’ sacrifice pleased God because, without this happening, we could never know Him.

➤ **In your own words, what pleases God?**

➤ **Why did it please God that Jesus shed His blood?**