

Entering the Family

We all need connections, friendships, and a space where we feel comfortable and secure. Even many of those living on the streets have their personal spaces they call their own. Without connections or good personal relationships with others, we face great difficulties in life. We need to belong to someone, to a place, to a group. Isolated, it becomes difficult to enjoy life and participate in the blessings God brings our way.

Jesus spoke of evil spirits. He said there was a problem in casting out an evil spirit without filling the void with God's presence. Just as we need a space to live and develop, so spirits need space. We cannot live in isolation, just as we cannot live without some type of spiritual influence. At the same time, God gives us the freedom to choose the kind of spiritual influence that will fill our lives.

Jesus spoke of evil spirits, but he also spoke of God's influence in our lives. When his relatives arrived, Jesus spoke of a different form of connection, participation, and belonging in life. Generally we think of our families as granting the space and connectedness which center us and allow us participation and security in life. Jesus, however, created another definition of participation and connection. He defined that it is relationship with God that really should matter to us and give us a sense of true belonging.

Like the question of evil spirits, we have the option to choose a connection that will influence our lives. When God dwells in us, he grants us a base of security and belonging in this world of relationships. It is when God dwells in our lives that we encounter the best protection from evil influences.

It is not enough to belong to a family. We need to accept a new participation in God's family. As important as family ties are, this is the family tie that should really matter. Are we part of this, the family of God in Jesus Christ?

—Christopher B. Harbin **Matthew 12:43-50**

⁴³ “When an evil spirit goes out of a person, it travels over dry country looking for a place to rest. If it can't find one, ⁴⁴it says to itself, ‘I will go back to my house.’ So it goes back and finds the house empty, clean, and all tidy. ⁴⁵Then it goes out and brings along seven other spirits even worse than itself, and they come and live there. So when it is all over, that person is in a worse state than he was at the beginning. This is what will happen to the evil people of this day.”

⁴⁶ Jesus was still talking to the people when his mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside, asking to speak with him. ⁴⁷ So one of the people there said to him, “Look, your mother and brothers are standing outside, and they want to speak with you.”

⁴⁸ Jesus answered, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹ Then he pointed to his disciples and said, “Look! Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ Whoever does what my Father in heaven wants him to do is my brother, my sister, and my mother.” (GNT)