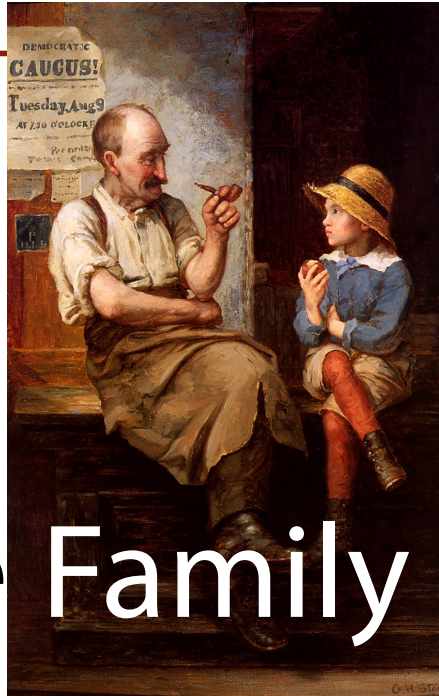


For this reason I bow
my knees to the Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,



George Henry Story

from whom the whole
family in heaven and
earth is named.

Ephesians 3:14-15 NKJV

The Family Business

EVERY FAMILY HAS A “BUSINESS.” In some cases it is obvious: a parent or grandparent has created a going concern, and at least some of the children are expected to come into that business to continue it into the future. In other instances a parent has, over many years, developed a respectable and profitable trade skill, and hopes that one or more of his children will take up the same trade and “make his dad proud.” Often, however, the family “business” is simply to uphold and sustain its unique character. Parents want their children to uphold the honor of their family, doing nothing that would tarnish its reputation in the community.

God’s family through Christ is no different. Every believer is expected to follow in the footsteps of the Savior, who, better than anyone else, understands the family business: His kingdom.

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.” Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

John 18:36-37

Every Christian is expected to come into the family business. In fact, whether he realizes it or not, every believer is already on the books. Employment is not optional. And what is the Christian’s job description in the family business? Jesus said it best: “For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth.” Every Christian’s life is a testimony; he brings either honor or shame to the family name. The family’s name is “Christ.” Its members are called “Christians.” Every Christian has a Father who expects His children to follow in His path: to testify in word and deed to the truth about Jesus Christ—to declare both in word and deed the gospel.



O God, it is You who knows my folly,
And my wrongs are not hidden from You.
May those who wait for You not be ashamed through me,
O Lord God of hosts;
May those who seek You not be dishonored through me,
O God of Israel.

Psalm 69:5-6

Even though my dad didn't have his own business for me to continue, I still bore the responsibility to uphold our family name. For all of his life, my dad was a hard worker, a responsible family man, a respected member of the community. Though he was not an educated man—to support his family, he had left school after the eighth grade—he always did what he could to educate himself and improve his station. Dad was active in our church, and was the head usher—back when ushers actually ushered—for many years.

As his son, I bore a responsibility to uphold my family's good name. Brought up in a relatively small town, most people with whom I came into contact knew whose son I was. My behavior mattered. I didn't ask for that responsibility; it came with my birth.

At our second birth, our birth into the family of God through Christ, we are given a new last name: Christian. We are born into Christ's kingdom, with all its benefits and responsibilities. As children of the King, we bear the obligation to uphold the good family name—not to bring shame and dishonor upon the family.

When I was growing up in our hometown there was no one I knew of who wished ill upon my family. Where we were known, only good will and respect was afforded. But the same cannot be said about the family of my *second* birth. This fallen world bears no affection or good will toward

the family of Christ. Indeed, it does everything it can, under the authority and influence of *its* king, to denigrate Christianity.

We have a powerful enemy, but when the day finally comes when he is roasting in the fires of his torment (Revelation 20:10), the family name of Christ the Lord will still stand in all power and glory. Thus, while we tread the soil of this earth, it is our burden to stand for its good name—to be about the family business in purity of heart, guided and empowered by the Spirit. As we labor in His name, we are to deal honestly, forthrightly with not only our brothers and sisters in faith, but with everyone who is not yet part of the family.

For we have the honor of bearing the Master's name.