

# Choose This Day Between Family and God

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” - Jesus Christ  
(Matthew 10:37 MKJV).

**Case One:** A boy once railed on me with vile expletives because I asked him and his younger brother to cease from illegally, noisily, and constantly riding their dirt bike on our street, disturbing the peace. When he refused, I went to his father, and the father said, “I don’t care what happens or what he has done; I will always stand up for my son, period!”

“Right or wrong, they are my family.”

So much for appealing to parents and giving them the opportunity to rein in their lawless children. I could have gone to the police and had them charged with numerous violations, but chose not to.

**Case Two:** There was once an issue with someone who was doing something plainly wrong. When discussing it with one of the key members of their family, the lady said, “I will never take sides with anyone against my family. Right or wrong, they are my family.”

**Case Three:** My Aunt Lois once tried to talk to her mother-in-law, Mrs. Benson, about her son Howard, Lois’ husband. Lois was seeking counsel and help, not knowing what to do when Howard was running around with other women, drinking, and leaving Lois and their three sons to fend for themselves in many matters. Though Howard never left them without essential amenities, he left them without himself and his devotion and care for them as a husband and father much of the time.

Mrs. Benson could have said, “Lois, I’m going to have a talk with my son. He is not right in what he is doing, and I will tell him so. I will try to help you, your children, and him as best as I can.” But Howard’s mother would hear none of it. She flatly stated, “Howard is my son. No matter what he does, I stand with him; case closed.”

In all of these cases, the issues of truth and justice were secondary in importance, if important at all. They thought it a noble thing to protect or stand with their loved ones. There was no consideration for what was right, only for what they valued as their own.

Certain principles and truths are imperative for the wellbeing of society.

While loyalty and dutifulness may be commendable in many cases, and love of kin understandable, man must, and one day will, come to know and obey God’s mind on this matter. In ancient Biblical

times, by Moses' Law, there was no question whatsoever as to what the duty of society, family, and parents was concerning a wayward person in the community:

Deuteronomy 13:6-11 MKJV

(6) If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is like your own soul, lures you secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which you have not known, you nor your fathers,

(7) that is, of the gods of the people who are around you, near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth,

(8) you shall not consent to him nor listen to him. **Nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare, nor shall you hide him.**

(9) **But you shall surely kill him. Your hand shall be first on him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.**

(10) And you shall stone him with stones so that he dies, because he has sought to drive you away from the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves.

(11) **And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this among you.**

There are certain principles and truths of God that are imperative for the wellbeing of any society. Compromise on those, and all those involved are asking for serious trouble. (As an aside, there are those who claim that increasing the severity of punishment does not deter crime. It would seem that God disagrees.)

It is almost considered a rarity to have a virgin for a wife.

## Fornication in the Family

To many in our society, it is not all that strange or offensive for a daughter to have premarital sexual relations. With the availability of birth control, parents aren't as afraid to take chances with their daughter's pregnancy. And even if they get pregnant out of wedlock, it is not necessarily a serious matter to them.

Men do not have high expectations for a virgin wife; the consideration is not important to most; indeed, it is almost considered a rarity to have a virgin for a wife. So how does God view these things?

Deuteronomy 22:13-21 MKJV

(13) If any man takes a wife and goes in to her, and hates her,

(14) and makes shameful charges against her, and brings up an evil name on her, and says, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I did not find in her the tokens of virginity,

(15) then shall the father of the girl, and her mother, take and bring tokens of the girl's virginity to the elders of the city in the gate.

(16) And the girl's father shall say to the elders, I gave my daughter to this man to wife, and he hates her.

(17) And, lo, he has made shameful charges against her, saying, I have not found in your daughter the tokens of virginity. And yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

(18) And the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him.

(19) And they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver, and give them to the father of the girl,

because he has brought an evil name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife. He may not put her away all his days.

