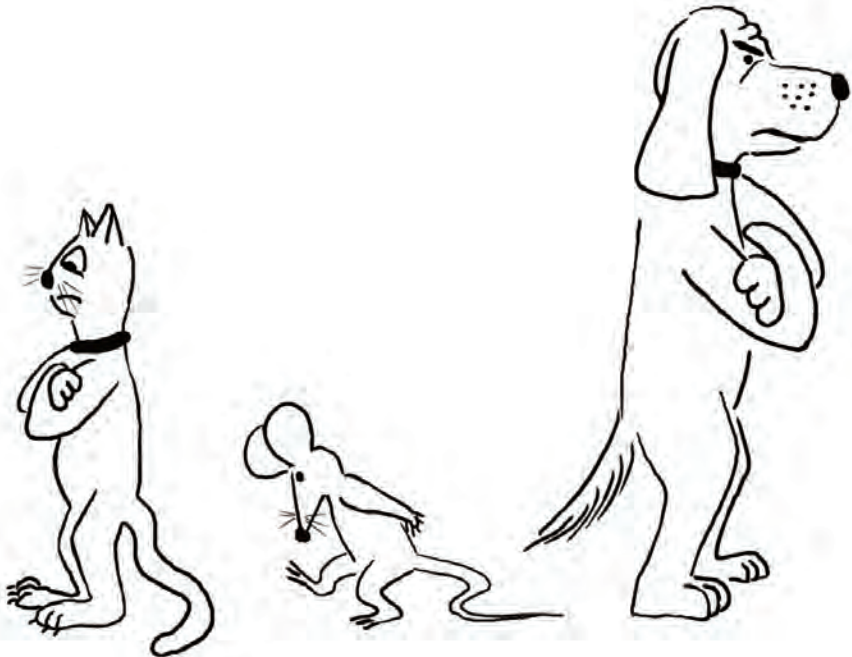


Home Sweet Home: In Crisis

Why Your Own Family is Often
Your Biggest Struggle



SARAH'S SECTION

Why Your Own Family is Often Your Biggest Struggle

I was an only child until I was six years old. I really wanted a brother or sister, and I would pray everyday that God would give us a new baby. I assumed that once I had a brother or sister we would get along perfectly. It never crossed my mind that we might fight; I was sure that we would be best friends. But then one day God answered my prayer. I was thrilled to have a brother (and soon after a sister). It didn't take me long to learn of their amazing talents—they messed up my stuff, bothered me constantly, and displayed unbelievable amounts of energy. I soon learned that, although brothers and sisters really are a blessing, they often come in disguised packages.

A brother and sister were traveling in the back of a small station wagon on their way to Florida. The girl was nine years old and the boy was three. About five minutes down the road the arguing began. From the backseat their parents heard continually, "Don't poke me."

"Gimme my thtuffed aminal back!"

"Mom, he keeps bothering me!" The two children were crowded, uncomfortable, and easily annoyed. Finally, the two of them made an agreement.



"I THINK YOUR NEW SYSTEM IS GOING TO MAKE TRAVEL A LOT EASIER, DEAR."

MAKING BROTHERS AND SISTERS BEST FRIENDS

“This half of the car is mine and this half is yours,” they decided.

“There is an invisible line down the middle.”

“Now don’t you touch my side,” said the girl.

“K, an dif ith my thide. Thtay off!” came back the reply.

Things were peaceful until the little boy “accidentally” crossed his foot into enemy territory. “Mom, he touched my side!” was promptly heard and the debate continued ... all the way to Florida. I was this little girl and my brother, Stephen, was this little boy.

Do not be surprised if you have struggles with your brothers and sisters. It is a common problem for almost all families. However, *common* does not mean *acceptable*. Stephen, Grace, and I have been more and more concerned about this as we have noticed the way brothers and sisters often treat each other. Do not allow yourself to believe that it’s okay for your relationship to remain substandard or that it cannot be improved. I can truly say that my brother and sister are my closest friends and great blessings in my life.

Be An Overcomer

It is not unusual that you have struggles, but it is extremely important that you deal with them properly. Struggles in life usually do not come at a convenient time; rather, they seem to come when we least expect them. They come in all different forms and in surprising ways. Our family is learning that it is important to see every obstacle as an opportunity. For example:



**Sometimes you are helpless and the
only solution is to be rescued.
You can't do it by yourself.**

CHAPTER ONE: HOME SWEET HOME: IN CRISIS

One time our family was traveling late at night. This is not unusual. Our family seems to have a history of traveling late. I think that is because it takes SOME of us too long to pack. (You might be able to figure out who after completing this book.) It was about 10:00 P.M. and we were on our way to a homeschool conference. We thought it was a nice, peaceful, uneventful evening. Then all of a sudden we felt a jerk. Everyone sat up, opened their eyes, and looked around with frightened expressions. Dad quickly swerved to the side of the road and informed us of the good news. It was only a blowout. The bad news was that we were in the middle of nowhere—along the interstate in Indiana. Dad said, “Everyone get out of the van right away.”

