

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Tonight, I'm going to share some thoughts on family relationships and how to deal with them. If there is one thing I've learned over the last 26 years, it's that very few Christians deal with their family *by the Spirit*. The reason for this is two-fold. First of all, they are afraid of losing those relationships. Second, they have been taught *lies* regarding the proper place of family within the context of the kingdom. So tonight, we're going to start by looking at how Jesus viewed family relationships and what He taught about them. And you're going to see that what He taught is the opposite of what today's religious leaders are teaching.

*Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, **which is the great commandment** in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Matthew 22:35-40

Satan is very skilled at using our weaknesses to ruin us, and the area we humans are the most vulnerable is in our relationships. God designed human beings for relationship, first with Himself, then with each other. So regardless of how much wealth, or power, or fame, or glory people acquire, they are never satisfied until they find a relationship with someone. To be in a relationship is our most fundamental need because that is what we were created for. When our relationship with God does not hold *top* priority in our lives, then relationships with other people will. Since we are so vulnerable in the area of relationships, the very first commandment God gave His people at Mt. Sinai had to do with relationships—“*Thou shalt have no other gods before me*” (Ex. 20:3).

A few years later, when explaining the essence of the Law to the people of Israel, Moses said: “*Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*” (Deut. 6:4-5). Thousands of years later, when The Lord was asked which commandment was the greatest, this is the passage Jesus quoted, for herein lies the fullest meaning of the First Commandment. Just as God was to remain *first* in the lives of the Hebrews under the Old Covenant, so Jesus made it clear that under the New Covenant nothing has changed. The greatest commandment is to love God with “all” our hearts, minds and souls.

God expects us to love Him *more* than we love our husband, wife, children, grand children, or parents. It's not a case where we can have two different *kinds* of love—a natural love for family and a spiritual love for God. Jesus said anyone who loves family more than Him is not worthy of Him (Matt. 10:37). This statement, together with His answer that we are to love God with *all* our hearts, souls and strength, makes what He is demanding of us very clear.

Of course, all Christians *say* they love God more than they love their family. But the fact is, very few of them actually do. The vast majority of them are involved in all kinds of family relationships that are just as important to them, or more important to them, than their relationship with God. They can deny that such is the case but denial of the facts does not change them.

It's very easy to see that they love their family more than they love God because if God asked them to walk away from their family and never look back, in order to better serve Him, they could not and they would not do it. They *could not* do it because God is not really first in their lives—He's just an addition to their lives. Their life is not Christ; their life is family. They *would not* do it because they have been taught that Jesus would never ask them to do such an un-Christian thing. Instead, they are taught that Jesus is pro-family; that He came to strengthen the family institution and family ties; and (best of all), that He promises will save your whole family if you become a Christian and you pray for them to be saved.

Consequently, today's churches are filled with *idolatry*—family idolatry. And when I say churches, I'm not just talking about that nasty old “harlot” Church System. I'm talking the people of God, wherever they are and wherever they congregate. Those of us outside the system are plagued with family idolatry just as much as those inside the system. Family idolatry is a universal plague.

To make matters worse, because we are living in the last days, and the institution of family is under attack by sexual perverts and God-haters, Christendom has made family idolatry a *business*. Everywhere you turn, there is a continual pressure to “focus on the family” because the God-ordained institution of family is under attack on all sides. A whole *Christian industry* regarding family relationships has arisen. But although there is an abundance of books, conferences, teachings, and radio shows dealing with family issues and trying to protect the institution of family, not very much of it is actually based on the Scripture. Instead, most of it is based on philosophy, psychology and the religious traditions of men.

*While he yet talked to the people, behold, his **mother and his brethren** [real brothers] stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. **But he answered and said** unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand **toward his disciples**, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For **whosoever shall do the will of my Father** which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

Matthew 12:46-50

What the Lord said in this passage is very hard for the average Christian to even understand, let alone experience and walk in. The individual who came to tell Jesus His family had come and wanted to speak to Him, was viewing the situation like any *normal* person would—that is, any normal person who is living in Adam, and not Christ. This guy wasn't just reporting the fact that Jesus' family had come to see Him. He *expected* Jesus to stop teaching, to stop obeying the Father's will at that moment, and give place to the demand of natural family relationships. Jesus saw that in this guy's mind, family takes precedence over everything. This is the way Adam views family. Family first—everything else (including God) second—and this is exactly how most of today's Christians live (though they vehemently deny it).

