! Today we thank the Lord for giving us another day to reflect on His Word. In this study, we will learn about the parents of two of Jesus' apostles—James and John, the sons of Zebedee. We will also see how the role of parents can deeply shape the spiritual lives of their children.

Scripture teaches that when a parent raises a child in the fear of the Lord, God places a crown of grace upon that child's head:

> *"Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck."*
> (Proverbs 1:8–9)

Thus, the foundation laid by parents is not only for worldly success, but even more importantly, for eternal life in Christ.

Why Were James and John So Close to Jesus?

Among the twelve apostles, only three—Peter, James, and John—were often invited into the Lord's most intimate moments.

For example, they alone witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37), the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–2), and Jesus' agony in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37).

Out of these three, two were brothers—James and John. In fact, John was the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23), the one who leaned on His chest during the Last Supper. Why did Jesus show such closeness to these brothers? It was not because the others were less faithful. Rather, it points to a divine purpose in their calling and the spiritual environment shaped by their parents.

Jesus even gave James and John a special name—Boanerges, meaning *"sons of thunder"* (Mark 3:17). This shows the zeal, boldness, and spiritual fervor that marked their lives—a trait that was encouraged by their upbringing.

Zebedee: A Father Who Released His Sons to Christ

When Jesus called James and John, they were working with their father Zebedee in the family fishing business:

> *“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.”*
> (Matthew 4:21–22)

Notice that Zebedee did not resist. He allowed both of his sons to leave the family trade and follow Jesus wholeheartedly. This is remarkable. Many parents today would struggle to let go of even one child to serve the Lord, yet Zebedee released both.

This shows us the faith of a father who valued eternal purpose above earthly business. Though it meant more labor for him and reliance on hired men, he gladly let his sons go, trusting God’s plan for their lives.

Salome: A Mother Who Desired Eternal Blessings for Her Sons

The mother of James and John, traditionally identified as Salome, also played a significant role. Matthew records:

> *“Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons 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.’”*
> (Matthew 20:20–21)

Though her request showed limited understanding of God’s kingdom, it reveals her heart for her sons’ eternal destiny. She did not only want them to follow Jesus on earth but also to share in His glory in heaven.

Jesus corrected her perspective, reminding them that discipleship requires suffering:

> *“You don’t know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”*
> (Matthew 20:22)

And indeed, both James and John would share in Christ's sufferings—James as the first apostle to be martyred (Acts 12:2), and John through persecution and exile on Patmos (Revelation 1:9).

A Lesson for Parents Today

The example of Zebedee and Salome shows us how much parents can influence the spiritual destiny of their children. Unlike other apostles' parents, who are never mentioned, the parents of James and John stood side by side with their children's calling.

Their support opened the way for James and John to become part of Jesus' inner circle, experiencing revelations that others did not.

As Christian parents (or future parents), we are called to do the same. Supporting our children in the ways of the Lord is one of the greatest investments we can make:

> *"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."*

> (Proverbs 22:6)

Practical applications:

- Buy your child a Bible and Christian literature just as you would buy schoolbooks.
- Encourage them to attend church, youth fellowship, and Bible study.
- Pray with them regularly and surround them with godly mentors.

You never know if the child you are nurturing might be a future *Samuel*, *James*, or *John* whom God will use mightily for His kingdom.

Final Reflection

The story of James and John’s parents teaches us that spiritual legacy often begins at home. Their father’s willingness to release them and their mother’s desire for their eternal glory show a partnership with God’s calling that bore great fruit.

May the Lord help us as parents, guardians, and mentors to raise our children not only for earthly success but for eternal life in Christ

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