



Kingdom Wisdom

Family Matters

Matthew 12:46-50

How to Prepare

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

Resources-

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-our-brother.html>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/adoption-the-heart-of-the-gospel>

<https://learn.ligonier.org/podcasts/things-unseen-with-sinclair-ferguson/the-family-of-god>

Sermon Outline:

Matthew 12:46-50

1. Family Realities. Vv. 46-49
2. Family Priorities. V. 50

Matthew 12:46-50

Changed Relationships

46 While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.

47 Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."

48 But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!

50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 12:46-50.

INTRODUCTION

Here is a question or two to help introduce the topic and jump-start discussion.

1. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being completely dysfunctional and 10 being perfectly healthy), where would you rank Jesus' earthly family at the time of this account? Why did you give it that ranking, and how might that be significant for our relationship with Christ?

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. Family Realities. Vv. 46-49

2. Who were Jesus' earthly biological family members? What are some possible reasons that they were wanting to talk to Jesus at that time?

(Jesus' mother, Mary, and half-brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas had come to talk with Him either because they thought they had special pride-of-place, or because they wanted to get Him "under control." Jesus also had half-sisters, Matthew 13:55-56, but we do not know their names. Many scholars believe that His adoptive father, Joseph, had died by this time in His life since there is no mention of him being present after Jesus was 12 years old.)

3. How did Jesus respond to His family, and how did that challenge their expectations as His biological family? How did it challenge the cultural expectations of the biological family at that time?

(As the eldest brother in the family, Jesus would have been expected to take over the family business and take direct oversight of the family. But Jesus makes it clear that He has an even larger family that He is in charge of... God's family.)

4. What is the difference between Christ's biological family and His spiritual family, and how can someone become a part of Christ's spiritual family?

(The main differences are that His spiritual family is eternal and spiritual, and one belongs to it, not by biology, but by faith. To be a part of God's family, one must be adopted into it through faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin.)

5. How do we know that Jesus still affirms the importance of earthly families and expects us to love and respect our earthly families?

(While Jesus was an adolescent, he still obeyed His earthly parents as long as it did not disobey God. And when He was on the cross, He made sure to provide for His mother, John 19:26-27.)

6. How do we live out our lives with our spiritual family today? What are some ways that people can have tension between earthly family and spiritual family today?

(Our church family is the most immediate way that we live out our lives with our spiritual family. Unfortunately, many people use their earthly family as an excuse not to invest in their spiritual family. Neither earthly nor spiritual family should cause neglect of the other. It is a balance that requires wisdom and wise counsel.)

II. Family Priorities. V. 50

7. As members of Christ's spiritual family, who determines what is most important in our lives? How do we know that love for God is to take a higher priority in our lives than love for our earthly family?

(This passage and other passages like Matthew 10:37-38 make it abundantly clear that love for God and obedience to His direction in life is the highest priority for those who belong to His family. It doesn't mean that we love other people less, it just means that we choose to love God even more. When we make family members more important to us in our hearts or in our decision making than God, we have actually made them into an idol that we are worshipping whether we know it or not.)

8. What does it mean to do the will of the heavenly Father? Since faith in Christ is the way into the family of God, why is obedience to the will of the Father important?

(First, the will of the Father, who is the first person of the Trinity, is for people to believe in Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, for their salvation, John 6:29. Second, we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not by our works, but for good works... which means that salvation necessarily creates a desire for obedience to the Lord, Ephesians 2:8-10. So obedience to the will of God from a sincere heart is fruit and proof of a heart that trusts in and loves Jesus. It is evidence that we belong to the family of God.)

9. Why is investing in our personal relationship with God and pouring the gospel into the lives of our earthly families the best thing we can possibly do for our earthly families?

(Rightly prioritizing our relationship with God makes us better in our other relational roles. Whether it is spouse, parent, child, or sibling, living in a right relationship with God and seeking His direction in life is the best way to love people properly in those God-given roles. But beyond that, the best thing you can do for anyone is to give them the gospel, since that is the only way anyone can become a part of the eternal family of God.)

10. How does this passage challenge us to examine our own priorities regarding family?

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Matt. 12:46–50 Jesus' Disciples Are His True Family. Jesus calls for a new spiritual family in relationship to him and his Father, united in the defining characteristic of Jesus' life and ministry: obedience to the will of the Father (v. 50).

Matt. 12:46 mother and . . . brothers. There is no mention of "father," which may indicate that Joseph had died by this time (Joseph is never mentioned after the trip to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12; see Luke 2:41–51). Jesus' family may have been trying to bring him to his senses (cf. Mark 3:21); as the eldest son, Jesus would have been responsible for the care of the family after Joseph's death.

Matt. 12:49 Here are my mother and my brothers. Jesus' messianic mission takes priority even over familial loyalties. Rather than negating the importance of one's biological family (cf. 15:3–9), Jesus is demonstrating the preeminence of a person's commitment to him and the kingdom of heaven.