**More Like the Master**

In His Family

Lesson 3

*“And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth;*

*and he was subject unto them…” (Luke 2:51)*

**Modern Family**

Every child born will have some kind of family relationship, good or bad. A child may be born into a godly family or an ungodly family. A child may have a large family or a small family. A child may grow up with a father and mother, or not. A child may be kept by his family at birth, or given away to an adopted family. A child may be born or aborted. Family can certainly be a wonderful blessing. It can be a relationship where there is love and acceptance and a safe haven of support and encouragement. But, we must choose to have families that are guided by biblical principles if we are to reap the wonderful blessings of family.

God certainly wants righteous families (Psalm 127 and 128). But, there is a crisis in today’s families. The family of our modern culture is in danger. Many children today are born into relationships that are not pleasing to God. We need to get back to the Bible and godly families. We need to get back to the example of Jesus and his family. He did not grow up in a “dysfunctional family” or come from a “broken home”. His parents were not “divorced”, “separated”, or on their second marriage. He was not a member of a “modern family” which includes homosexual parents and single parents. Jesus grew up in a family that was centered on serving God and obeying God’s word. What can we learn from the example of Jesus concerning the proper family relationship that we should have today?

**Jesus and Family**

Jesus was obedient to his parents. Jesus was subject and obedient to his earthly parents, Joseph and Mary. He did what he was told. He obeyed them (Luke 2:51). Jesus learned to be a carpenter from his father, Joseph (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). Joseph was not Jesus’ literal, earthly father, but his legal father (Matthew 1:16; Luke 3:23). Joseph was a just and godly man (Matthew 1:19), and as such, Jesus would have obeyed his father at work and would have respected his father.

Jesus was respectful of his mother. Jesus’ mother played an important role in the life of Jesus and she was blessed for doing so (Luke 1:28-48). Jesus knew his mother’s role was important and he was respectful of his mother (John 2:4). Even when he was hanging on the cross, Jesus wanted his mother to be given care (John 19:25-27). Though Jesus used the word *“woman”* for his mother on both of these occasions, he used a term of respect for her.

Jesus was kind toward his siblings. Jesus’ mother, Mary, was not a “perpetual virgin” as is claimed by Catholics today. She bore Jesus and other children as well (Matthew 1:24-25; 13:55-56). How then did Jesus treat his family? He was kind to his brothers and sisters (Matthew 13:55-56; John 2:12). Even though his brothers did not believe in him, he spoke kindly to them (John 7:1-9). Later, some of his own family was found among his followers (Acts 1:14; 15:13-21; 1 Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 1:19; 2:9).

Jesus was religious within his family. Jesus worshipped God with his family. From an early age, Jesus had been taken regularly to the temple by his parents to worship God (Luke 2:22,41-42). He had been raised with the *“custom”* of going to worship God (Luke 2:42). By age 12, he knew that he needed to be in the temple, his *“Father’s house”* (Luke 2:49). As he grew up in Nazareth, he continued to make a *“custom”* of going to the synagogue to worship (Luke 4:16). His parents taught him the importance of worshipping God and he made worship a central part of his life from an early age.

Jesus was compassionate toward other families. Jesus showed that he cared for families when he worked miracles for family members of those who suffered in some way. He healed the mother of Peter’s wife (Matthew 8:14). He healed Jarius’ daughter (Mark 5:35-43). He raised from the dead the only son of a widow at Nain (Luke 7:11-17). He also miraculously fed the hungry – 5,000 men, women, and children on one occasion (Matthew 14:13-21) and 4,000 on another occasion (Matthew 15:32-39).

Jesus was mindful about teaching on the family. Jesus taught several important truths about the family that are often neglected in our modern society. He taught that parents must be honored in their old age, taken care of, and not neglected (Matthew 15:3-6; 19:19; Mark 7:8-13). He used a child as an example of humble obedience (Matthew 18:3; Mark 9:36-37; Luke 18:16) and he blessed the children (Matthew 19:13-14). He taught that a husband and wife are joined by God for life and the husband is not to put away (divorce) his wife just for any cause (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18). He taught how a loving father will look for his prodigal son to return and rejoice when his son does so (Luke 15:11-32). He taught the importance of a son obeying his father (Matthew 21:28-30).

