

## Leave Your Family

*So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were going to marry his daughters. "Get up," he said. "Get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking. At the crack of dawn the angels urged Lot on: "Get up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he hesitated, so because of the Lord's compassion for him, the men grabbed his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters. And they brought him out and left him outside the city. – Genesis 19:14-16 HCSB*

Everyone knows that it's difficult to witness to your own family. Even the Master came to His own with a life-giving message and was not recognized.<sup>1</sup> You would think that those who knew Him best, who had witnessed His early, sinless life, would have been those most likely to receive His message. But their pride did not allow them to accept that someone who grew up in their midst could be orders of magnitude better than they.<sup>2</sup>

It's actually ironic that many families have no problem accepting that their members are drug addicts, alcoholics, compulsive gamblers, wife abusers or party animals but balk when the same person becomes a clean and sober Christian.

We are to seek out our families first before anything else.<sup>3</sup> Jesus practiced this consistently in His own ministry, focusing the bulk of His efforts on the Jews, but allowing Gentiles in on the blessings.<sup>4</sup> Paul also made a practice of first going to the synagogues<sup>5</sup>, and turning to the Gentiles once he had been rejected by his countrymen.

But there comes a time when we have to be willing to leave our family behind. Because of their unbelief, Jesus turned away from His biological family and turned toward His adopted family of believers.<sup>6</sup>

This is obviously a tremendously difficult decision. No one ever said it would be easy. The Master specifically warned us that there would be a cost to our discipleship.<sup>7</sup> And interestingly enough, when He did, it again involved family.

So how do we steel ourselves to do this? How can we choose to turn away from our families and follow Jesus on the Way? First, we must decide to save ourselves because a drowning person cannot save anyone else. Second, we must decide to save those we can. We must not allow self-deluding concepts of grace or fairness to cause us to lose ALL of them. Third, we must humbly realize that perhaps we are in the way. We may plant a seed, another water and yet another harvest.<sup>8</sup> We dare not let our sense of filial duty overcome our commitment to follow our Master in obedience. We are His bride<sup>9</sup>. We must be willing to leave our homes and cling to our Husband.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:10-11

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6

<sup>3</sup> 1 Timothy 5:8

<sup>4</sup> Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 15:21-28

<sup>5</sup> Acts 9 :20; 13:5; 14:1; 17:1-3, 10, 17; 18:4, 19:8

<sup>6</sup> Mark 3:31-35; Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 8:18-22; Luke 9:57-62

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:5-8

<sup>9</sup> Ephesians 5:22-32

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 2:24