(20) But if this thing is true and tokens of virginity are not found for the girl,

(21) then they shall bring the girl out to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones so that she dies, because she has done foolishness in Israel to play the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put evil away from among you.

By these laws, God said, "Put away these things, or they will destroy you."

Who cares about adultery any more? No big deal. Is it a small deal to God? Let's see:

Deuteronomy 22:22-24 MKJV

(22) If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they shall both of them die, the man that lay with the woman, and the woman. So you shall put away evil from Israel.

(23) If a girl who is a virgin is engaged to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her,

(24) then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them with stones that they die; the girl because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he has humbled his neighbor's wife. So you shall put away evil from among you.

To God, adultery is like murder and blasphemy, punishable to the same degree:

Leviticus 24:15-20 MKJV

(15) And you shall speak to the sons of Israel saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.

(16) And he that blasphemes the Name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall surely stone him. And the stranger as well, even as he that is born in the land; when he blasphemes the Name, he shall be put to death.

(17) And he who kills any man shall surely be put to death.

(18) And he who kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal.

(19) And if a man causes a blemish in his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him:

(20) break for break, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him.

By these laws, God was saying, "This is what these sins ultimately do to you, and to your loved ones, and to the society in which you live. Put away all these things, or they will destroy you."

"If a man has a son who is stubborn and rebels, who will not obey..."

## Children and Parents

Here are some testimonies against worshippers of friends, children, and families ("worshipping" meaning choosing them above what is right):

Deuteronomy 21:18-21 MKJV

- (18) If a man has a son who is stubborn and rebels, who will not obey his father's voice or his mother's voice, even when they have chastened him he will not listen to them,  
(19) then **his father and his mother shall lay hold on him and bring him out to the elders of his city**, and to the gate of his place.  
(20) And they shall say to the elders of his city, this son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey our voice. He is a glutton and a drunkard.  
(21) And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones so that he dies. ***So shall you put evil away from you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.***

Leviticus 24:10-16 JPS

- (10) And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and the son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp.  
(11) And the son of the Israelitish woman blasphemed the Name, and cursed; and they brought him unto Moses. And his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.  
(12) And they put him in ward, that it might be declared unto them at the mouth of the LORD.  
(13) And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying:  
(14) "Bring forth him that has cursed without the camp; and **let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head**, and let all the congregation stone him.  
(15) And you shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying: Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.  
(16) And he that blasphemes the Name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him; as well the stranger, as the home-born, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. ..."  
(23) And Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and they brought forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stoned him with stones. And the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

God was teaching us that such sins result in grave consequences.

How many are there today that blaspheme the Name of Jesus Christ? Consider the Biblical antidote and fear. While we do not practice capital punishment in our modern Western society for children in serious rebellion against parents or for blaspheming the Name of the Lord, the lesson of the Law of God for humanity's instruction was that such offenses and attitudes were serious and ought not to be tolerated.

God was teaching us that such sins result in grave consequences, including death to those who offend, not because a death penalty is imposed by society, but because the very nature of those sins brings death and destruction naturally and automatically, just as light comes when the sun shines. It is that sure; rarely instant, but just as sure, one way or another.

Here is some Biblical proof of that:

Eli was the High Priest of Israel. His sons were priests, but they were wicked, abusing their spiritual authority and status in society:

1 Samuel 2:12-17 MKJV

(12) And the sons of Eli were sons of Belial. They did not know the LORD.

(13) And the priests' custom with the people was: If any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came while the flesh was boiling, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand.

(14) And he stuck it into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. All that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites that came there.

(15) Yea, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant came and said to the man who sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest. For he will not have boiled flesh from you, but raw!

(16) And if any man said to him, Let them not fail to burn the fat at once, and then take as your soul desires, then he would answer him, No! But you shall give now! And if not, I will take it by force.

(17) And the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD. For men despised the offering of the LORD.