Jesus was aware of his larger, spiritual family. Jesus had a great respect for his own physical family, but he also realized that he had a larger, spiritual family. When a woman in the crowd cried out, *“Blessed is the womb that bare thee…”,* Jesus said, *“Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it”* (Luke 11:27-28). Jesus certainly respected his mother on this occasion, but he also knew that obedience to God is an even greater honor. All who do the will of God in heaven can be in Jesus’ family: *“For whosever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother”* (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21). All true disciples are members of Jesus’ spiritual family! While a physical family is important, obeying God is more important. Jesus taught the importance of putting God first over family (Matthew 10:35-37; 19:29; Luke 12:53; 14:20,26). Caiaphas reminded the Jewish leaders that Jesus would die so that he might *“gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad”* (John 11:52).

**The Christian and Family**

The Christian’s physical family. Like Jesus, children today should be taught to obey their parents. Paul teaches the importance of obedience, honor, and godly instruction in Ephesians 6:1-4 and in Colossians 3:20-21. The importance of having obedient children is also found in the qualifications of an elder (1 Timothy 3:4). Additionally, a mother should rule or guide her household of children (1 Timothy 5:14) and a father who disciplines his child is held up as a virtue in Hebrews 12:7-11.

Honoring parents is also important (Ephesians 6:2). Children honor their parents by speaking respectfully to them and by taking care of their needs, especially in old age (Matthew 15:4-6; 19:19; Luke 18:20; 1 Timothy 5:3-4).

Husbands and wives also need to be following God’s word so that their relationship in the family can be proper. Husbands need to be a loving head and wives need to be a respectful help-meet (Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Peter. 3:1-7). Husband and wives should also keep themselves sexually pure for their sake and that of their children (Hebrews 13:4).

The Christian’s larger, spiritual family. Christians today must also be aware of their larger, spiritual family, the Lord’s church. Christian parents and children must not be so caught up with the worldly activities of the physical family that they neglect their brothers and sisters in Christ. Christians must not put their physical families over their spiritual obligations to the Lord (Matthew 10:35-37). The Lord’s church is the *“house of God”* (1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 4:17; see also Hebrews 3:6). Christians are *“children of God”* (John 1:12; Romans 8:16,21; 9:8) and a *“spiritual house”* (1 Peter 2:5). There are many “one another” passages in the New Testament that teach us to be mindful of our spiritual brethren, care for them, and treat them properly (Romans 12:5,10; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; etc.). When a member of our physical family is not a member of God’s family, what can we do? As a faithful Christian, we can set the right example for them in our worship and obedience and we can influence them to obey the gospel (1 Corinthians 7:16; 1 Peter 3:1-2).

The spiritual family of Christians (the Lord’s church) has many important characteristics. God’s children are a family united by blood (Acts 20:28), a family united in Christ (Galatians 3:26-28), a family by choice (Mark 3:35), an influential family (Philippians 2:15), a family that is distinguished (1 John 3:1), a family that is focused (1 John 3:1-3), a family that is pure (1 John 3:4-10), a loving family (1 John 3:10-11,16), and an obedient family (1 John 5:2).

Finally, families need to build the habit of worshipping God regularly. Like Jesus, they should make a *“custom”* of assembling together with the local church to worship God. They should not make a *“custom”* of forsaking the assembling as some do (Hebrews 10:24-25). Public worship activities in the local church and private home devotionals(Bible reading, prayer, singing) should be a priority of every family today.

**More Like the Master in His Family**

We from Jesus, not from the world around us, concerning the proper family relationship. We learn the importance of obedience, respect, and worshipping God. We learn that we have a spiritual family in addition to our physical family. The Psalmist wrote: *“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it…”* (Psalm 127:1). With the Lord’s help, let us go out and build our home and family by following the example of Jesus and his family. Let us all be “More Like the Master” in the family relationship!

**Questions**

1. What kind of a family does God want us to have today and how does this compare with the “modern” family today?

2. What are we told about Jesus’ relationship to his parents in Luke 2:51?

3. How did Jesus treat his mother at the marriage of Cana and while he was on the cross?

4. How did Jesus treat his brothers in John 7:1-9?

5. What family “custom” did Jesus have from an early age?

6. How did Jesus show compassion for families?

7. What are some important lessons that Jesus taught about the family during his earthly ministry?

8. Who did Jesus say can be a part of his larger, spiritual family?

9. Who did Jesus say must come first, physical family, or God?

10. What did Paul teach about the parent-child relationship in Ephesians 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:20-21?

11. How do children show honor to their parents?

12. What did Paul teach about the husband-wife relationship in Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3:18-19, Titus 2:4-5, and 1 Peter. 3:1-7?

13. Who are God’s children today and what should a Christian’s attitude be toward them?

14. What “custom” should families have today regarding their worship of God?