

FIRST

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 October 24, 2021
“The Competition”



OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for being our creator, sustainer and redeemer. We know that you call us to put you first in our lives, but we recognize that this is not always the case. Forgive us for the idols in our lives and help us to have no other gods before you. May we honor you with our time, talents and resources. We pray this in the powerful and matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Exodus 20:22-24 (NIV)

²² Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites this: ‘You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven: ²³ Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.

²⁴ “Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you.

Exodus 34:2-4 (NIV)

² Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. ³ No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain.”

⁴ So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the Lord had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands.

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus makes it clear that we need to put God first in all aspects of our lives. But one of the hardest areas to make that happen is with our finances. Although we don't worship idols like some cultures in Biblical times, we have our own idols that compete with our attention for God. So how can we truly overcome the competition for our hearts?

The first step in overcoming the competition for our hearts is to identify our idols. There are two main indicators as to what we worship - how we spend our time and our money. This week, examine how you are spending both. Then take a step to honor and glorify God with your time, talents and resources instead of spending them on your idols.

QUESTIONS

1. If you were to compare how you feel when you willingly give to others to how you feel after you have bought something you really wanted for yourself, which makes you the happiest and which is more lasting?
2. When you give your offerings at church, to whom are you giving? When you donate to charities, to whom are you giving?
3. In what way(s) has God been generous to you? How can you pass God's generosity on to other people?
4. How do we draw a line between providing wisely for our material needs and hoarding?
5. Jesus warns us about focusing too much on our earthly life and missing the fact that our soul, our eternal self, is far more important. In what ways might we tend to focus too much on our earthly lives?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week examine how you spend your time and money to determine what you truly worship.