Is it enough for a father to scold his children? Eli scolded his sons, but did nothing about their sins:

1 Samuel 2:22-25 BBE

(22) Now Eli was very old; and he had news from time to time of what his sons were doing to all Israel.

(23) And he said to them, Why are you doing such things? for from all this people I get accounts of your evil ways.

(24) No, my sons, the account which is given me, which the Lord's people are sending about, is not good.

(25) If one man does wrong to another, God will be his judge: but if a man's sin is against the Lord, who will take up his cause? But they gave no attention to the voice of their father, for it was the Lord's purpose to send destruction on them.

This was the Word of the Lord Eli heard, but Eli still did nothing about it.

So what was the end result? What happened to the sons who would not listen to their father, and what happened to the father who should have exercised discipline? Here is what God said would happen to Eli:

1 Samuel 2:27-36 MKJV

(27) And there came a man of God to Eli, and said to him, So says the LORD: Did I plainly appear to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

(28) And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before Me? And did I give to the house of your father all the offerings made by fire from the sons of Israel?

(29) Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering, which I have commanded in My house? **Do you honor your sons above Me**, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?

(30) And the LORD, the God of Israel says, I said indeed, Your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever. But now the LORD says, **Be it far from Me! For those who honor Me I will honor, and those that think little of Me shall be lightly regarded.**

(31) Behold, the days come when I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house, so that no old man shall be in your house.

(32) And you shall see an adversary in My house, in all the good which He does with Israel. And

there shall not be an old man in your house forever.

(33) And that man of yours whom I shall not cut off from My altar, shall be left in order to make your eyes fail, and to grieve your heart. And all the increase of your house shall die young men.

(34) **And this shall be a sign to you, which shall come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day both of them shall die.**

(35) And I will raise up a faithful priest to Myself, one who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever.

(36) And it shall be that everyone who is left in your house shall come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a piece of bread. And they shall say, Please put me into one of the priests' offices so that I may eat a piece of bread.

This was the Word of the Lord that Eli heard, but Eli still did nothing about it. Again God spoke by Samuel to Eli, when Samuel was but a child and growing as a prophet to Israel. God spoke to him and told him to tell Eli what He was going to do to Eli and his house:

1 Samuel 3:11-14 BBE

(11) And the Lord said to Samuel, See, I will do a thing in Israel at which the ears of everyone hearing of it will be burning.

(12) In that day I will do to Eli everything which I have said about his family, from first to last.

(13) And you are to say to him that I will send punishment on his family for ever, for the sin which he had knowledge of; **because his sons have been cursing God and he had no control over them.**

(14) So I have made an oath to the family of Eli that no offering of meat or of meal which they may make will ever take away the sin of his family.

The destruction was not limited to Eli and his sons.

Eli's sons carried the ark of the Lord into a battle between Israel and the Philistines to ensure victory over their enemies. They presumed the ark to be some magical protection from God, irrespective of their personal contempt for Him, even as people attend church or read their Bibles, thinking they will win favor with God in their everyday "battles." Here are excerpts of what then happened (read the full Biblical account in 1 Samuel 4):

"So the Philistines went to the fight, and Israel was overcome, and every man went in flight to his tent: and great was the destruction, for thirty thousand footmen of Israel were put to the sword. And the ark of God was taken; and Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were put to the sword" (1 Samuel 4:10-11 BBE).

A survivor of the battle ran to Eli, the High Priest, and reported to him:

"And the man said, Israel went in flight from the Philistines, and there has been great destruction among the people, and your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken. And at these words about the ark of God, Eli, falling back off his seat by the side of the doorway into the town, came down on the earth so that his neck was broken and death overtook him, for he was an old man and of great weight. He had been judging Israel for forty years" (1 Samuel 4:17-18 BBE).

