

# Spiritual Family > Earthly Family

May 8, 2022

## **PREPARATION**

### **Study**

Spend the week studying Mark 3:31-35. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

### **Pray**

Pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members and their openness to God's Word.

### **Landing Point**

Jesus welcomes me to follow Him and His ways with my brothers and sisters in Christ.

## **GROUP DISCUSSION**

CONFIDENTIALITY | What's said in the group stays in the group.

NO CROSS-TALK | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

NO FIXING | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

SHARING | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.

## **INTRODUCTION**

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

### **BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER**

Jesus had a mom and He understood the significant role a mom plays in the lives of her children. Growing up by Mary's side He experienced what countless children have experienced from their own mom or grandmother. That moms and grandmothers are the glue in many households that keeps the bond of family together.

They say "blood is thicker than water" and that is true. The bond of our earthly family is strong and deep but Jesus offers an even stronger and deeper bond. This week your group will discuss how Jesus redefined family by declaring that His blood creates a spiritual bond in God's family that's greater than the bond in your earthly family.

Q - Share about a time when you experienced the deep bond of family or lack thereof.



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## DEEPER DIVE

### Can We Have a Word?

The context for this week's story is Jesus going back to His hometown. A large crowd followed Jesus back home and you can imagine what people who saw Him grow up must have thought. "We saw Him learn to walk and speak. We watched Him as Him grow from a child to a man. Now crowds are following Him and He's saying these extraordinary things. What is happening?" Jesus' family also observed the crowd and heard about the incredible things He was saying and they thought He was out of His mind and they wanted to see Him to tell Him as much.

Let's take a look at what happened when Jesus' family tried to have a word with Him and what Jesus' response teaches us about the new spiritual bond we have in Christ that's greater than the one we have in our earthly family.

Q - Have a volunteer read Mark 3:31-35. How would you state Jesus' response to His earthly family in your own words?

Q - What makes it difficult to give your spiritual family priority in your life over your earthly family? How would you like to grow in engaging with and loving your spiritual family?

Q - In Mark 3:35, Jesus says, "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." What's one thing you can start doing to understand what God's will is for your life?

## REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

### Called into a Deeper Bond

Jesus declared that whoever does the will of His Father is His brother and sister and mother. With that statement Jesus redefined family and created a stronger and deeper bond between people than an earthly family. Jesus didn't call His followers to abandon their family. Rather He called them into a deeper bond, a spiritual bond with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who want to see their family members and everyone follow Jesus and worship Him as Lord and Savior.

From this story Jesus shows you that:

- **You are welcome.** Jesus' invitation is open to all who would come. No matter who you are or what you have done, you can be a son or daughter in God's family. There is room at God's table for you.
- **You must follow Him.** Jesus didn't applaud people for just believing in Him but for putting that belief into action. The proof that you truly believe Jesus is that you live your life to follow Him and His ways in both words and actions.
- **You need others.** We need each other in order to learn the new way Jesus teaches us. Discipleship (following Jesus) is not a solo project. It requires you to be connected to a spiritual community of brothers and sisters that will help you keep the good things you learned from your earthly family (i.e., things that are honoring to God) and leave behind the generational sins, patterns of behavior and "normal" way of doing things you learned from your earthly family.





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Q - Name one family member you could reach out to with the good news that all are welcome in God's family. How can your Small Group support you as you take this step?

Q - Take a moment to pray silently and ask God to reveal an area in your life where you need to follow Jesus and His ways.

Q - Living life together as a Small Group gives you an opportunity to live as a spiritual family and encourage each other to follow Jesus and His ways. What could your group do to encourage and help one another in their spiritual growth? How have you grown in your love for each other and God this past semester?

Q - How can the group be praying for you this week?

## COMMENTARY

### Defining True Spiritual Relationships

"The rejection of Jesus by the religious leaders parallels the rejection by his family and reminds the reader that it is Jesus' own people who are rejecting him. These developments allow Jesus to define true spiritual relationships in the kingdom of God." 1

### Difficult Decisions

"The story about Jesus' family redefines who constitutes His family. Jesus' true family consists of those who respond positively to Him rather than those who are physically related to Him. The story also suggests that being a part of Jesus' family may require adjusting or even severing relationships with an earthly family." 2 The sad reality is that your earthly family members may object to your decision to follow Jesus. If this happens know that you're not alone. Many have made the difficult decision to distance themselves from family members or even severe a relationship with family members. Jesus said we would be rejected for our faith and we must be prepared to leave behind everything that stands in the way of us following Him.

### New Priorities

"In [Mark 3], Jesus tells us what is truly important. We see the heart of the servant as He states what His priorities are and what ours should be: people over rules; intimacy over familiarity; God's family over earthly families." 3

#### Endnotes:

1. Walter W. Wessel and Mark L. Strauss, "Mark," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew–Mark (Revised Edition), ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 748.
2. James A. Brooks, Mark, vol. 23, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 73.
3. Rodney L. Cooper, Mark, vol. 2, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 55.

