

# Are You Related To Jesus?

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The most important relative anyone could have is Jesus. Someone might reply, "How can I be related to Jesus? He didn't marry or have children. Besides, people today can't trace their genealogies back that far."

You probably have already figured out that we're not talking about being fleshly kin to Jesus. In Mark 3, Jesus' mother and brothers were standing outside and had sent word that they wished to see Him. Jesus asked the messengers: "*Who is My mother, or My brothers?*" Then He answered His own question: "*Here are My mother and brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and My mother*" (vv. 33-35).

Jesus was not being disrespectful to Mary or to His brothers, nor was He discounting the importance of family. He was simply making the point that spiritual relationships are even more important than fleshly ones. The Jews needed this lesson, and it is still timely. The Jews were inclined to rest on their fleshly descent from Abraham. "*We are Abraham's descendants,*" they argued in John 8:33. John the Immerser had warned them earlier, "*Do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones*" (Matthew 3:9).

People today also rest on their pedigree, assuming that God will accept them since their grandparents and parents were faithful Christians. To the Jews, Jesus said, "*If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham*" (John 8:39). Likewise if we expect God to receive us as faithful Christians, we must behave like faithful Christians, not merely rest on our family background.

Some people today put entirely too much stock in Mary's fleshly relationship to Jesus. While we highly esteem this outstanding woman whom God chose to be the mother of Jesus, the very idea of worshiping or praying to her fills us with revulsion. We are confident that Mary herself would reject all such behavior, for she acknowledged her own need for a savior (Luke 1:47). The Bible does not teach the dogma that Mary stands between sinners and God. Quite to the contrary, "*there is one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*" (1 Timothy 2:5).

Our Lord said that those who do God's will are His relatives. In a similar incident, "*a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, 'Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You.' But He said, 'More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!'*" (Luke 11:27, 28).

Are you hearing the word of God and keeping it?  
Are you related to Jesus?

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## Stop Gripping!

A man entered a monastery and agreed to a vow of silence. He could speak only two words every ten days. After the first ten days, he uttered two words: "Bed hard." Ten days later he said, "Food bad." Then, after another ten days had passed, he said, "I quit!"

The head of the monastery replied: "Good! You've done nothing but complain ever since you came here!"

--via House-to-House/Heart-to-Heart

# God's Loving Holiness

**"Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds"** (Titus 2:14).

What comes to your mind when you think of God's holiness? Do you gloss over it as a characteristic of God? Or like Isaiah and others, are you afraid? Or perhaps like C.S. Lewis, who said, "No I'm not afraid -- I am afraid."

Our sinfulness doesn't make God holy by contrast. Rather, God's holiness reveals our sinfulness. We aren't worthy to come before the holy God. However, the holy God doesn't seek to destroy the sinner. The holy God seeks to destroy sin within us. He seeks to restore us to life with Him.

God desires us to have life with us. He desires this more than we desire to have life with Him. The Father God sent God the Son to redeem us from our bondage in sin. God doesn't stop there. He is determined to purify us. God's loving holiness causes Him to pursue us to make us clean, strong, and pure.

God seeks the destruction of everything that is opposed to His holiness. What we forget is that God rages against un-holiness on our behalf. He does not rage against the sinner. He wants every single person to come to Him (1 Timothy 2:4). God calls us to be holy like He is (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Look at Jesus. Examine His dealing with sinners and see His loving, gentle work of redemption and His uncompromising dealing with sin. Jesus called people to follow Him and let Him change them to be like Him.

God works to purify or clean us up so we will be holy as He is holy. He wants us to live with Him. We need to make His word a part of us. He means us no harm.

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)