

Doing Family According To Jesus PART 2



Having finished our discussion on Jesus' radical view on family, it is important that we (now) consider its application to our everyday lives. In other words, that we understand what doing family according to Jesus it looks like.

With regard to the world's values or expectations, conversations with outsiders and fellowship with those not welcomed to God.

1. You reject the family values or expectations established by the world.
2. Your conversations w/outsideers are to be focused on family talk: God and His Word/gospel/our church family.
3. You have no fellowship w/anyone who does not welcome conversation about God and His gospel or refuses to act on what they have heard (including biological family and friends).

With regard to your major life decisions, personal life and attitude toward your brothers and sisters

4. All major life decisions- or in the lives of those in your care, are under the oversight of your church family (most especially your ordained pastor).

4.1. (1Co 1:10; Phi 1:27, 2:2)

4.2. Some practical examples:

4.2.1. Discipleship/discipline of your kids (Eph 6:4) = Notice Paul (their ordained pastor) is telling them what to do w/their kids. IOW: he had jurisdiction over the parents in respect to how they raised their children. And based on the scope of the two terms used by Paul ("discipline" and "instruction of the Lord"), this would include jurisdiction over their education and extracurricular commitments since these two terms (discipline and instruction) encompass the entirety of the child's spiritual and/or character formation. Which means if parents don't know what the church understands to be God's prescription (in respect to these two terms) and their application to the different areas of their children's lives (education etc), then they need to go to the church (or its ordained pastors) and ask. Your children are not your own to do whatever you want with (especially if they are covenant children – i.e. a part of the church family).

4.2.2. Where to live, what to do for work (Jam 4:13-17) = According to James it is "evil" and sin" to make decisions as to where to live ("Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there") or what to do for work ("we will ...trade and make a profit"- i.e. career choices) without determining (first) the will of God (15).

4.3. According to Scripture, the will of God is determined by the church family (or her anointed pastors) (Act 15:1-3 = Notice it is the church who decides what should be done; 15:6 "apostles [anointed men] and elders [meaning anointed elders such as James] w/19-28; Gal 2:1-2; 1Co 14:29 [w/28 "church"] = Who is determining the will of God in this matter is the church [Hence Mat 18:17 "tell it to the church"] = The church [or her ordained leaders] possess the HS for discerning God's will [Joh 16:13] = Verse 16 reveals which of the two HS events Jesus is referring to. It is the one *after* His resurrection [versus after His ascension] [v16]. It is therefore the anointing of the HS that Jesus is referring to, that portion of the Spirit given to pastors for discerning God's will for His people [Joh 21] - versus the baptism of the HS [Acts 2] that which helps all Christians live in obedience to God and His appointed leaders.

4.4. Does this mean that ordained pastors are infallible (or cannot be wrong) – or that we cannot disagree w/him? (emphatically) *NO*. But it does mean that if we think they are wrong, then we have an *obligation* to go to them and reason from Scripture (following the protocol of Mat 18:15-17 when necessary) (e.g. our view regarding the excommunicated being able to pray – Psa 51). If we can't demonstrate our position to be correct (to them or the church) then we must continue to submit to them understanding this to be God's (current) will for our lives (Rom 13:2; Eph 6:5-7; 1Pe 2:13-18) = Notice, neither Paul nor Peter give exceptions based on foolishness, error or even danger. God never excuses disobedience to His established authorities for such things. Why? *Because it God's will that His appointed leaders not always be correct as a means of testing our trust and submission to Him (1Pe 2:19-23)*. In this respect consider (1Pe 3:1; Eph 6:1-3) = Does God's Word teach that wives or children have the right to disobey if they believe what they are being told to be foolish, in error or even dangerous? Is not sin the only exception? (Notice, Peter applies the prior established principle as his reasoning – 1Pe 3:5-6). If God expects this kind of behavior in relation to wives and children (those under God's appointed authorities of husband and parents) why would we think different rules apply to God's ordained pastors in the church who have been given *His highest authority on earth*, the authority to bind and loose (Mat 16:17-19)? When are we out of God's will for obeying God's leaders? Only when it can be proven (through God's protocol – Mat 18) that what we are being commanded to do is sin.

4.5. POINT (then) NOT TO MISS = Gospel accuracy and enforcement aside, your assessment before God will not be based on whether your pastor always got it right, or made the wisest decisions, but whether or not you happily submitted to his decisions (Heb 13:17). Once more, will not the same be true with respect to wives and their husbands or children and their parents?

4.6. That our major life decisions be (specifically) in agreement/submission to the church's ordained pastors is confirmed by St. Ignatius (a direct disciple of the Apostle John who also had correspondence w/Jesus' mother Mary). Consider his words to the early church: *"It is fitting that you should run together in accordance with the will of the bishop [i.e. the ordained pastor] who by God's appointment rules over you...He that refuses to assemble with the church (for the judgment of the bishop) has condemned himself. Let us be careful then not to set ourselves in opposition to the bishop, in order that we may be subject to God...It is becoming therefore, that you also should be obedient to your bishop, and contradict him in nothing; for it is a fearful thing to contradict any such person. For no one does [by such conduct] deceive him that is visible, but does in reality seek to mock Him who is invisible. And every such act has respect not to man, but God...Some indeed give one the title of bishop, but do all things without him. Such persons seem to me not to be possessed by a good conscience, seeing they are not steadfastly gathered together according to the commandment (under and in submission to their bishop)...To those who indeed talk of the bishop, but do all things without him, He who is the true and first Bishop, and only High Priest by nature, will declare 'Why do you call Me Lord and do not do what I say?' Such persons are dissemblers and hypocrites."*

4.7. Summing up what the early church thought Joseph Hellerman in his book, *When the church Was A Family* (says this)...*"The [first century Christian] person perceive[d] himself/herself to be a member of a church and responsible to the church for his or her actions, destiny, career, development and life in general...The individual person is embedded in the life of the church and is free to do what he or she feels right and necessary only if in accord with the church (family's) norms and only if the action is in the church's best interest. The church has priority over the individual"*.

4.8. This (again) is doing family according to Jesus. The world (and wicked people) buck against such constraints, but those who truly love (and are following) Christ welcome it. They know that such things are for their (and their family's) protection.

CLOSING CONTEMPLATION: Are you doing church according to Jesus? Just like His laws, God gives the church family as protection (not a prison). Those who fail to do family according to Jesus are therefore putting themselves in grave danger of not being a part of that family in heaven.