So there in the dark Mom and the three of us stood in the grass while Dad tried to put on the spare. Unfortunately, he could not get the jack underneath the van. (I guess SOME of us had packed too much.) After trying quite a few times, he finally decided that he would try to flag someone down to help. We were still standing along the road and praying while Dad was waving at every car that passed. No one stopped. More cars went by. Still no one stopped. It was getting late but we didn’t have anything else we could do but wait. Then our faces brightened as we saw a car pull over and two young men get out to help us. They seemed to have a lot of experience and a lot of energy. It didn’t take them long to lift up our van and get the jack underneath. After the spare tire was fixed, Dad explained to them that we sometimes get in situations where we can do nothing to help ourselves, and we need someone to come and rescue us.

“That’s how it is when it comes to God,” Dad continued. “We are trapped by sin and can do nothing to help ourselves. We need a rescuer. That’s why we needed God to send His Son. When Jesus died on the cross, He did what we could not do for ourselves.” He told the boys we were sorry there was nothing we could give them, but asked if we could at least pray for them. They said, “Yes,” so Dad prayed, and then they left.

We were all relieved that our struggle was over and happily climbed back into our van, excited to continue on our way. But now we had a new problem. Dad turned the key and the car didn’t start! We couldn’t believe it. The lights had been on too long! Mom and the three of us climbed out of the van for the second time and the whole thing happened all over again. We started praying while Dad tried to flag someone else down. This time a man in a work truck pulled over. He jumped our van and it started. He had to leave in a hurry but we saw to it that he left with

MAKING BROTHERS AND SISTERS BEST FRIENDS

a tract. For the third time that night we climbed into our van ... this time to stay, and we made it safely to our destination.

Does your family have a flat tire right now? Are you on the side of the road? Did you have a blowout that shook the household and brought you to a stop? Maybe you don't have the right tools. But God does.

The obstacles involved in getting our car back on the road gave us the opportunity to witness, pray, demonstrate patience and endurance, and feel what it's like to be helpless. God doesn't allow difficulties unless He has a reason for them. Struggles are often the greatest chances for growing and ministering to others.

Problems are a normal part of life. Therefore, it is not surprising that you have struggles with your brothers and sisters. Your response will determine whether you will be defeated by these problems or overcome them. Victorious warriors are not defeated or discouraged by difficulties. Rather, they see them as a challenge. Our goal in this book is to share with you how you can fight the **good** fight by responding to family struggles in the right way.

You may ask, "But *why* is it so hard in my own family?"

Six Reasons for Family Conflict

1. False Concepts

Have you ever believed any of these things?

"My brother or sister is a problem in my life."

"If I didn't have a brother/sister think how much easier my life would be."

"Things are hopeless in our relationship."

"The problem is their fault, not mine."

"We get along as well as anybody else. I don't need to worry about this."

"I'm just normal."

"It's too late to do anything about our relationship now."

These are lies that must be recognized, rejected, and replaced with truth. *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds:) Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* (II Cor. 10:3–5)

2. Bitterness

Many family problems are caused by offenses that lead to bitterness. We hurt others, sometimes intentionally and sometimes unintentionally, and we don't correct things. This damages their spirit toward us and causes bitterness. Also, when others hurt us, we do not respond in the right way. If there are offenses from the past that have never been cleared up, we cannot expect to maintain a good relationship in the present. We will explain this further in chapter four.

3. Higher Expectations of Our Family

We think we deserve more from our family. We want them to respect our time, space, and opinions. We expect the love and care that we see them show to other people. After all, we are their own sister (or brother); we deserve their love and service more than anyone else does. When they don't measure up to our expectations, we become angry and feel justified in cutting off the relationship. Then we often begin to seek approval from friends instead of our own family.

4. Lower Expectations of Ourselves

We tend to lower our expectations of ourselves when we are around our own family. We do not make the effort or take the time to consider their needs in the way we would think of other people's. After all, they are only our brothers and sisters. Our careless attitude is displayed by outward actions—we say things to them that we would be ashamed to say to others, we fail to express gratitude, we criticize, and we tease. In general, we make their life miserable and it doesn't even bother us.

In other words, we have **lower expectations** of ourselves, and **higher expectations** of them. Of course, this uncovers yet another problem. It is the other way around for them! As you can guess, this is a family self-destruct combination.

5. Distractions

If we are too busy to spend time with our families, we will not have a close relationship with them. Many distractions come along to occupy our time. These often keep us from the many important assignments God has for us, including our brothers and sisters. How can we expect to have a good relationship if we do not spend

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any time together? Some of these distractions are the television, the computer, the telephone, sports, video games, books, other friends, and busy schedules.

6. Hidden Enemy Influences

- From the beginning, Satan has tried to undermine and destroy God’s plan. A godly family has much potential for the Lord. The enemy knows this and works very hard to destroy families. He has many lies, snares, and strategies. (I Pet. 5:8)
- The world is also working against us. We are surrounded by influences and teachings which do not encourage relationships in the family.
- Many young people strive to make friends, rather than concentrate on the family God has already given them. They think that it is not considered “cool” if you are nice to your brother or sister. Being best friends with your own family is not even considered a conceivable possibility. In fact, they think it’s unheard of!