The Lord went right to the *root* of this guy's problem and asked: “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?” Then He pointed to His disciples—not to the crowd but to His disciples—and said: “Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” Jesus was telling this man that all family relationships must be

subservient to our relationship with God. Well, it that the same as *denying* those relationships? Was Jesus denying His natural relationship with His mother and His brothers? Not at all. But He was putting them in their proper place. Obedience to God first, loyalty to God first, love for God first—family relationships and duties second. That means, if there is a clash between our loyalty and obedience to God, and the demands of a natural family relationship, it's the family relationship which must suffer loss.

Very few people will ever be able to even understand, let alone walk in the reality of what Jesus was talking about when He said anyone who does the will of His Father, though they be not His natural family, are *just as important* to Him as His natural family. Those words reflect a reality about family that is foreign to everything around us, both in the secular and church culture. Not only are we to love God more than our own family members, we are to love God's people as our own family.

For the natural man, this is an inconceivable way to view family relationships. For Adam, it's family first and everything else second. But it's not that way in Christ. In Christ, Christ is first and everything else is second. In Adam, natural family ties are the greatest and strongest bond. In Christ, spiritual ties are to be the greatest and strongest bond. In Adam, blood is *always* thicker than water. In Christ, blood is *never* thicker than water. In Adam, our closeness to people and our loyalty to them is based on blood ties. In Christ, our closeness to people and our loyalty to them is (or should be) based on spiritual ties.

The Lord's attitude towards family was certainly holy and right. Yet it was so far beyond anything that is being taught today, we can't even bear to explore the ramifications of it. What He said goes against all the basic impulses of the human soul. The Adamic mind finds it extremely *offensive* and recoils from it. But the fact is, those who claim to be God's children should be walking in God's kingdom—and in God's kingdom, natural blood ties and loyalties take *second place* to spiritual ties and loyalties.

*And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but **let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.** And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

Luke 9: 59-62

The above passage reveals just how alien the ways of Jesus are to today's Christian culture. You will never hear any of today's preachers or Bible teachers tell anyone to do what Jesus told these two would-be disciples to do. The first man was called by the Lord. The second one volunteered to follow Him. But both of them had a similar problem—family relationships and responsibilities were top priority in their lives and those relationships had *the potential* to keep them from following the Lord.

The first man wanted to fulfil his *proper* duty as a son (and display his loyalty to his parents) by burying his father before joining the disciples. Carrying out a family duty like burying your father is certainly not wrong. Yet, in this instance the Lord must have known that fulfilling a proper family duty—even one as necessary as burying your father—would have kept this man from following Him. So He told him *not* to go back and fulfill that proper family duty. He said let the (spiritually) dead bury the (physically) dead.

You will never see this kind of attitude in today's "Christians" because everyone is involved in family idolatry. A man who goes off without burying his father would be seen as worse than an infidel by both the world *and* the Church. And if that man were to tell today's Christians that *God* told him to leave without burying his father, nobody would believe him! Do you understand? I'm saying that today, this guy's fellow Christians would never accept that God told him to do such a thing. They would never believe that Jesus would say the *same thing today* that He did 2000 years ago! If you told today's Christians that Jesus instructed you to leave your family without burying your father, they would not only say such you are irresponsible, they would say your actions were completely un-Christian and *un-Scriptural!*

Why did Jesus tell that guy not to go back and bury his father? Why did He tell him to do something that seemed so irresponsible and harsh on the surface? He did it because He loved the man and He wanted the guy to find the kingdom. What Jesus did only seems harsh to us because we live and move and have our being in this *natural* realm. We don't live and move in the Spirit. Consequently, we don't really know how God sees things and what's really important in His eyes.

What Jesus said to that man was not harsh at all. It was a manifestation God's *love* towards him. What would have been harsh, is if the Lord would have just let the guy return home without saying what He did, knowing that *if* he went back to fulfill his proper family duty, he would never leave again and he would *miss* the kingdom. To *not* say what He did would have been harsh.

The second man in that account volunteered to follow Jesus. But he wanted to go back and say farewell to his family. Again, this would be the proper thing to do under normal circumstances. We all agree that it's irresponsible for a family member to just disappear without a word. Yet this is *exactly* what Jesus told him to do! No warnings; no goodbyes; no phone calls. Just leave without a word, and follow some unknown religious teacher.

