

## The Family of God

- Matthew 12:46 – 50, Mark 3:31 – 35, Luke 8:19 – 21, “Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”
  - Matthew includes the detail that Jesus gestured toward His disciples.
  - Mark includes the detail that His family thought He might be crazy (3:21)
  - Was Jesus expressing a personal or Messianic sentiment, or does this generalize?
- Did the New Testament writers use family references out of cultural habit or by intent?
  - A mixed group was called brethren (Acts 3:17)
  - Moses called Israel brethren although most were unfaithful (Acts 3:22)
  - Stephen called a hostile crowd brethren and fathers (Acts 7:2)
  - Fellow Christians were called brothers (many places)
- Was the intention to forsake unbelieving physical family?
  - Jesus entrusted the care of His mother to John (John 19:27)
  - Unbelieving spouses were not to be forsaken (1 Corinthians 7:12 – 16, 1 Peter 3:1)
  - Christians were to provide for their own (1 Timothy 5:8)
- References to the nature of the relationship within the spiritual family
  - Romans 8:29 Christians are conformed to the image of Jesus in order to be brothers
  - Romans 14:10 – 14 Do not cause to stumble, have contempt for, or judge a brother
  - 1 Corinthians 4:15 Paul considered himself the father of the Corinthian Christians
  - 1 Corinthians 6:5 – 6 Do not sue a brother in civil court
  - 1 Corinthians 8:11 – 13 Do not cause your brother to stumble
  - 1 Thessalonians 3:15 Do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother
  - 1 Timothy 5:1 – 2 Timothy was to treat Christians as family members
  - 1 Timothy 6:2 Slaves were to consider believing masters as brethren
  - Hebrews 2:11 – 12, 17 He is not ashamed to call them brethren
  - James 2:14 – 15 Provide for spiritual brothers and sisters
  - James 4:11 Do not judge or speak evil of a brother
  - 1 Peter 1:22 Obeying the truth in sincere love of the brethren
  - 1 Peter 3:8 Be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers
  - 1 John 2:9 – 11 He who hates his brother is in darkness
  - 1 John 2:12 – 14 John calls Christians fathers and children
  - 1 John 3:10 – 17 Christians are to love, provide for, and die for their brethren
  - 1 John 4:20 – 21 Anyone who hates a brother cannot love God
  - 1 John 5:16 Christians pray concerning the sins of their brethren
- How do we act out these spiritual family relationships?
  - Those with dysfunctional physical families should know that something went wrong. Therefore, even they can understand the goals of a spiritual family.
  - Love for the brethren: doing what is best for them regardless of its effect on me
  - What practices would foster this spiritual family relationship?