

BAD FAMILIES

- Abel was killed by his own brother (Gen. 4:6 - 8).
- Sarah was betrayed by her own husband (Gen. 12:10 - 20).
- Lot was raped by his own daughters (Gen. 19:30 - 38).
- When Job got sick his own wife told him to curse God and die (Job 2:9).
- Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers (Gen. 37:12 - 36).
- Jephthah's own mother was a prostitute (Judges 11:1).
- David's own son usurped his throne and tried to kill him (2 Sam. 15:1 - 37).
- Hosea's own wife was a prostitute (Hosea 3:1 - 5).
- Even the brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him for many years (John 7:5).

These examples, of course, could easily be multiplied. The point is that in each instance our Sovereign God placed each individual in those bad families. Before attempting to leave a bad family, perhaps we should consider that God has placed us there for a reason.

One level of common sense compels us to seek for comfort. That's why we roll over in bed and put on a coat when it gets cold. Those who operate at this level will do whatever it takes to escape from a bad family. That's why there are so many divorces and so many children who run away from home.

But there is another level of common sense that cries out for our attention. Cancer patients, for example, are often faced with a choice. They can opt for temporary comfort and die soon, or choose temporary discomfort and seek for a cure. Surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, etc. become rational when compared with the alternative.

Understanding this principle is at the heart and core of Christianity. Jesus does not call us to a life of comfort, He calls upon us to take up a cross every day (Lk. 9:23). Crosses are not designed for comfort. Exactly the opposite! So when Christ commands us to take up a cross He has a reason. He calls upon us to endure temporary problems that we might receive an eternal reward.

Let's take another look at the "bad families" we mentioned earlier. Even though righteous Abel died young, he still speaks (Heb. 11:4) Sarah is even today a good example for all wives (1 Pet. 3:1 - 6). Lot's children became great nations (Gen. 19:37 - 38). Even today Job is lauded as an example of patience (Ja. 5:11). God used Joseph to save his nation and preserve the ancestry of Christ (Gen. 45:1 - 11). Jephthah became a great Judge who delivered Israel from the Ammonites (Judges 11:1 - 40). David's trials did not destroy him because he was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). The story of Hosea is in the Bible to teach us that God desires mercy more than sacrifice (Hos. 6:6). James, the brother of Jesus, became a leader in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13 - 21), and also wrote the book of James. In each instance those who persevered in the bad families where God placed them were ultimately used for His glory. Understanding this, puts you, and the problems you are facing in your family, in a different light.

There is an old saying that rivers are crooked because they take the easy way around obstacles and people get crooked the same way. The road that leads to life is straight and narrow and only a few will find it (Matt. 7:13 - 14). Most people prefer the broad and easy way that leads to destruction. Let us pray for them that they will recognize their error before it is too late.

It is, as you know, impossible to unscramble an egg. If you have been married more than once, God knows you cannot unscramble the past. Do not despair, for the things that are impossible with men are possible with God. Our problems are not nearly as complex as those Paul found in the ancient city of Corinth. The inspired answer to marriage problems is to remain in the same state you were in when God called you into his service. After pointing out that an unbelieving spouse can be saved by their Christian mate, Paul states three times that converts are to remain in the same state they were when God called them to follow Christ (1 Cor. 7:17, 24).

If you were in a bad family when God called, that's where you need to stay!