

## And in First Place ...

### Scripture Reading — Matthew 10:32-42

*“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me ...”*  
*Matthew 10:37 —*

I was talking recently to a Japanese pastor involved in our media ministry. He shared his personal story of coming to faith in Christ. As a young teen, confused about life, he began to explore the gospel through our radio programs. Eventually, he contacted our staff and professed his faith in Christ. Later, he said, he decided he also needed to pursue God’s call to pastoral ministry. Then, he added, with tears in his eyes, that what motivated him were Jesus’ words “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”

I was moved by his testimony. Having been raised in a Christian family, my decisions to confess Christ and eventually pursue Christian ministry were met with happy affirmation by my family. For my Japanese friend, it was the opposite. His Christian commitments deeply strained his connections with people that he loved.

Although my sacrifice did not take the same form as his, the dynamic of sacrifice is operative in the life of every disciple. Perhaps my sacrifice for the kingdom of God is not with family ties. But for me too, Jesus claims first place. What competes in my own life with his lordship?

There can be no love in our lives greater than the love of Christ. There can be no commitment greater than his kingdom.

### Prayer

*Lord, help me tear away all competitors to your place in my life. Lead me to discover ultimate joy in focusing on your lordship in all I do. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Christianity](#), [Salvation](#), [Life](#), [Christian Life](#)

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