

What does the Bible say about family problems?

Family problems are nothing new. In a fallen world, those we should love the most—our families—often become the ones we fight with the most. The Bible doesn't gloss over sin, and it records a number of family problems, starting with Adam's blame-shifting, with his wife as the target ([Genesis 3:12](#)). Sibling rivalry crops up in the stories of Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers. Jealousy among wives—one of the negative consequences of polygamy—is found in the stories of Hannah, and Leah and Rachel. Eli and Samuel dealt with wayward children. Jonathan was almost murdered by his father, Saul. David was brokenhearted by his son Absalom's rebellion. Hosea experienced marital difficulties. In each of these cases, relationships were damaged by sin.

The Bible has a lot to say about relationships, including family dynamics. The first institution God established for human interaction was a family ([Genesis 2:22–24](#)). He created a wife for Adam and joined them in marriage. Citing this event, Jesus later said, "What God has joined together, let no man separate" ([Matthew 19:6](#)). God's plan was for one man and one woman to remain married until one of them dies. He desires to bless that union with children who are to be raised "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" ([Ephesians 6:4](#); see also [Psalm 127:3](#)). Most family problems emerge when we rebel against God's design—polygamy, adultery, and divorce all cause problems because they deviate from God's original plan.

The Bible gives clear instructions about how family members are to treat each other. God's plan is that husbands love their wives in the same way that Christ loves His church ([Ephesians 5:25, 33](#)). Wives are to respect their husbands and submit to their leadership ([Ephesians 5:22–24, 33](#); [1 Peter 3:1](#)). Children are to obey their parents ([Ephesians 6:1–4](#); [Exodus 20:12](#)). How many family problems would be solved if husbands, wives, and children simply followed those basic rules?

[First Timothy 5:8](#) says that families are to take care of their own. Jesus had harsh words for those who evaded their financial responsibilities to their aging parents by claiming they gave all their money to the temple ([Matthew 15:5–6](#)).

The key to harmony in families is not one we naturally want to apply. [Ephesians 5:21](#) says to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Submission is in direct opposition to our flesh's desire to rule and have its way. We defend our rights, champion our causes, defend our opinions, and assert our own agendas whenever possible. God's way is to crucify our flesh ([Galatians 5:24](#); [Romans 6:11](#)) and submit to the needs and wishes of others whenever we can. Jesus is our model for that kind of submission to God's will. [First Peter 2:23](#) says, "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."

Most family problems could be lessened if we all followed the instructions found in [Philippians 2:3–4](#): "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." When we adopt the spirit of humility and treat others as Jesus would treat them, we can resolve many of our family and relationship problems. *From GotQuestions.org*