



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/outside 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) (the exclusions: 1Co 7:12-14; Mat 15:3-6).

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) (Heb 13:17).

"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. – St. Ignatius (direct disciple of the Apostle John)

5. Your life is an open book to your church family and you welcome their correction (versus you hide your life and get angry or pout when others call out your sin).

- 5.1. (Isa 44:9-20) = Fallen feelings fueled by pooled ignorance produces a deluded heart that cannot deliver itself.
- 5.2. The only way to be delivered from self-delusion is letting others into your day-to-day life to assess and exhort/correct where necessary (Heb 3:12-13; Consider also Psa 141:5; Jam 5:19-20; Pro 18:1-2 w/2Co 6:11-12; Pro 12:15; Pro 15:12; btw Mat 18:15 ≠ go to your bro 1st before talking to others).
- 5.3. What welcoming the correction of your church family looks like (false humility versus true humility) (Isa 58:1-9)

6. Excluding a pattern of untrustworthiness and lying, or possessing sufficient evidence of wrongdoing, you always give your brothers and sisters the benefit of the doubt and think the best of them.

6.1. (1Ti 6:3-4 "evil suspicions") = Notice the internal engine producing such feelings: 1) They are a person who is "puffed up w/conceit and understands nothing" [ἐπίσταμαι = epistemology; μηδείς = no one; Luk 5:14] = A person whose confidence (in their ability to read people) is not based on comprehension of the facts/truth (e.g., Sixth sense = Reality determined through physiology/body versus psychology/brain), 2) They have an "unhealthy craving for controversy and quarrels about words" = They are addicted to questioning/distrusting people (or the words of people) they should trust (e.g., Conspiracy theorists = People [esp. those in authority] are secretly/sinfully plotting against them).

6.2. The way (therefore) to avoid evil suspicions is to: 1) STOP letting your trust in others be based on the *feeling* that other person gives you (e.g., "they seem nice or friendly"; e.g. "they seem harsh or mean") versus the *facts* about that other person (e.g. they have a history of lying and untrustworthiness; e.g.; they have a history of always speaking the truth no matter how difficult or unpopular). 2) STOP thinking everyone is out to get you!

6.3. Does this mean we should never be suspicious or untrusting? NO. Scripture (most especially the Proverbs) are filled with commands to be suspicious (and untrusting) of certain people, but it is to be based on facts not feelings – i.e. they have a pattern of lying or untrustworthiness (Pro 26: 6, 8, 10; Jer 7:4 and 9:4; Rom 16:17-18 even Mat 7:6 and also Joh 2:24-25 “them...a man” = Those currently believing in Jesus were those who would later betray Him).

6.4. The POINT NOT TO MISS: Unless there is fact-based and sufficient evidence, we must always give others the benefit of the doubt (no matter how we feel). *We cannot act on how we feel*. If we do, we may become guilty of serious sin - i.e. a malicious witness (Deu 19:15-21; Pro 25:8-10). It can also send us to Hell (Rev 21:27 [“does what is false”] and 22:15 [“practices falsehood”]) = Same words for both phrases. Literally those “who make-up/create false realities in respect to God” [e.g. false religions/false gospels], history [e.g. revisionist history] or people [e.g. caricatures]).

7. You stand up for your church family and pastors, by strongly opposing those who speak against them.

7.1. We do not tolerate anyone (inside or out) who speaks against our church family and pastors. That includes biological family (Remember: blood is thicker than water). We are to take personal anytime someone dares to speak against our church family and pastors. IOW: those are fighting words. And that b/c to speak against them is the equivalent of speaking against our Savior (Mat 10:40; Luk 10:16).

7.2. Such individuals are encouraging dissension and are to be reported to the elders (Rom 16:17-19)

7.3. One of the keys to effectively advancing God’s kingdom against the false forms of Christianity that exist in the world is through our unity in this respect: that all of us are committed to standing up for our church family – including her pastors, by strongly opposing those who speak against them. It is also a sign of our salvation (Phi 1:27-28) = Our unified and bold witness presents a “clear sign” to those who oppose us that we are the ones truly “saved” and they are the ones on the road to “destruction”.

7.4. Given the overall context of 1st Timothy, this act of strongly opposing those who oppose Christ’s church and people is the key function of those selected as ruling (non-ordained) elders (1Ti 1:18 w/3:8-12) = Appoint righteous men as your security team on the battlefield, men who will boldly fight for God’s house: His people and pastors (1Ti 3:15). As such, this is the mindset we should have when considering elders. Not only must they be righteous (according to the criteria of 3:8-12), but also the bold protectors of God’s people and pastors. They are the NC Levites (Isa 66:21 w/Exo 32:26-29; Num 1:53; Lev 18:1-6 = Levites guard the priests and God’s house [they are the police/protectors]; priests guard the holy things in the house – God’s laws and sacraments [they are the judges]). Once more then, this is how we should be choosing men to fill this role in our church. They must be men who have already demonstrated loyalty and boldness in fighting for god’s people and pastors – i.e., for their church family. Cowards and the limp-wristed men need not apply.

CLOSING CHALLENGE: We need more ruling elders. Think about who among the men, have already demonstrated themselves to be not only righteous, but bold against those who oppose Christ’s people and pastors.