

Key point: Jesus had family pressures and if he did, we will too. What happens to Jesus and his family happens to us in our family.

Verses 31–35: And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

For Understanding and Clarity:

It seems that the problem here is more with Jesus than his family.

However, that is not the case:

Earlier in Mark 3:20–21: Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”

John 7:1–5: After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” For not even his brothers believed in him.

Looking at our reading more carefully:

Mark 3:31–32: And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and **called him**. 32 And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, **seeking** you.”

Call: Mark 1:20; 2:17
Seek: Luke 19:10

Thoughts and Takeaways:

1. With family pressures, can you relate to how Jesus' family is responding, or to the pressures Jesus is facing from his family to respond a certain way?

Thoughts and Takeaways:

2. For healthy Family Dynamics, appropriately *managing one's own emotions* (EQ Self) and appropriately *responding to the emotions of others* (EQ Others) are significant:

a. Unhealthy management of one's own emotions can result in over functioning, control, a "helicopter mode" that creates resentment. This appears to be the case with Jesus' family. And it is often rooted in the idols of fear and control.

b. An unhealthy response to the emotions of others can look like placating out of fear, lashing out in anger, or stonewalling in silence. While we don't see this happening in Jesus' response to his family pressure, we often respond in these ways when family pressures come to us. Such responses are often rooted in the idol of approval.

Thoughts and Takeaways:

3. **Addressing Family Pressures requires healthy Differentiation.**

Differentiation: The ability to remain connected in relationship to significant people in our lives and yet not have our reactions and behavior determined by them.

a. What healthy differentiation looks like (Resilient Ministry):

1) The capacity to hear and empathize with others' frustrations while not necessarily agreeing with their analyses or taking the attacks personally (we see this here with Jesus and how he responds to his family)

2) The ability to care for family members while not taking personal responsibility for their negative reactions and responses.

b. The gospel is the power of God that helps us differentiate in a loving way:

1) Not agreeing with their analyses and not taking attacks personally: "In the gospel, what anchors me is ultimately what God thinks of me: I am approved, justified and made righteous in Christ."

2) Not taking responsibility for others' negative reactions and responses: "In the gospel, I humbly recognize that I am NOT the Holy Spirit, and I don't have the wisdom and power of God to exact change in a person's life. (What's mine? What's theirs? What's God's?)"

Family Pressures

1. What family pressures do you have and how do you respond?

2. What does our passage say about dealing with family pressures?

Verses 32-35: And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." 33 And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" 34 And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

Thoughts:

1. Jesus is not dismissing the importance of one's family.

Exodus 20:12 (5th Commandment): Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Ephesians 6:1-4: Children, obey your parents in the Lord... Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the nurture and discipline of the Lord.

John 19:26-27: When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

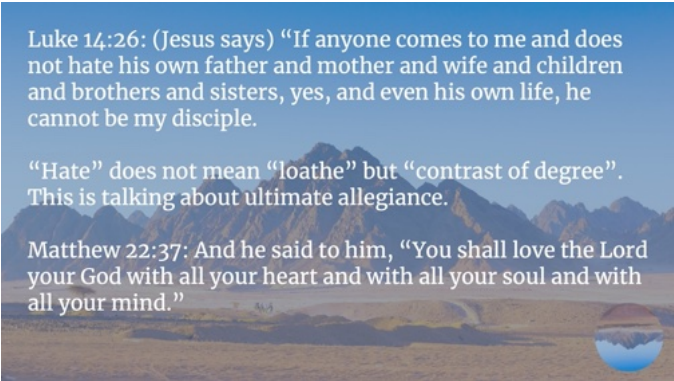
Thoughts:

2. Rather, Jesus is highlighting the truth that as important as our family is, being part of his family and following him is the most important and it takes ultimate precedence.