Now, you tell me—*which* of today's preachers and Bible teachers would say such a thing *could possibly* be God, if it happened today? Do you know what today's leaders would say about the person who did such a thing? They would say he just joined a "religious cult". You see, in their view, that anyone who would leave their family *without* saying goodbye, in order to follow a religious teacher, is deceived. As far as they are concerned, if you don't view family relationships the way the *Adamic man* views them, then you are beyond the pale. Something is drastically wrong with you.

My friends: do you realize that the first "sign" of a cult in the eyes of today's religious establishment—and especially in the eyes of all these "de-programers" who go around rescuing young kids from cults—is when people no longer view family in the "normal" (ie: Adamic) way? Do you realize that today, the first sign of a cult is when you *stop* viewing family relationships the way the *Adamic man* views them. If you should ever cut off a family relationship in order to pursue God, or to live a more righteous and holy life—that's *the* sign that you have had your mind bent by some Eastern Guru or cult leader.

We need to get this realization into our brains. According to today's *church* standards—not the standards of the unsaved world, but the standards of the *church*—the Lord Jesus would be classified a "religious cult leader" because He didn't view family relationships the way the *Adamic man* views them. We need to realize that if Jesus came on the scene today and said the very same things He said 2000 years ago, He would be viewed as another Hara Krishner. That's how far today's Christianity is from the truth!

If Jesus appeared in any city today and started walking up and down the streets, saying the *very same things* He said 2000 years ago, Christian leaders would call in the “de-programmers”, who would go out to “rescue” (kidnap) the Lord’s followers in order to “de-program” them. And all the Christians would rejoice as those followers were returned home to their *proper* family relationships! This is how deluded and blind today’s religious leaders are. They are living in Adam instead of living in Christ, when it comes to family relationships. So they see things the way Adam sees them, not the way Christ sees them. The result is, they have *sanctioned* family idolatry and have made themselves God’s enemies.

Did you ever wonder why Jesus told the guy in that passage not to return home and say goodbye to his family? Did you ever think it was a harsh thing to say to that poor guy? Well, the fact is, it’s not hard to imagine what would have happened if he would have gone back to say goodbye. When he told his family he was leaving to follow some unknown the Rabbi from Nazareth, it’s pretty easy to imagine the response he would have gotten. His family would have said God would *never* ask anyone to *forsake* their family in order to serve Him. It’s not hard to imagine them begging and pleading with him not to go; putting him on a big guilt trip; and it’s not hard to see him caving into that pressure and *missing* the kingdom.

You see, Jesus knew how the Adamic man viewed family. He knew how selfish and dangerous *Adamic love* can be. And He knew what was waiting for that guy back at the house. He knew that if the man returned home to do the “proper” thing, he would have never left again, and he would have missed the kingdom. So it wasn’t harshness that made Jesus tell him *not* to go back. It was the love of God that warned him not to go back. To Adam, the ways of God regarding family relationships often seem cruel. But if we are walking in Christ, this will not be the case. Unfortunately, most Christians don’t live and walk in Christ when it comes to family. They live and walk in Adam, and they view things the way Adam views them. Their love for family is actually *destructive*.

It was in the context of family relationships that Jesus said: “*No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*” When the Lord talked about looking back, he wasn’t talking about looking back and desiring to be able to sin again. He was talking about wanting to go back to the way things were before you made that decision to follow Him, which upset the whole bandwagon as far as family relationships were concerned. He’s talking about not allowing family relationships to interfere with our *spiritual* walk.

Yes, God has instituted family relationships and duties and they are not to be ignored or despised. But we must understand that these relationships and duties are *Adamic* and they must be kept in their proper place. They must remain *subservient* to the Christ life we are to walk in. Jesus was saying that once we make a decision to follow Him, we must never again allow any natural family relationship, loyalty, responsibility, or duty—regardless of how right and proper they may be—to *interfere* with our complete obedience to the Lord Jesus. If we do, we simply are not fit for the kingdom.

*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**.*

Matthew 10:34-36

It's amazing that so many false teachings about family relationships can flourish in the churches when the Scripture declares very clearly that Jesus *didn't* come to heal and preserve our family relationships. Rather, He came to bring a sword to those relationships! That means, He came to bring *division* in family relationships. Such a thought is blasphemy, according to the purveyors' of today's family idolatry industry. Their motto is: Family first! Everything must be sacrificed to keep the family together. They declare with great authority that God would *never* break up a family—or would He?

