

no place like home

selections from James, Galatians and 1 John

Scripture is packed with advice for families. Discover some of this advice by following the directions and answering the questions below.

▶ READ JAMES 5:16.

- ▶ Why would confessing sins to others be especially important in family life?

▶ READ GALATIANS 5:24—6:2.

- ▶ What does Paul mean when he talks about crucifying the sinful nature and keeping in step with the Spirit? (vss. 24-25)
- ▶ How can you crucify your sinful nature and keep in step with the Spirit in your family relationships? Refer to the examples Paul gives in verse 26.
- ▶ When things go wrong within a group of Christians, such as a family, what should be done about it? (6:1-2)

▶ READ 1 JOHN 3:16-18.

Develop a poster idea for this Scripture. First write a caption that expresses a principle of love found in 1 John 3:16-18. Then suggest an illustration that shows this principle being practiced in your family.

James 5:16

¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Galatians 5:24—6:2

²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

¹Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. ²Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

1 John 3:16-18

¹⁶This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

»mon

These verses are part of a larger section that might be called “Rules for Everyday Christian Living.” Notice that Paul’s first rule is to love—which involves helping others grow in Christ. How are you challenged today to reach out in love? Who in your family needs to experience more of your love?

»tues

“Love must be sincere.” To love someone sincerely means to *want the best* for that person. This is difficult when a family member opposes you, causes you problems, or hassles you. Who in your family has been causing you problems lately? How can you sincerely love this person and work for his or her good?

»wed

Hating evil requires saying “No!” to temptation. For example, you may need to resist the temptation to get even with a family member who has hurt you. Pray about one such temptation and determine to resist it with God’s help.

»thurs

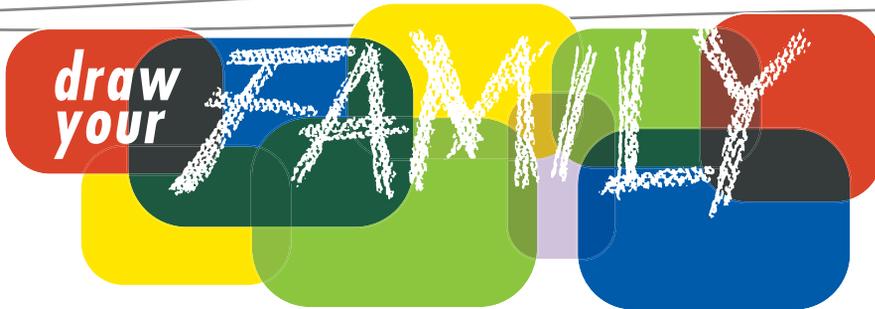
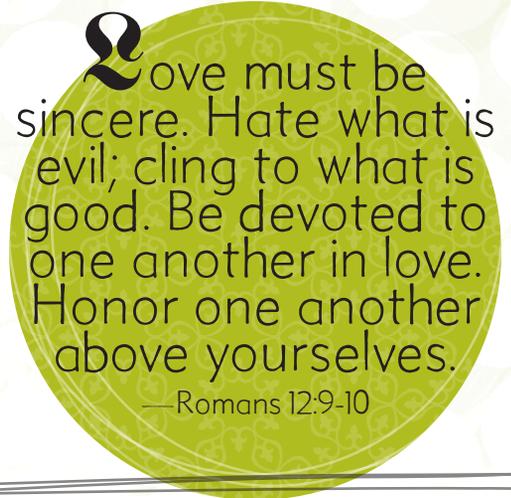
Paul says, “Cling to what is good.” One aspect of “the good life” is the joy that can come from family relationships. Take a moment to thank God for your family. If your family situation seems more painful than good, spend some time asking God for His healing and peace.

»fri

“Honor your father and mother” is the fifth commandment. It calls us to treat our parents with respect. In what specific way could you show your respect for your mother and father this week?

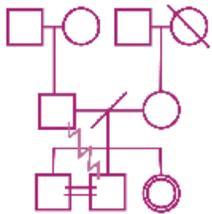
»sat

Love means treating family members with affectionate regard. Giving a hug is a great way to show affection. Who in your family could benefit today from a hug that says, “Hey, you’re OK!”



Idea #1

Draw a diagram of your family. Use boxes for males, and circles for females. Draw lines to indicate the relationships between people. (See the example below.) Use various symbols to indicate the status of those relationships. For instance, if there is a divorce in the family, draw a line through the line connecting the former partners. If one person has died or is no longer with the family, draw a line through that person’s symbol. If one member has been adopted, draw a circle around his or her symbol. If there is a lot of conflict between two people, make the line between them jagged. By contrast, if two people are unusually close, draw a double line between them. When you are done, talk about the relationships in your family.



- Who are you closest to? Why?
- Who do you have the most conflicts with? Why?
- What can you do to improve family relationships and to reconcile the not-so-good ones?

(If you want to do a little digging into why your family is the way it is, try to draw a diagram of each of your parents’ families. Use your diagram to talk to your parents about how they felt about their families when they were growing up. You may discover some interesting things.)

Idea #2

Pick a common family situation, such as sitting at the dinner table or watching TV together. Use stick figures or photos and highlight specific characteristics of each family member and how you relate to each other. Use your drawing or photo collage to talk about your family relationships.

- What is significant about where the people are in your picture?
- How do you feel when you are in this situation? Why?
- What is the one thing you’re happiest about in your illustration?
- If you could change one thing about your family in this situation, what would it be? Draw it and explain.