Luke 14:26: (Jesus says) "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

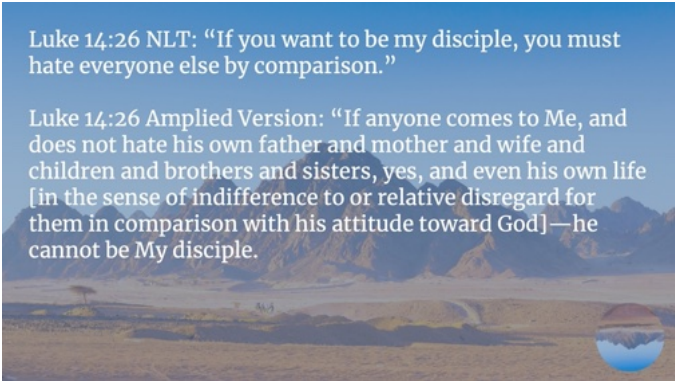
"Hate" does not mean "loathe" but "contrast of degree". This is talking about ultimate allegiance.

Matthew 22:37: And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."



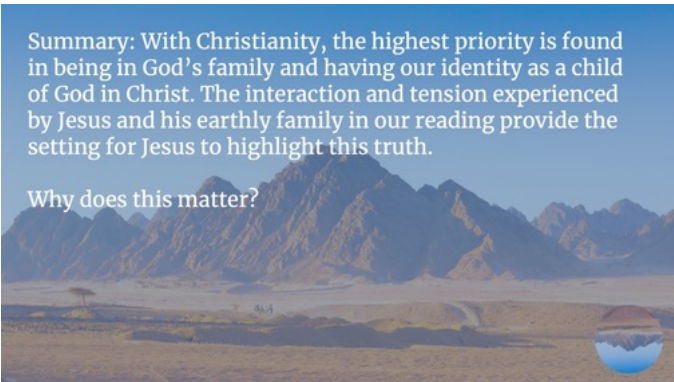
Luke 14:26 NLT: "If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison."

Luke 14:26 Amplified Version: "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life [in the sense of indifference to or relative disregard for them in comparison with his attitude toward God]—he cannot be My disciple."



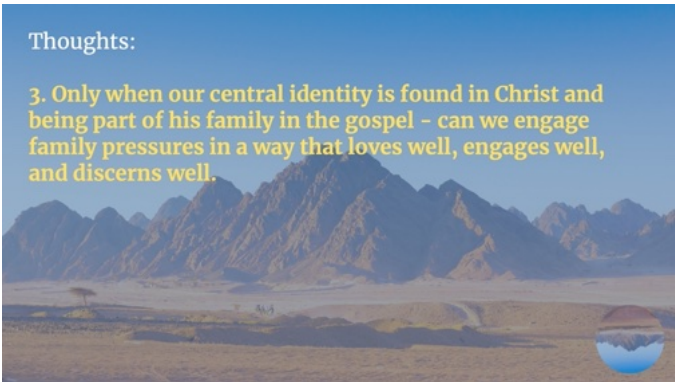
Summary: With Christianity, the highest priority is found in being in God's family and having our identity as a child of God in Christ. The interaction and tension experienced by Jesus and his earthly family in our reading provide the setting for Jesus to highlight this truth.

Why does this matter?



Thoughts:

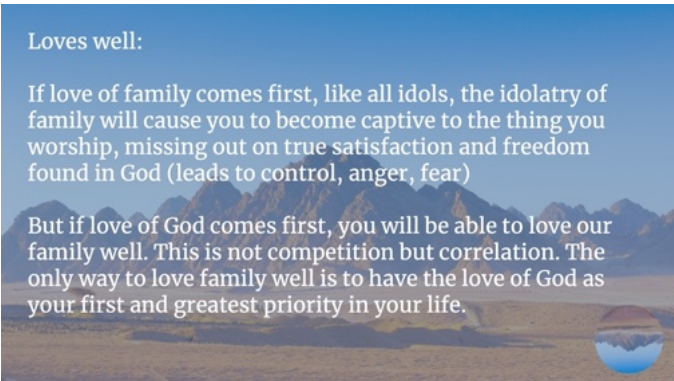
3. Only when our central identity is found in Christ and being part of his family in the gospel - can we engage family pressures in a way that loves well, engages well, and discerns well.