When Jesus said He didn't come to bring peace, He was talking about *family* peace. The Lord didn't come to bring *that kind* of peace because the Adamic man already has that kind of peace. He came to bring another kind of peace; true spiritual peace. He came to bring that inner peace that is the fruit of union with Him. But in order to bring true peace into a home, the Lord must first bring the sword of truth into that home. And when He brings that sword of truth into a home, the members of that family are instantly divided between those who love and receive the truth, and those who hate and reject the truth.

From then on, *Adamic family peace* is shattered and the only way the family can ever have peace again is if someone compromises. Either the one who hates the truth will repent and find true peace; or the one who has received true peace will compromise so the old *Adamic peace* can return. Those who trade the true peace of God for a temporary family peace may restore their relationships with family members, but they will destroy their relationship with God in the process.

In addition, spiritual division is not confined to the kind of division that comes between *saved* and *un-saved* family members. Just as often, the sword of truth will pass between *believing* family members and it will divide those who want to follow Jesus all the way, from those who only want to follow Him enough to be saved from Hell and get a few rewards. In this case, obedience to God will take one family member in a direction other family members have no desire to go. It will lead one family member down a path that the rest of the family has no desire to walk on.

God will ask you to do things that He does *not* ask of them; and He will forbid you from doing many of the things you once did with them. When this kind of a situation arises, we must choose between keeping the peace with family or obeying God. If we choose obedience, the sword will fall between us and them, and that obedience will produce jealousy, animosity, bitterness, and even hatred. Jesus wasn't joking when he said a man's *enemies* will be those of his own house.

*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.*

Matthew 10:37

*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**.*

Luke 14:26

No true disciple of Jesus can love family more than God. Indeed, Jesus stated that we must "hate" our family—comparatively speaking. That is, when family duties begin to *interfere* with our obedience to God,

we must deal with those relationships as our enemies. When they begin to *replace* our love for Him we must deal with them as enemies. When they begin to *steal* our time from Him we must deal with them as enemies. It's easy to say we have put God *first* in our lives. But the fact is, those who really do seek to put God first, often find that doing so causes big trouble in the home.

*And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one **that hath forsaken** houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, **or wife**, or children, or lands, **for my name's sake**, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*

Matthew 19:28-29

Of course, the relationship that receives the most attention today is the marriage relationship. An endless procession of books on the subject of marriage continues to flow into Christian bookstores. But none of them teach people how to deal with marriage by the Spirit. It's all about how to have a happy marriage, or how to save marriages. *Save the marriage at all costs!*—that's the message of today's Christian leaders. Nobody seems to notice that what Jesus said in the above passage doesn't quite fit that view! And should you try and point this verse out to them, you will immediately be accused of not holding the sanctity of marriage and of being “pro-divorce” like the pagan God-haters.

I'm not going to get into the whole issue of divorce tonight. If you've been coming to this chat room for any length of time, you'll know that I don't hold the “orthodox” view of divorce. I have never been one of those who condemns or looks down my nose at people who have been divorced and re-married. The Lord showed me many years ago that His *first* concern is not protecting marriages per say, or even the institution of marriage, but *the people* who are married. He also showed me that the Church worships the institution of marriage—and let me tell you my friends, God hates all idolatry, including *marriage* idolatry. All idolatry *is* idolatry in His eyes and He hates it all.

Over the years I have watched individuals—both male and female—who had a call of God on their lives, be destroyed because they were married to someone who was filled with Satan, and who as a result, never stopped trying to kill that spiritual life in them, until they finally succeeded. I'll tell you very frankly that I have seen more than a few Christians go into *eternal perdition* because they were taught by blind religious leaders who worshiped the institution of marriage that it would never be God's will that they even separated from their spouse, let alone divorce them. So in the end, they paid their dues to the institution—but the price was their souls.

Therefore, my attitude towards divorce has never lined up with the sanctimonious declarations of the Church System. In one of my messages last year, I explained and showed from the Scripture that the whole *slant* that's put on divorce and remarriage by the majority of those in the Church System is totally un-Scriptural. People have taken certain passages and built a doctrine on them, while ignoring the ones like we just read, where Jesus clearly sanctioned the break-up of a marriage, if it has to be done in order to follow Him. If anyone is interested in knowing my position on the subject of divorce, you can check out the message called: “*Apostasia and Apostasion*” on the audio archives page of my web site.

