

REACHING YOUR FAMILY

Because you have accepted Christ as your Saviour, you have lost honor in the families' sight. *And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house. (Matt.13:53-57)*

Your family looks on you as the traitor who betrayed the family heritage, as the one who is following a cult, and as the one who is no longer in the One True Church.

It is the Gospel which divides you. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household* (Matt. 10:34-36). Remember it is the Gospel they hate, because the Gospel changed you.

They may think you crazy for believing a Gospel which is not inclusive of Catholicism but exclusively concerning Christ, even as the Scripture describes *And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself* (Mark 3:21). They may refuse to believe you as Jesus own family *For neither did his brethren believe in him* (John 7:5). And they may separate from you as the Word says, *His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For neither did his brethren believe in him* (John 7:3-5).

You must realize that you will probably not lead your family to Christ. You can plant the Gospel and another may reap the harvest. If the family believes you, they are admitting that they were wrong in their life beliefs, and that their parents are in Hell today. While they don't want to admit that to you, they may come under conviction and desire to believe the Gospel for themselves if someone else would say the same thing.

The following principles may be of help to you in giving the Gospel credibility in their eyes.

1. **Be CONSISTENT--lovingly say what you believe, and stick to it they are watching and waiting for you to back down.**

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:58)

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. (Col. 2:5-7)

2 Pet. 3:17-18 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

2. **Be CONCERNED--for their eternity, not for the Church they attend. They recognize if you are just trying to make them change their Church or if you really concerned for them.**

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Gal. 6:7-10)

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; (Rom. 12:10)

3. **Be COOPERATIVE--helping them whenever possible. They are your family, and they see who loves them by who is unselfishly giving of themselves.**

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (Rom. 12:17-18)

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (Exod. 20:12)

Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. (Rom. 13:7)

4. **Be CONCISE--answers to questions should not preach but be interesting to draw or lead your family to look further for the truth of the Gospel.**

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. (1 Pet. 3:15-16)

5. **Be CREATIVE--find ways to give testimony gently and interestingly. You can not force some one to be saved but you can show them the goodness of God to lead them to search for salvation.**

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (Matt. 10:16)

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (Rom. 2:4)

When your family knows that your desire is for them to have eternal life and not simply to get them into your church, they may begin listening to you. You may be able to play dumb, and ask questions like “Why did we ask Mary for help in prayer?” or “What did Jesus do for us on the Cross?” Ask questions that will make them think. In the beginning, you will need to be quiet and resist answering back. As time goes on, you will be able to offer comments of your own, such as “That’s interesting because Jesus said . . .” You may also need to try the direct approach, sitting down with them and telling them how much you love them and want them to understand what Jesus has done for you and what He can do for them as well.

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