

Call to Obedience #507  
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA  
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## Jesus and His Family

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If you, as a Christian, find your relationship with your unbelieving family strained, remember these sobering words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

*Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and a man's enemies will be those of his own household (Matt. 10:34-36).*

**We learn from this scripture that as you receive Christ,** members of your family may become your enemies. We learn from this that light has no fellowship with darkness. Divine love can do a lot of things: it can forgive a multitude of sins, but it cannot and will not compromise its integrity. So there was a strained relationship, a rift between Jesus and His family. Yet, the straining was only felt by His family and not by Jesus Himself. There are no strains in the God/man relationship. Let us now look at the origin of this problem and trace it throughout the Scriptures.

**Adam.** The line of family division had its origin in Genesis: *And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (Gen. 2:23-24).* Here a man is disconnecting from one thing to connect with another. Here a man is commanded to change his loyalties. Yes, the words are clear: *leave* and *join*. When this is done, the result will **be a family wholly given to God**, a family providing a resting place for God, a place of comfort for the weary and a beacon of hope for the lost. It is also here in Genesis that a woman's role is clearly defined: to be his helper. That means that he becomes her mission field. With that in mind, she was created to be his best counselor and cheerleader. There is no longer any allowance to be made for him to yield to family pressures and traditions. God wants His man to be free, entirely free in Him and for Him, or He cannot use him. God is a jealous God.

**Abraham.** As Adam was your father in the flesh, so Abraham is your father in the faith. And again, the first words that God gave to Abraham were: *...Get out of your country, **from your family and from your father's house**, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing* (Gen. 12:1-2). As the blessing on Abraham required his forsaking his previous family loyalties, so it is with all of us. Again, when God said: “Leave your family,” He made no allowance for us to keep straddling between our physical and spiritual families. As long as we do the straddling between that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit, we will keep coming short of the anointing: *No one can serve two masters...* (Matt. 6:24).

We shall now look into the Gospels to see how Jesus accommodated this separation and how in the end His family, who once opposed Him, eventually received Him as their Lord and Savior.

**Jesus.** When Jesus was 12 years old and His family was returning from the Temple at Jerusalem to go back to Nazareth, He came up missing. For three days, Joseph and Mary were earnestly looking for Him and then they found Him still in the Temple, discussing the Holy Scriptures with the scholars. When they found Him, they asked Him for an explanation for His inappropriate behavior, to which He replied: *...Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that **I must be about My Father's business?** But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them* (Luke 2:49-50).

**If your earthly parents or siblings are not born again, they cannot understand you** because *the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God...* (1 Cor. 2:14). This is a spiritual law and spiritual laws do not change. This inability of your unbelieving family to understand you can even lead them to think that you are mentally imbalanced or even demon possessed—as it was in the case with Jesus (Mark 3:21-22). So, you can see that even before Jesus came into manhood (at 13 by Jewish tradition), a rift opened up between Him and His parents. And this rift became wider and deeper as He grew up. And this was also true with His church (synagogue) (Luke 4:29). The rift between Him and His fellow church members and its leaders ever widened, leading finally to His expulsion from the congregation and eventual crucifixion. Regarding this, Jesus responded by saying: *...A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house* (Mark 6:4).

The common cliché: God first, family second, and country third, in reference to family usually refers to your birth family. But notice how Jesus upset this age-old concept of birth family dynamics altogether, when He stood before a multitude and introduced a new family order by saying: *...Who is My mother and who are My brothers? And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother* (Matt. 12:48-50). With this single sentence, Jesus declared the emergence of a new family which was unknown aforetime.

**The Apostles.** From then on, it no longer mattered "who begot so and so" in terms of your birth family. What is now important is Jesus: *...who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead* (1 Peter 1:3). Along the same lines of this concept, the Apostle Paul wrote: *For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel* (1 Cor. 4:15). As you become part of the kingdom of God, what amuses them will no longer amuse you and what is of value to them is now nothing but sounding brass and tinkling symbols to you. Your soul now is only satisfied by the bread of heaven. Yes, it is now all about doing your Father's business.

Add to all of this also these words of your dear Lord on the new family dynamic: *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me* (Matt. 10:37). **If you love anything more than your Lord, you are in idolatry:** *And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it* (Matt. 10:38-39). Truly, the gate to life is narrow.

Now the question arises: "How then do you evangelize your family?" The first thing you might consider is that, upon receiving Jesus, you should quickly do something like what Matthew did: he made a feast and invited all his old friends to it to introduce them to Jesus as his new Master. That is evangelism. If they would have rejected Jesus after that, Matthew could have shaken off the dust of his feet; that also is evangelism (Matt. 10:14). Do not let your family keep guessing about what happened to you. Be loving and kind for they sacrificed much to raise you, but also be courageous and clear. So it was with Elisha after Elijah appointed him to take his place. Elisha slew his oxen, made a feast and kissed his parents goodbye. Is it any wonder that he received a

“double portion” of the Spirit of God? Also remember that Jesus rejected the man who first wanted to bury his father before he would follow Jesus (Luke 9:60). Do not drag this thing out as Abraham did by taking Lot with him. Commit your family to God immediately and live all for God; and your surrendered life will become like a hammer that breaks hard hearts into pieces, bringing some of them to repentance. In fact, Luke put the conversion of Jesus’ entire family into the first chapter of the book of Acts! Jesus’ family was found present in the Upper Room. *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women **and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers*** (Acts 1:14). Obviously, you can see here that none of Jesus’ family became part-timers of the Christian faith because their once despised brother, Jesus, was not a part-timer. They all became full-timers like their brother was. Like begets like.

**The fifth commandment.** How does “honor your father and mother” come in here? “Honoring” them now comes through the Holy Spirit, hence the best way for you to honor them in the light of eternity is to be all for God. And yes, fulfill all of your filial obligation as Jesus did, but never, never do so at the cost of forsaking your spiritual obligations. So, even while Jesus was hanging on the cross, He provided for His widowed mother when He said to John: *...Behold your mother...* (John 19:27). And also recall how Jesus honored His mother at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11). Again, the best way for you to evangelize your family is for you to be about the Father’s business at the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the best evangelist.

Summing it all up, do not attach yourself to anything or anybody but to Jesus only (Luke 14:33). This point is best illustrated by God asking Abraham to offer his son on the altar (Gen. 22:2). When God saw that Abraham would not allow Isaac to come between himself and God, God confirmed His covenant with him that he would become a blessing to all the nations. You ask: “Isn’t all of this radical?” It is. Jesus’ whole life was radical; His preaching was radical; and **His rewards will also be radical beyond your wildest imagination.**

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