Jesus didn't make it clear in this passage whether the man who had "forsaken" his wife had divorced her, or if he had just *separated* from her. Separation—even according to the most narrow and legalistic interpretation of the passages dealing with divorce and re-marriage in the New Testament—is clearly acceptable. I never encourage people to seek a divorce. But there is nothing wrong separating from a spouse if he/she is actively fighting against God or trying to draw you away from Him.

I hate to topple the great idol of family, but the primary goal of Jesus is *not* saving our relationships—and that includes our marriage relationship. His primary goal is to change us into His image as much as possible in this life. If a family relationship must be sacrificed in order for us to be changed into the Lord's image, then God has won't hesitate to sacrifice it and He expects us to have that same kind of attitude. He expects us to be *willing* to sacrifice any relationship, regardless of what type of relationship it might be, in order to attain what He has made available for us.

Some people can accept that God might require a friendship to end, in order for you to follow the Lord more fully. Some will even accept that spiritual relationships between fellow Christians might have to end, in order for you to follow the Lord more fully. But the vast majority of today's Christians *refuse* to accept that God would ever require *family* relationships to end—especially a marriage relationship—in order to attain the destiny or the rewards God has made available for us through Christ.

It's very important that we know how Jesus viewed family relationships because if we don't, we will never attain the goal God has for us. Satan uses family relationships to stumble God's people all the time. So if you are worshipping at the Golden Shrine of *Family*, you can forget about going on to perfection, or attaining the High Calling, or walking in Sonship, or bringing forth 100-fold fruit. It will never happen. Satan will use your own family to defeat you very early in the race.

As I said, the most important family relationship is the husband/wife relationship. So the *first* person the enemy is going to try to use to defeat you is your husband or your wife. Unsaved or uncommitted spouses are a virtual playground for Satan and unclean spirits. Quite frankly, I'm skeptical when someone tells me their spouse is not saved, but they get along just fine anyway. I'm sure such a situation is possible, but I don't believe it's very probable, unless the Christian has been compromising.

*But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and **she be pleased to dwell with him**, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and **if he be pleased to dwell with her**, let her not leave him.*

Corinthians 7:12-13

I want you to notice some things in this very important passage. First, please notice that according to the plain grammar and construction of these of statements, leaving your spouse *is* an option. It's an option *if* your unsaved spouse is not "pleased to dwell with" you.

To the husband of an unsaved wife, Paul said, if she wants to stay with you even though you are living a Christian life, then don't send her away. That also means, if she is *not* pleased to dwell with you, then you are free to put her away, which is another term for divorce.

To the wife of an unsaved husband, Paul said, if your husband wants to stay with you even though you are living a Christian life, then don't leave him. That also means, if your unsaved husband is *not* pleased to dwell with you, then you are free to leave him.

Oh, I can hear all the Patriarchs, now. They're screaming: "*Heretic! Burn him!*" I can also hear the Orthodox and the Evangelical's yelling: "*Heresy! Heresy!*" But to be quite frank, I couldn't care less what these people say. I only care about what God says and what His Word says—and it's very clear (at least to me) what Paul is saying in this passage.

It's important that we see what Paul is saying here. He is putting the responsibility for the decision of whether or not to remain in an *unbalanced* marriage on the believing spouse. Paul said that if the unbelieving spouse will not dwell peacefully with the Christian spouse, then the *believing* spouse is free to "leave" or "put away" the unbelieving spouse.

A few verses later Paul will tell the believing spouse that if the unbelieving spouse wants to leave, then let them leave. But that's *not* what he's saying in the above passage. He clearly telling the believing spouse that *they* have the choice to end that relationship or stay in it, IF the unbelieving spouse will not live peacefully with them because they are a Christian.

But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

I. Corinthians 7:15-16

After laying the responsibility for staying or not staying in an unbalanced marriage on the shoulders of the *believing* spouse—if the unbelieving spouse will not live peacefully with them—Paul then tells the believing spouse how to deal with the decision of the unbelieving spouse to leave. He says: "*But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart*".

Then he says: "*For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?*" What he's saying is that even though it's the believing spouse's responsibility to make the decision as to whether or not to stay in an unbalanced marriage or not (if the other spouse refuses to live in peace with them), they need to take into consideration the fact that they don't know whether or not that spouse might break and come to the Lord after a certain amount of time. So while he's setting the believing spouse free, at the same time, he's also warning them to make their decision carefully and wisely.

