

10 family

God flows through family to keep us close to Him. **Heart change changes circumstances.** I can't expect circumstance change to change my heart. I've had to change on the inside before expecting change anywhere else. One of my biggest sins has been idolizing my family. When I was little I was told, "Family is the only thing you can count on in life. Everyone else will let you down, but family never will." I was too little to understand this was a set up for idolatry. After I came to know the Lord, the Holy Spirit began to reveal experientially how important the family of God was to my well-being. I needed to have healthy family of God relationships for support. Turn with me to Matthew 12:48-50 NLT: ***"Jesus asked, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Then he pointed to his disciples and said, "Look, these are my mother and brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father who is in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*** When I gave my life to the Lord, my heart change literally changed my circumstances. I started going to Bible studies, hanging out with different friends, stopped swearing, stopped partying, started hanging out at the Christian bookstore – Jesus Chapel, first Bible, listened to Christian teachings. I went into zealous overdrive while my family went into zealous overreaction. They didn't know what to do with me.

When they realized my heart change was real and as I began to soften instead of fighting every little difference, a loving change happened in our family atmosphere. **Heart change changes circumstances.** Mutual acceptance and understanding replaced judgment and false assumptions. Out of fear my parents thought we'd be disconnected forever if we didn't all believe and act the same way. I learned that where they would try to suck me into the vacuum of dysfunction, I kept conversation in what I call the SNOOZE or Superficial Nice Zone. **Why do people try to vacuum you? Because they have an empty space they are trying to fill.** Don't let the devil deceive you into thinking you are incomplete. You are beautiful and you are loved!! Let's go to Luke 23:34 NLT: ***Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.*** Most people don't even realize what they're doing. My parents are still unconscious about lots of different areas, but I am ok with it and I love them. It wasn't until I was married with small children before I saw family alcoholism. You can teach your kids what you believe but you reproduce who you are. I was acting like my parents! I needed some of my own personal

internal remodeling! Facing my own fear and control with my own little family brought revelation that freed me from these dysfunctional dynamics. **This is why the family of God is so important to me. It is the scaffolding that holds my nuclear family in place.** Facing my family alcoholism was like a bucket of cold water splashed in my face. I wasn't physically drunk but emotionally drunk. I had to sober up emotionally. **Heart change changed my circumstances.** We need each other. It feels so good to be at peace living inside my own skin.

Process takes time. I had to face the fact that on some level, I married my father. Someone who was driven to success and became my higher power. His mom who spent 4 years in a prison camp during WW2 also inculcated into my husband, "Family is the ONLY thing you can count on." We both have had to **unlearn the lie**, stop putting family first and learn to emotionally connect to have true family. Do you have true or false family? We had false family – the look of family, but with no real relationship. We were too scared for that. As a result, "family" became synonymous with idolatry. Turn with me to 1 Sam 15:23 AMPC: ***"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim (household good luck images). Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."*** Rebellion is refusal to accept authority. Witchcraft is also described as divination or black magic. When you refuse to accept God's authority you're going to follow yourself and start manipulating and controlling. Witchcraft is manipulating. Trying to get someone else to do what you want them to do. Stubbornness is a resolute adherence to your own ideas or desires. Idolatry is also described as iniquity, wickedness, evil. Sticking to my wants opens the door to evil. We had to put God first! Whatever you are idolatrous of will never support you. This is the lie the devil wants you to believe. Whatever I am idolatrous of will let me down. Jesus will never let you down.

I had to repent of idolatry of my family. My idolatry manifested in my need to keep the peace. I am a fighter too, so I fought for peace! I had to learn to keep **my** peace, not keep **the** peace. Keeping **the** peace was a big issue for me. I had to recognize my own fear. Fear-based thinking is always trying to keep the peace. When unresolved issues brought tension, I thought if I kept everything peaceful constantly negotiating, my family would stay together. I believed this lie. I kept compromising to keep **the** peace. Instead, I lost respect. I valued peace over honesty, family over God. As I repented, I learned that it's ok to disagree and let go. Things don't always turn out the way I expect, but keeping

Jesus Lord of my life keeps **my** peace. And each one of my family members understands deeply he or she is loved.

Circumstance change can take years. Heart change is an instant. Heart change influences atmosphere or circumstances immediately. Probably the biggest roadblock was our lack of compassion. But God changed our hearts in an instant that opened the door to compassion. Turn with me to John 19:26-27 NLT: ***"When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son." And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home."*** Even in His dying breath, Jesus' compassion welled up in His heart ensuring His Mom would be cared for before He died. Compassion is in the very fiber of Jesus. Think of what Mary went through, how she had to wrap her mind around what God spoke to her spirit, letting go of her expectations of having a loving close family, seeing Jesus dishonored by His own siblings – and possibly seeing her own husband die before Jesus began His ministry. During that time period, only a widow could have rightly been given into the care of someone outside the immediate family.

Michael and I are both first born, driven perfectionists. Jason said, "Talk together. Ask questions. Then you can understand. Seek to understand. Reciprocate. When you start to reciprocate the love someone is giving, you establish connection. The only way it works well is if you have compassion. Most people don't know what compassion really is and therefore don't know how to express it. It is the ability to see, understand and sometimes feel what the other person is experiencing through the eyes of God. The beautiful thing about compassion is it takes you to places you never would go otherwise. You go way beyond what you'd ordinarily do for someone else because it's the heart of God. The inability to look at the other person through God's eyes as a norm leads to disconnection. Compassion doesn't take the problems away. It changes the way you interact with someone." Heart change changes circumstances.

It's not changing your circumstances that brings healing. It's God changing your heart that brings healing and reconciliation. If you're not happy with what you have, you won't be happy with what you get. We don't need circumstance change, we need heart change. **Heart change changes circumstances.** What changes do you need in your heart? Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the areas He wants to change. He loves you so much, He's your best friend and family!! Let's pray the Family Prayer on page 124 out loud together.