

3) The Example Of Christ-Like Choices

- A) Choose to keep your eyes on your relationship with God! Focus on eternity, rather than temporary challenges (7:1-8).

- B) Choose to have a positive attitude, despite the circumstances! Despite the rejection of His family, Christ chose to keep His relationship with God as His top priority. His attitude was determined by His relationship with God, not by the circumstances (7:6-8). Choose humility!

- C) Choose to avoid unnecessary conflict whenever it would distract from your relationship with God! Christ chose to avoid a big confrontation with His brothers, knowing it would be a distraction from what God wanted Him to do (7:9-10).

- D) Choose to honor God with your actions, even if it means losing face with your family (even if they think you're crazy)! It is more important to honor God than people (7:16-18).

- E) Choose the right time to speak about Jesus Christ with others! You do not have to speak all the time about Christ, you just have to speak at the right time about Christ. Christ was "tuned in" to God and people, He knew when to speak (7:11-15).

- F) Choose to glorify God, not yourself! Are you marching to God's timing, or your own? If it doesn't count for eternity, it doesn't count. Glorify God (7:18)!

Family Matters

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 7th, 2004 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**HE WHO SPEAKS FROM HIMSELF
SEEKS HIS OWN GLORY; BUT HE
WHO IS SEEKING THE GLORY
OF THE ONE WHO SENT HIM,
HE IS TRUE, AND THERE IS NO
UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IN HIM.
~JOHN 7:18 (NASB)**

1) Do You Feel The Love?

- A) It has been six months since Peter's remarkable confession of faith, as the Feast of Booths* (NIV -- 'Feast of Tabernacles') draws near (John 7:2).

* The Feast of Booths (The Jewish Festival Calendar was provided in the 8/8/04 sermon on the John 2 account of Christ cleaning the temple) was the "feast of feasts" for the Jews. They considered this feast to be "especially sacred and important" (Josephus, *Antiquities* 8.100). Each festival was a commemoration of God's provision for the Jews. The Feast of Booths commemorated God's provision for the Jews while they wandered in the desert during the Exodus. The feast, also known as "Tabernacles," was held when the harvest was finally gathered in, not only the grain crops but also the grape and olive crops (Exodus 23:16 refers to it as the "Feast of Ingathering"). The feast lasted for seven days, and sometimes longer. The Jews would celebrate the festival by moving out of their normal homes and moving into "booths" or small tent-like structures which had leafy roofs (commemorating the structures/tents they lived in during the 40-year Exodus). To this day, during the Feast of Booths, Jews will "camp out" in these structures on the roofs and balconies of their homes. One commentator noted that it is the only time of the year when the poor and the rich all live in similar fashion, making it a unique week of fellowship and camaraderie amongst the people. (Various sources, especially *NICNT*, Leon Morris, Page 349).

- B) Jesus limits His ministry to the Galilean region** because "the Jews" (religious leadership) are still angry about Jesus healing on the Sabbath (5:1-14) and claiming equality with God (5:15-18). They intended to kill Jesus (5:18), and have not forgotten their intentions (7:1, 19-23).
- C) "Therefore" (7:3), pointing to the previous two verses, Jesus' brothers tell him He should go to Judea, the same place Jesus has been avoiding because the Jews want to kill Him. Paraphrase: "Brother, you are avoiding Judea because you will be killed, but we'd like you to go there anyway."
- D) Jesus' brothers (7:3-4), making a rather heavy-handed attempt at subtly, reason with their oldest brother that His disciples ought to see Christ for themselves, after all, if Jesus is attempting to be known publicly, he shouldn't do things in secret. Paraphrase: "I double-dog dare you to go and show your face in Judea. If you won't, you're just chicken."