What if the unbelieving husband or wife can *eventually* be won to the Lord by your holy living and pure testimony? Are you willing to suffer persecution for a time, in order to see them saved in the end? Paul is telling them to take into consideration the fact that their conduct and testimony might win over the *hostile* spouse at some point. So all these possibilities need to be weighed in the balance when making a decision to end or not end a marriage relationship. Don't do anything in haste or out of emotional pressure. Seek the wisdom of God. Ask Him to let you know what you should do. That's Paul's counsel.

Unfortunately, you will never hear this kind of spiritual counsel from today's Evangelical and Orthodox leaders. Regardless of the problem or the situation people face, they only have one answer: Never divorce because divorce is sin and God hates divorce. They will say: "It's never God's will that anyone gets a divorce". They don't care of the *whole* family ends up in Hell—just so there is no divorce. They would rather see a wife and all her children *in Hell* than let her get a divorce—so great is their blindness!

What Paul said about staying or not staying with an unsaved spouse is in perfect harmony with the way he approached relationships in general. The principle by which he lived was: "*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*" (Rom. 12:18). That's all he's saying to those who find themselves married to an unbeliever. If it's possible to live at peace with them, then do so. However, if it's not possible, then you are free to get out of that relationship, as long as the Lord is telling you to do so. And if they choose to end the relationship, then don't try to stop them.

Of course, if the believing spouse *compromises* with the unbelieving spouse, then the unbelieving spouse will certainly be pleased to dwell with them. But where will the believing spouse end up? After living a life of compromise in order to keep her husband, or to keep his wife, they will find that God has no place for them in His kingdom. That's a pretty steep price to pay..

The sisters who have a desire to serve God and go all the way with Him are the ones who are at a real disadvantage when it comes to all this because according to Patriarchal Evangelical teaching, the wife is to "submit" to her husband in "all" things. Well, it doesn't take a Ph.D. to figure out that if the believing wife submits to an unbelieving husband in *all* things, the unsaved husband will be *very* pleased to dwell with her forever because she will be compromising all over the place!

And if her conscience should ever begin to bother her about all those compromises, or the Spirit of God should begin to convict her, and she goes to the local "pastor" or "Bible teacher" to share her concerns, she will be told in no uncertain terms that she is to just keep submitting in "all" things to her unsaved husband because this is God's will. And if she listens to that pastor or that Bible teacher, she will go back home and continue to compromise with her unsaved husband until her conscience no longer bothers her, and the Spirit of God no longer convicts her, and she will end up cut out of Christ.

My friends, I'm not joking when I say the orthodox doctrines of Evangelical Christianity are so corrupt, they are going to send multitudes of people into eternal damnation. I'm telling you, there will be many wives in the Lake of Fire who ignored their conscience and the conviction of the Holy Spirit because they listened to blind religious leaders who said: THE BIBLE SAYS you must obey your husband in ALL things! I believe those leaders will be burning right beside all those foolish women. It's to these kinds of deluded hypocrites the prophet Amos wrote the following words:

Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?

Amos 5:18-20

The Day of the Lord will only be light for those who have been prepared by the Holy Spirit to face it. The unsaved, the hypocrite, and especially deluded religious leaders will not enjoy that Day at all. For them, it's going to be a *terrifying* day! It's going to be a day of darkness. It's not just going to be a day of external darkness; but also a day when all the internal darkness of men will be exposed. All the religious deception these leaders have been walking in, and teaching to multitudes of other people for years, will be exposed and they will be punished for all the *spiritual* death and destruction they have caused.

Like I said last week, God's people have no fear of God. They don't have any fear of being punished by Him for what they've done or how they've lived. If they did, they would approach whole issue of spiritual leadership with fear and trepidation because they would believe what brother James said: "*Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment*" (*James 3:1 NAS*). Today's theologians and preachers and Bible teachers don't believe that they will receive a "stricter judgement" if they teach people error. They couldn't believe what James said even if they wanted to because their theology of "grace" states just the opposite. They read that verse of Scripture, and they don't believe it any more than they believe in the tooth fairy!

