

Shalom! Today, by the grace of the Lord, we have another day to reflect on His Word. I warmly invite you to meditate with me on the lives of the parents of two of Jesus' apostles: John and James. We will also explore how parents can profoundly influence the spiritual lives of their children.

As we have seen in previous lessons, when a parent raises a child in the fear and knowledge of God, teaching them respect and obedience, God crowns that child with a "crown of grace." This grace is none other than knowing Christ in His fullness (Proverbs 1:8-9) and becoming a blessing to others.

We will also examine the parental response when children make the decision to follow Jesus. By looking at the lives of John and James' parents, we can learn valuable lessons. But first, consider this: Have you ever wondered why, among the twelve apostles, only three were closest to Jesus?

Among those three, two were brothers—John and James—and the other was Peter. The apostle whom Jesus loved most, the one often reclining at His side, was one of these two brothers. Why? Were the other apostles lacking in some way? The answer is no. So why did Jesus show special love to John and James, even calling them Boanerges, meaning

“sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17)?

It was not solely due to their personal effort, but also because of the influence and support of their parents. Let us briefly examine these parents in light of their role.

The Father of John and James

Matthew 4:18-22 recounts:

“As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’ At once they left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him.”

Notice that at the very start of their calling, Jesus saw that these two young men were suitable for His ministry and called them directly while

they were working with their father. Remarkably, their father did not resist. He allowed his children to leave the family business wholeheartedly and follow Jesus.

For a modern parent, this may seem challenging—to let one's children serve Christ fully—but Zebedee prioritized their spiritual calling over his own business and comfort. He supported his children's relationship with God, even at personal cost.

The Mother of John and James

Matthew 20:20-23 provides further insight:

"Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of Him. 'What is it you want?' He asked. She said, 'Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.' Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?' 'We can,' they answered. Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.'"

The mother's request demonstrates her desire for her children to experience favor and closeness with Christ—not just in this life, but also in the coming Kingdom. Her support, encouragement, and vision for their spiritual growth positioned John and James to become leaders in Christ's ministry.

The Role of Parental Support Today

You might wonder: Did the other apostles' parents not know or support their children's calling? They may have known, but the biblical record highlights no parent who actively partnered with Jesus in their child's spiritual journey—except for the parents of John and James.

This shows us the importance of parental support. As a parent or guardian today, when you see your child showing a heart for God, be the first to encourage and equip them. If you can buy them schoolbooks, why not provide Bibles and books that teach God's Word? Let them be mentored by pastors and teachers of the Word. Who knows—you might be raising the next Samuel, John, or James.

May the Lord help us learn from these examples, so that we too may have hearts that support our children's spiritual growth.

Blessings!

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