Eli was greatly responsible, not only for his sons' deaths, but for the judgment upon all of Israel because of his failure as High Priest to lead Israel in right living, according to God's Law. And the

destruction was not limited to Eli and his sons. God poured out His wrath even on Eli's daughter-in-law, who was a victim of her husband's adultery:

1 Samuel 4:19-22 BBE

(19) And his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was with child and near the time when she would give birth; and when she had the news that the ark of God had been taken and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, her pains came on her suddenly and she gave birth.

(20) And when she was very near death the women who were with her said, Have no fear, for you have given birth to a son. But she made no answer and gave no attention to it.

(21) And she gave the child the name of Ichabod, saying, The glory has gone from Israel: because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

(22) And she said, The glory is gone from Israel, for the ark of God has been taken.

When one fails to stand up against the evil in his family, one brings judgment on all.

Gideon knew very well which father to obey when the two were in conflict.

## Sons and Fathers

What about a son's fidelity to his father? Is that important? Indeed, it is. The Fifth Commandment says:

"Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you" (Exodus 20:12 MKJV).

But which father is more important, the earthly or the Heavenly, when the two are in conflict? Let us hear from the Heavenly One, Who commanded His servant Gideon concerning his earthly father, who worshipped Baal. Gideon knew very well which father to obey when the two were in conflict:

Judges 6:24-27 MKJV

(24) Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom. It is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites to this day.

(25) And it happened on that night Jehovah said to him, Take your father's young bull, even the second bull of seven years, and **throw down the altar of Baal which your father has, and cut down the pillar by it.**

(26) And build an altar to the LORD your God upon the top of this rock, in an orderly manner, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which you shall cut down.

(27) Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as Jehovah had said to him. And so it was, because he feared his father's household and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day. So **he did it by night.**

Because Gideon had an obedient heart towards God, he was soon granted to miraculously save Israel from the grave oppression of the Midianites, who held Israel in captivity because of Israel's sins, such as those of Gideon's father (Judges 6, 7, and 8).

Truth and righteousness take precedence over family preservation.

Tell me, dear reader, does a father have the right to incur God's judgment and bring evil on his loved ones and countrymen, as well as on himself, by his idolatry and sins? And does a son not have the right to obey God and, if possible, turn His wrath from himself, his father, household, and country?

Tell me, who has more right - the one who does wrong, or the one who does right and opposes the one who does wrong?

In God's judgment, truth and righteousness take precedence over family preservation. What good is family if family destroy themselves? God's purpose is to save and not allow people to destroy themselves. Jesus said:

Matthew 10:34-37 MKJV

(34) Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to send peace, but a sword.

(35) For **I have come to set a man against his father**, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

(36) And a man's foes shall be those of his own household.

(37) **He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.**

King Saul, the first king of Israel, turned out to be a wicked king who did not obey God. Destruction came to the house of Saul as judgment of his wickedness. Now Saul had a son, Jonathan, who was a dear friend to David, future king of Israel - David was anointed by Samuel the prophet to succeed King Saul. For this, King Saul sought to slay David, but David fled.

Jonathan chose to remain behind with his father Saul and keep the comforts of regal status (the "treasures of Egypt") instead of joining David and his men who lived a life of distress and refuge from King Saul in the wilderness. As a result, Jonathan died by the sword on the battlefield with his father and his brothers (1 Samuel 31) - the terrible price to be paid for misplaced loyalties (read [Commitment](#) and see whether one ought to stand with God or with loved ones who withstand the will of God).

Do not make the dangerous assumption that King Saul did not speak of God or worship Him. He did. Of Saul, in his state of rebellion, it even looked good! It is recorded:

"Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray you, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD your God. So Samuel turned again after Saul; **and Saul worshipped the LORD**" (1 Samuel 15:30-31 KJV).

Professing faith in Christ and being religious mean nothing at all to God.

The problem is, Saul did it his way, so that the prophet Samuel had to say to him:

“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the Word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king” (1 Samuel 15:22-23 KJV). (Read 1 Samuel 15 for the full story.)