You know, Jesus warned us not to let our "light" become darkness. That light is our understanding of salvation. He said if that light becomes darkness, "how great" is that darkness (*Matt. 6:23*). This is what has happened to the Church System. The *light* of what salvation is, has become darkness. The light of what salvation is, has become nothing but religious fantasy and mythology. Oh, how great is that darkness! It is destroying multitudes of people.

I've taken the time to show what Jesus taught and how He viewed family relationships because I want you to see it in the Scripture for yourselves. The main goal of most Christians is to keep their family relationships intact. But that's not God's goal. You need to know that He's not really that interested keeping all your family relationships intact. His goal is to *prepare you* for eternity—and all our family relationships must become subservient to that work of preparation.

We need to rest in the knowledge that God desires to save our family members, just as He desires to save everyone. Whether *you* serve Him or not, He will still try to save your family—not *because* they are your family, but because they are human beings who need salvation. Jesus died for them, just as He died for you. He draws them, not because they are related to you, but because He draws *all* men.

There is only one way to deal with family members—I don't care *what* their spiritual condition is. There is only one way to deal with *unsaved* family members. There is only one way to deal with *carnal Christian* family members. There is only one way to deal with an *deceived* family members. There is only one way to deal with *committed Christian* family members. We must deal with them all *by the Spirit*. However, if we have been taught all kinds of error regarding family relationships—error which supposedly comes from the Bible—then we will never be able to hear the Spirit, will we? Instead, we will constantly be dealing our family according to all the error we have been taught. This is why it's so important to know what the Scripture *really* says about those relationships.

There are two fundamental things we need to keep in mind when dealing with family. First of all, self preservation is not wrong when you're talking about *spiritual* self preservation. It's not wrong to determine in your mind that you are not going to let anyone deceive you and cause you to *miss* what God has for you.

We need to protect ourselves *spiritually* from anyone who is not serving God because they are our enemies. That includes family. I know it's very hard way to look your own family that way, but we have to or else Satan will *use them* to destroy us. I'm not saying you have to treat them nasty or refuse to talk to them. What I'm talking about is seeing things the way they really are in the spirit. I'm talking about seeing things by the Spirit. We must deal with all of our relationships by the Spirit; and the unpleasant fact is, anyone who is not serving God is our enemy. They are a *potential* weapon in Satan's hand that he can use against us. Aside from using our own flesh, there is no easier way to deceive us than through our own family. I've watched Satan use family to destroy many Christians over the years. It's no joke.

The second thing we have to remember is that each one of our family members has a free will and God will never over-ride that free will. It's so important that we remember this, especially when we are asking God to *save* them, for you see, one of the things the Church System teaches you is to *never* stop praying for your unsaved family members. But how can they teach such a thing? What if God told you to stop praying for them? Could you even hear Him speak that kind of a word to you? For most of today's Christians, the answer is absolutely not. They could never hear God say such a thing because they don't believe He would ever say such a thing.

Well, I'm here to tell you my friends, God would and He *does* say such things. He does tell people to stop praying for their relatives when He knows they are past the point of no return. He also tells people to stop praying for relatives when He is not presently moving in their lives. Also, He will tell you to stop praying for your relatives as a test, to see if you will obey Him, or if you are rebellious and determined to keep doing your own religious thing!

I'll tell you another situation where will God tells us *not* to pray for family. He'll tell us *not* to pray for those who are involved with demon spirits, and who don't want to get free from them. If you pray for them when they love those spirits and are determined to keep them, you will be opening yourself up to those same spirits and before long, you'll be having major problems yourself. Prayer, like anything else, must be Spirit-led. When God tells us to pray for someone, then He covers us, regardless of their spiritual condition. But God is not obligated to cover us if we are doing our own thing.

The bottom line is this: God doesn't want us walking under the influence of the flesh, or sin, or any unclean spirits. But it's not going to do us any good to get free from our own flesh, if we are going to turn right around walk under our family's flesh. It's not going to do us any good to get free from our own sin, if we are going to turn right around partake of the sin of our family. And it's not going to do us any good to get free from all the unclean spirits in our lives, if we're just going to turn right around walk under the same spirits our family walks under.

God wants us *free* of all these things—and He expects us take whatever steps are necessary to get free from them and stay free. If that requires the sacrifice of a family relationship, or even of all our family relationships, then that's the attitude we must have. Moreover, we must know that such an attitude is completely Scriptural. Jesus taught very clearly that *being prepared* to meet Him takes precedence over *all* family relationships and duties.