

God is very **near** and involved with His creation, while also remaining **distinct from** His creation. Humans appear to have 2 instinctual drives: a drive toward **togetherness**, and a drive toward **separateness**.

Presence: Being with Family Luke 2:41-52



1. Jesus established clear boundaries with his family so that he could focus on and accomplish his Father's purposes.

2:41-50



**Jesus remained
behind in Jerusalem
when his family left
to return to
Nazareth.**

2:43-46

**Jesus' explanation
for his choices was
simple: he had to be
in his Father's (not
Joseph's!) house.**

2:48-50

Reactivity:

the vicious cycle of intense reactions of each family member to events and to one another, characterized by labeling “you” statements, and exaggerated overstatements.

Herding: a process through which the forces for togetherness triumph over the forces for individuality and move everyone to adapt to the least mature family members (those who are least likely to adapt, grow, mature), who will impose their will on everyone if allowed.

Cut-off: a process of separation, isolation, running away, or denying the importance of the people being separated from.

Blame displacement or scapegoating:

family members focus on forces that have victimized them rather than taking responsibility for their own being and destiny. Members of the family place blame rather than accept responsibility.

Quick fix: a low threshold for pain that constantly seeks symptom relief rather than fundamental change. Family members rescue one another instead of allowing adequate time for the painful, but necessary, growth processes.

I am tempted to allow my family relationships to make me responsible for the feelings and actions of others so that I am no longer taking responsibility for my own maturity, health, and obedience to God.

Mark 3:20-21, 31-35

Have I established clear boundaries with my family so that I can focus on who I am in Christ, on living according to *my* principles, and on *my own* God-given responsibilities?

2. Jesus remained in appropriate relationships with his family throughout his life while accomplishing God's purposes.

2:51-52



**Jesus went with
Mary and Joseph and
was obedient to them
the way a 12-year-old
should be. 2:51**

**While Jesus was
appropriately connected
to his family, he matured,
or grew up, in a way that
pleased his Heavenly
Father and the people
who knew him. 2:52**

**I believe that God
accomplishes powerful
things in me and in my
family when we stay
connected to one
another over time.**

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. [John 19:26-27](#)

1. I can live according to my own principles, priorities, and beliefs and allow God to shape me into Christlikeness.

2. I can find meaningful ways to be connected with my family. Specifically, I want to be a Christ-like presence.

3. I can resist the emotional reactivity of my family by maintaining clear boundaries for my life.

Am I fostering an appropriate and healthy relationship with my family that will result in my own growth and maturity while accomplishing God's purposes for others?

Is God shaping you into the likeness of Christ? Are you living according to your own principles, priorities, and beliefs, or are you making yourself responsible for the feelings and actions of your family?



Are you making and maintaining the meaningful connections that are possible at this time in your family? Are you a Christ-like presence seeking to accomplish God's purposes in your family?

