

FIRST THINGS

First

Do you “seek . . . first the kingdom of God”
(Matthew 6:33)?

In the October 2013 general conference, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that God is our first and highest priority, as stated in the first two of the Ten Commandments:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God” (Exodus 20:3–5).

Elder Oaks then said: “The question posed by the second commandment is ‘What is our *ultimate* priority?’

Are we serving priorities or gods ahead of the God we profess to worship? Have we forgotten to follow the Savior who taught that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments? (see John 14:15). If so, our priorities have been turned upside down by the spiritual apathy and undisciplined appetites so common in our day” (“No Other Gods,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 72–73).



How can I turn it around?

If you’ve placed a high priority on something ahead of God, decide now to turn your priorities around and put God first. Here are some things that can help you do it.

- **Pray.** Your priorities have a lot to do with your motivation and desire. Ask Heavenly Father about your priorities specifically and in detail. Ask for His help in changing your thoughts, feelings, and actions so that they will reflect your love for Him and His Son.

- **Enlist the help of others.** Talk to your parents or Church leaders and ask them for support as you try to change.
- **Imagine success.** Picture yourself thinking, feeling, and doing the right things in the situations that challenge you the most. Ponder what it would take for that to happen, and then make it happen.
- **Just do it.** Determine to put God first, and then do it. Be like the Prophet Joseph Smith, who said, “I made this my rule: *When the Lord commands, do it*” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 160).

For more ideas, go to lds.org/go/prioritiesNE1.

HOW DO YOU STACK UP?

Here are a few examples of things that may compete for your devotion. They're not all necessarily bad. Sometimes it's more a matter of better vs. best. But our devotion to God should not take second place to anything. So how would you stack these things up in these situations?

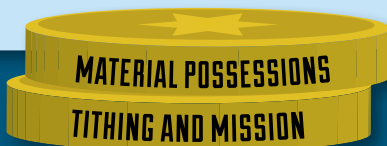
"I have to get stronger, but the only time I can lift weights is at the same time as early-morning seminary."



"I really want her as my friend, but she's always doing things to drive away the Spirit and trying to get me to do them, even though I've asked her to stop."



"I've saved some money, but I haven't paid my tithing yet, and I haven't added to my mission fund for quite a while. But I just have to get that cool new phone as soon as I can."



"Prophets have taught us not to get tattoos, but everyone in my culture gets one."



"I have really hard classes, and I just have to get straight A's so that I can be the best, so this year I don't really have time to go to all three hours of church or to Mutual."



"I realized that I don't ever play with my little sister anymore ever since I got that new video game a while back."



"Everybody makes fun of that guy to get laughs; if I stand up for him, they'll probably turn on me."