Loves well:

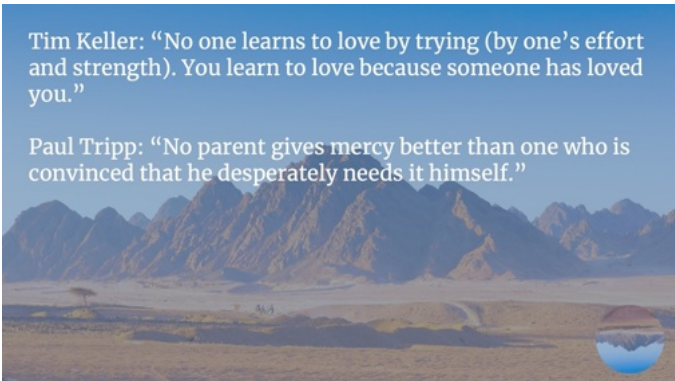
If love of family comes first, like all idols, the idolatry of family will cause you to become captive to the thing you worship, missing out on true satisfaction and freedom found in God (leads to control, anger, fear)

But if love of God comes first, you will be able to love our family well. This is not competition but correlation. The only way to love family well is to have the love of God as your first and greatest priority in your life.



Tim Keller: "No one learns to love by trying (by one's effort and strength). You learn to love because someone has loved you."

Paul Tripp: "No parent gives mercy better than one who is convinced that he desperately needs it himself."



Engages well:

Family pressure tempts us to over-engage (control, guilt, shame, condemn others) or under-engage (avoid, give in, placate others). But knowing we are accepted in Christ, we can engage in love, not being anxious about the results nor feeling responsible for how others respond. Christ sets us free from fear and control.

Discerns well:

When our central identity is found in Christ and being in God's family, we can love family members by having healthy boundaries. In wisdom, we can discern if certain situations are not healthy and wise for us or other loved ones in the family. While love forgives and extends mercy, love also protects (ie abuse, neglect...)

Family Pressures

1. What family pressures do you have and how do you respond?

2. What does our passage say about dealing with family pressures?

3. **Knowing how personal and painful family pressures can be, what comfort and hope can we find from our passage today?**

Verse 35: "For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

Comfort and hope:

1. This is not religious moralism that says, "If you obey well, then you can be part of the family."

John 1:12-13: But to all who did **receive** him, who **believed** in his name, he gave the **right** to become children of God, who were **born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**

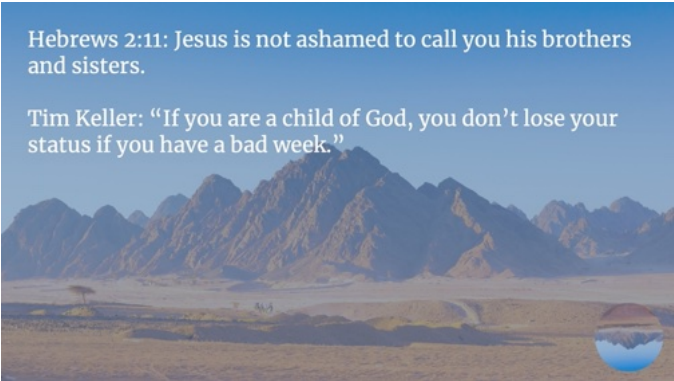
2. Comfort and hope to those who are exploring Christianity:

Come and be part of God's family! The Gospel as invitation and a welcome to you!

2. Comfort and hope to those who are already part of God's family:

Hebrews 2:11: Jesus is not ashamed to call you his brothers and sisters.

Tim Keller: "If you are a child of God, you don't lose your status if you have a bad week."



Close:

Let the gospel of being a child of God in Christ's family enable you to engage your family pressures. In light of God's grace, love well, engage well, discern well.

