

# THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

Luke 8:19-21

## INTRODUCTION

Having given the parable of the sower, the seed, and the soil, Jesus said in Luke 8:8, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.” He then spoke about putting our light on a stand so others may see. After this, he said that we should consider carefully how we listen. Jesus now says in Luke 8:21, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.” Could this be the most important thing? Let us see by first asking...

## 1 WHAT IS IMPORTANT?

Luke 8:19-21 says that during Jesus’ ministry, his mother and brothers came to see him. Mark 3:21 enlarges on this. It says when Jesus’ family heard what he was doing, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He’s out of his mind.” Responding to this, Jesus said in Luke 8:21, “My relatives (those closest to him) are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.” This is important for Jesus. This is why he came, and we see it early in his life. In Luke 2:49 when Jesus was about twelve, he said to his parents, “Didn’t you know I had to be involved with the affairs of my heavenly father?”

When Jesus’ family came to see him, they thought they would receive immediate attention. If we were related to a famous person, wouldn’t we expect the same? In v20 someone said, “Your family is standing outside wanting to see you.” Jesus uses this to teach an important lesson.

In his response, Jesus did not downgrade his family. Jesus upgrades anyone who responds to his message—including his mother and his brothers. Where we live does not win any favours with God. Our qualifications mean little to God. Our status in life does not gain his approval. Our family cannot give us direct access to God. John 1:12 says, “Those who believe in Jesus are given the right to become children of God.” This leads from what is important to...

## 2 WHO IS IMPORTANT?

Jesus’ earthly family should have known that he came to establish a spiritual family who are born of the Spirit with brothers and sisters in Christ. Hebrews 2:11 says, “The one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. Therefore, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.”

God created the family for his glory and for our good, and we should value family life. Having said this, it is important to know that our earthly family does not last forever. Though blood is thicker than water, spirit is deeper than flesh. If we say our physical family is more important than our spiritual family, we are saying our physical life is more important than our spiritual life... and it isn’t!

Jesus puts this more radically in Luke 14:26 when he says, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, and even their own life cannot be my disciple.” The word ‘hate’ here can mean to regard with less affection

or to love less. This comes out in Matthew 10:37 when Jesus said, “Anyone who loves his father or mother... his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” According to Jesus, love for our earthly family is important, but it is not as important as our love for God and his family. This leads from what is important, and who is important to...

### **3 THE MOST IMPORTANT THING**

We may say God and his people are important, but we need to see this in practice. This is the most important thing, and Jesus points to this in Luke 8:21. Shifting the focus from his earthly family, Jesus says, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.” Another translation says, “My relatives (those closest to him) are those who hear God’s word and do it!”

Reflecting on the privileged status of the earthly mother of Jesus, a woman said to Jesus in Luke 11:27-28, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” In response, Jesus said: “Blessed rather are those who hear God’s word and obey it.” This is the most important thing. One of Jesus’ brothers who came to him in Luke 8:20 would have been James. He said later in James 1:22-24, “Do not merely listen to God’s word... Do what it says. Those who listen to God’s word and do not do what it says are like people who look at their faces in a mirror and do nothing about it!”

Jesus said in John 14:15, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” 1 John 5:3 adds to this when it says, “This is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not a burden.” When we love God and serve him, and when we love God’s people and serve them, we feel better about ourselves, and the more we serve God and his people, the better we will feel about ourselves. Jesus said, “My relatives (those closest to him) are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.” This is the most important thing.

**The following may help us reflect further on the message**  
we use these points as a discussion guide at our fellowship groups

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1. Discuss the following sequence. In Luke 8:8, Jesus called out, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." In v18 he said, "Consider carefully how you listen." In Luke 8:21 Jesus said, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."
2. Why was Jesus an embarrassment to his family (John 7:3-5; Mark 3:20-21)? *How does this relate to our life? Could this happen to us?*
3. What is the significance of Jesus' response to the request from his family in Luke 8:21? *How does this apply to us today?*
4. How does Jesus view family life? How should we view family life after Sunday's message? *How does this relate to Luke 14:25-26? See also Matthew 10:37 and John 1:10-12.*
5. For Jesus it was not what you know or who you know that mattered, but knowing God. *Discuss this with reference to Jeremiah 9:23-24.*
6. How do you understand Hebrews 2:11-12? *How do these verses relate to Zephaniah 3:17?*
7. How important is Luke 8:21 and how does it apply to our daily life? Why is knowing about God relatively easy, whereas obeying God is more difficult? *How does this relate to what Jesus' brother James said in James 1:22-24?*
8. So what is the most important thing in life?" (Luke 8:19-21). *How should we apply this today?*