

Scripture: Titus 3:1-8

Note: Last time we talked about living in fellowship with God. Today we are going to talk about living in fellowship with family.

I. It is important for parents to begin early in teaching their children a Biblical worldview. Ephesians 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. According to a Biblical worldview children are to respect their parents authority, love them, honor them with their lives. Parents are to teach the children about the Lord, the importance of church and the need to be saved. Ecclesiastes 12:1-3, 13-14 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened....., Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Solomon the richest and wisest man who ever lived said remember God; learn about him before you get the scars of sin. When you are young get close to God; get solid foundations remembering the teachings of your parents, the Bible and Sunday school. God is supposed to be the uniting center of the family. Some folks will say it is a little too late for that.

II. Sometimes our family has been hurt by our sinful behavior. Titus 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. This is what our family has experienced and in some cases that person is who they understand us to be. In affect we are starting our family relationships over. Titus tells us how God makes that possible.

1. We must accept forgiveness and apply what God has given us in the Holy Spirit. (4-6) But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; God is the God of second chances. He loves us so he saves and then pours the renewing power of the Holy Spirit in us. That Holy Spirit gives us the power to change and makes amends to people we have hurt.

2. We must realize people may not understand our new faith. Matthew 10:34-39

A. Family make fight your desire to live for Christ. (34-36) Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. Suppose you have been living a life of addiction and you get saved. God convicts you and you change what you watch on TV, your language cleans up, you start going to church on a regular basis and you begin reading the Bible. This is a drastic change for someone living with you. Jesus said he came not to bring peace but a sword. Just because God has changed your want to's it does not change your families want to's. They may be lost still deceived and desiring sinful activities.

B. Family may not appreciate your level of commitment to Jesus. (37-39) He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. . These words of Jesus are hard to accept. It basically says you are to love God more than your family. If we examine this we will see the reason. Jesus is not asking us to choose between. He is reminding us that we can best love our family if we have a strong relationship with Him. He empowers us to love them as God loves them. Living in God's will means abiding in His love. God promises to bring us joy and abundant life as we abide. He promises to guide us and direct us on the right path as we live according to His will. When we are living that way He empowers us to guide and love our families providing what is best for them. Never forget God loves our families more than we do. The best way to serve our families is to become disciples of Jesus. Luke tells us what is involved.

1. Jesus teaches us that he must have the pre-eminence in our lives. Luke 14:26-27 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. The word pre-eminence means to have first place in our hearts. Another way to say this is our love for Jesus must be so great that our love for our families and ourselves will seem like hatred. There are times when we must choose service for God over family. I read a book by Erwin Lutzer titled the Cross in the shadow of the Crescent. It's about the rise of Islam in the world and it tells the conditions Christian have to live in countries that are governed using Sharia law. (laws based on the Quran) These folks are ostracized from their families and even called criminals in the eyes of the government. In Jesus day people who were converted from Judaism were considered heretics. Even in America when some folks are saved their families call them religious fanatics and want nothing to do with them. To become a disciple I must surrender my will to God on a daily basis. **Galatians 2:20** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. To take up my cross daily means to live a crucified life. Obtaining a crucified life is a process of spiritual transformation. Where I am in that process tells me how close I am to being a disciple. Part of the process involves a choice on my part **Romans 12:1-2** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Presenting your body as a living sacrifice sometimes takes your body away from your family and your family may not understand.

3. We must show folks the change in us rather than tell them. This is especially true in addiction situations. It also is true in abusive situations. Trust once lost takes time to earn back. This is talking about our testimony in the home. Just going to church and telling folks you've changed doesn't mean you have actually changed. **1 Peter 3:15-16** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. It is the change in you that people will see and want. Your family will eventually see the change and your level of commitment to Jesus. When you are a disciple they will see your new hope and ask what changed you and then with meekness you can tell them Jesus.