Professing faith in Christ and being religious mean nothing at all to God. Indeed, if one does so but lives a life of independence, it is all the worse, for there is nothing God hates more than hypocrisy. Sad to say, hypocrisy is rampant. It is pandemic.

### Wives and Husbands

What about fidelity of wives towards husbands? Is that good? Of course, it is! “Wives, submit to your husbands,” says the Word of God (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1).

However, if husbands are fools who refuse to do what is right, then what? Read about faithful Abigail and her foolish husband Nabal (1 Samuel 25) and learn of a favorable example to God. Hearing of approaching doom because of Nabal’s wicked ways, Abigail tried to save her household, and she did, but ten days later, God killed Nabal.

Had Abigail remained at Nabal’s side, as many evangelicals teach is the right thing for a Christian woman to do, no matter what the husband does or is like, what do you think would have happened to her and the rest of Nabal’s house? The Bible says:

1 Samuel 25:32-34 MKJV

(32) And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, Who sent you today to meet me.

(33) And blessed is your advice, and blessed are you who have kept me from coming to shed blood today, and from delivering myself with my own hand.

(34) And truly, as the LORD, the God of Israel lives, Who has kept me back from doing evil to you, for unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely there would not have been left to Nabal by the morning light one who urinates against the wall.

Tell me, dear reader, does a husband have the right to incur God’s judgment on his loved ones and countrymen, as well as himself, by his folly and sins? And does a wife not have the right to obey God and turn His wrath from herself, her husband, household, and country?

Abraham offered up his beloved son Isaac as a burnt offering to God.

Tell me, who has more right - the one who does wrong, or the one who does right and opposes the one who does wrong?

But consider an even higher dimension of obedience to God, regarding one's family. Shall the faithful of God forsake their children for God **only if they do evil**? Abraham, our father of faith, offered up his beloved son Isaac as a burnt offering to God. Why? Because God asked it of him. And his was not a matter of choice because his son had done anything wrong; his son was innocent, and Abraham knew it. The issue was a matter of faith and of how much Abraham loved God and understood His ways, trusting that if he did as commanded of God, the outcome would be only good. And it was!

### The Example of the Prophets of Israel

The nation of Israel is a family, which was founded on the twelve sons of Jacob and was formed during the time of their children's bondage in Egypt. Beginning with Moses, the Lord sent prophets from among the people to speak His words to them and to testify against their ways. Every one of these prophets had to choose to stand with God rather than with their own flesh. So it is for every son and daughter of God born of Him through Jesus Christ today, for the least in the Kingdom of God has received something greater than the greatest prophet (Luke 7:28).

Along with greater gifting comes greater responsibility:

"See that you do not refuse Him Who speaks. For if they did not escape, those who refused him that spoke on earth, much more we shall not escape if we turn away from Him Who speaks from Heaven" (Hebrews 12:25 MKJV).

"And all these things happened to them as examples; and it is written for our warning on whom the ends of the world have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11 MKJV).

"For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it."

In the beginning of this article, I gave you three examples of those who put family before right and before God.

In the first case, the wife left her husband, and one son ended up in trouble with the law.

In the second case, the woman was abandoned by two of her children to this day, and this during a time when she suffered hardships and ill health. A third child, for all intents and purposes, seems to be waiting, somewhat impatiently, for her mother to pass away, whether because of all the trouble or because wanting the inheritance or both, I don't know - likely all of the above.

In the third case, a divorce ensued; Lois and her two older boys went one way, and Howard and the youngest went another. Some years later, the youngest shot Howard dead with a sawed-off

shotgun. Helen, Howard's mother, ended up losing her beloved son, her daughter-in-law, and her three grandsons by Howard.

"For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it, and whoever desires to lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:25 MKJV).

One loses that which he keeps selfishly against the common good, refusing to do right; there is no exception.

If one should obey God in good matters, how much more should one obey God when evil is present?

Victor Hafichuk

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