** John Calvin's thoughts are pertinent here... "If any person think it strange that Christ sought a place of concealment, who, by the mere act of his will, could break and render powerless all the efforts of his enemies, it is easy to reply, that he remembered the commission which he had received from the Father, and determined to confine himself within the limits which belonged to him as man; for, "having taken upon him the form of a servant, he emptied himself, till the Father exalted him," (Philippians 2:6-8.) If it be objected that, as he knew the time of his death, which had been foreordained and determined in the purpose of God, he had no reason for avoiding it, the former solution applies here also; for he conducted himself as a man who was liable to dangers, and, therefore, it was not proper that he should throw himself at random into dangerous situations. In encountering dangers, it is not our business to inquire what God has determined respecting us in his decree, but what he commands and enjoins on us, what our office requires and demands, and what is the proper method of regulating our life. Besides, while Christ avoided dangers, he did not turn aside a hairsbreadth from the course of duty; for to what purpose would life be maintained and defended, but that we may serve the Lord?" (*Calvin's Commentaries*, John 7:1).

- E) Jesus brothers (cf. Mark 3:21, 31-32) agreed with the reasoning of the Jews that since he was their brother (cf. names of some of Jesus' brothers in Mark 6:3, and the inclusion of having sisters. Notable that Joseph (Jesus' earthly Father) is not mentioned anywhere, alluding to his death), He must have gone crazy and "lost His senses."
- F) In a "lonely" verse which reminds us of the desertions Jesus has already faced from the Jews and His larger group of disciples, John points out that even Jesus' own family rejected Him (7:5)

2) Stay Focused On The Purpose!

- A) Jesus keeps His eyes on the goal, stating that His "time" has not yet come. Paraphrase: "The only thing that is significant to me is marching to God's clock" (7:6).
- B) Jesus tells His brothers that their "time" was "always oportune." Paraphrase: "You can go at any time, because anything that is outside of God's timing is insignificant" (7:6).
- C) Christ drives His point home (emphatically) to His brothers by reminding them that they are of the world, He is not. They are evil (worldly), He is not. The world hates Him, but cannot hate itself (them). One more time, He reiterates to them -- feel free to go to the Feast of Booths yourselves (7:6-7).

Attitude

Words can never adequately convey the incredible impact of our attitude toward life. The longer I live the more convinced I become that life is 10 percent what happens to us and 90 percent how we respond to it.

I believe the single most significant decision I can make on a day-to-day basis is my choice of attitude. It is more important than my past, my education, my bankroll, my successes or failures, fame or pain, what other people think of me or say about me, my circumstances, or my position. Attitude keeps me going or cripples my progress. It alone fuels my fire or assaults my hope. When my attitudes are right, there's no barrier too high, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too great for me.

-Charles R. Swindoll

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Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) Most of us have never genuinely wanted one of our siblings to be killed because we didn't see eye-to-eye with them. Yet, Jesus faced this kind of rejection within His own family. What about your own family? Have you faced rejection for one thing or another with your family? Share your "family story" with your small group.
- B) Despite having some obvious family conflict, Jesus rises above (or sneaks below) the clamour of His family and keeps His eyes on Jesus. He practiced the art of focus, of keeping His distractions at a minimum. Are there some things in your family that distract you from following God?
- C) One of the most remarkable books in the Bible is the New Testament book of James. Why? Because it was written by Jesus' half-brother. The same James (probably the next oldest brother) who wanted Christ dead, wrote the book which bears His name. We don't know when James and Jesus were reconciled to each other, but we know for sure it happened. Is there someone in your family with whom you need to be reconciled?
- D) It must have felt odd for Jesus to be the only "Christian" in His family (perhaps Mary (His mother) was a follower, but we're not sure at this point in time). Do you have people in your family who do not know Jesus? So did He. Take some time to share who those people are for prayer together.
- E) Talking about family can bring up so much "old garbage" about the past. Despite the garbage, Jesus was able to keep God first, and everything else last. What is something in your own life which you need prayer and accountability for this week? How can you be praying for your family to "march to God's timing," and not our own?

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