A little boy named Joey was told by his parents that they were having company for dinner. Since they didn’t have enough room at the big table, they said he would have to sit at a little table with his brother and sister. When it was time for dinner, Joey’s dad asked him to give thanks for the meal. Joey prayed, “O Lord, thank you for preparing a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”

STEPHEN'S SECTION

I Can't Run That Far

I am the second oldest, the second youngest, and also the only boy. It's a good thing that I'm helping to write this book to give a male perspective.

Someone may ask the question, "I get along fine with my friends. Why can't I get along with my family?" If you, like others, have asked this, then congratulations for thinking of a great question!

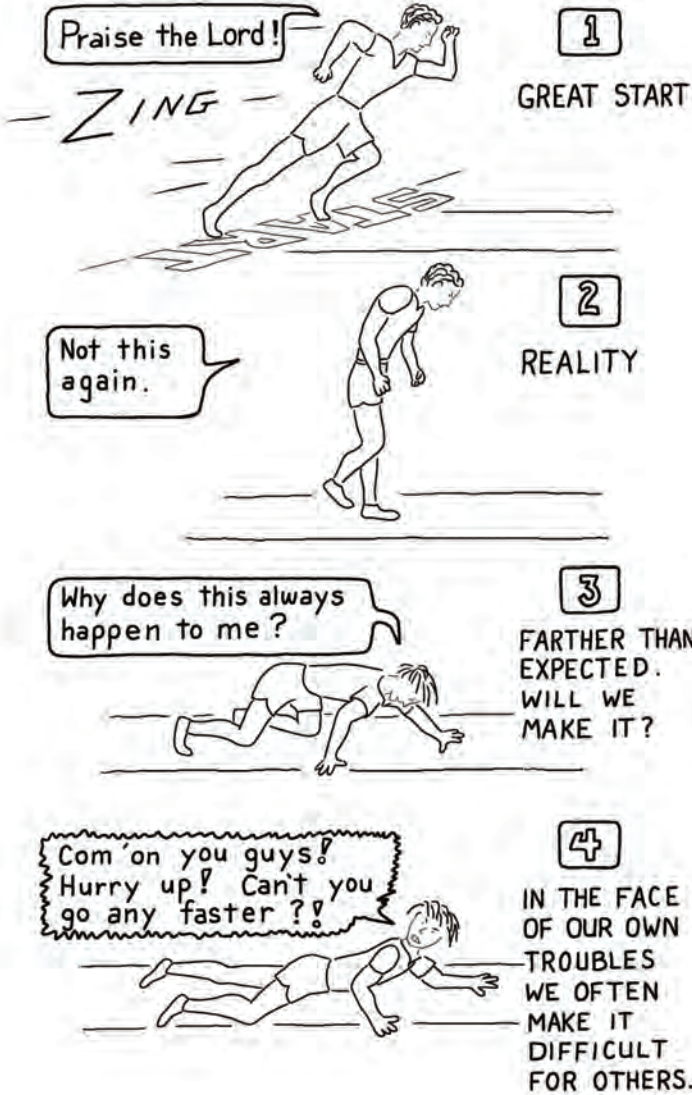
Let me answer by giving you an illustration. When I am with my friends I am only running a sprint (a short race). Now, even though I might not be a very good runner, I can probably fool them and at least make it to the finish line. Why? Because I don't have very far to run. My friends will not know if I collapse right after I finish. When I am with my family, things are different. With them we are running a marathon. In the race of life, none of us are perfect runners. We all get tired, we all trip and fall, we all take breaks, and we all make mistakes. I might be able to fake it on a sprint, but I can't fake it on a marathon.

When I am with my friends, they think that I am easy to get along with (a very sensible thing to think). I would like to agree with them, but I know that in reality I am more careful what I say around them, more patient with their flaws, more flexible with their plans, and more cautious about how I act. For example, when I am with my friends and things don't go exactly as planned, I can tolerate that; I don't get frazzled or flare up. But with my family, I say what I think. In my family, I **do** care if things aren't going the way I was expecting, and I will notify them at my earliest convenience (not theirs!).

When I'm with my friends, they won't tell me what to do. I can sit down, rest, and have a good time. With my family, on the other hand, there always seems to be work to do. If I sit down to take a break—a much deserved break—a family member will certainly walk by and be excited to notice my availability. My friends see me on days that are going well, when the sun is shining and I'm happy and cheerful (or if I'm not, at least I pretend to be). My family sees me all the time, even on bad days when I'm sick, depressed, exhausted, stressed out, or suffering from a headache.

Since we are running the whole marathon of life with our family, we tend to have a lot of expectations of them. We are relying on them to help us through. We think that they should be more courteous to us at meals,

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treat us with more respect, be more attentive to our needs, or at least not get mad about how we hold our fork. Since we are only on a sprint with our friends, we don't expect them to be perfect. They can ask us dumb questions or interrupt us when we are talking and it doesn't bother us that much. But with our family ... well, that's a different story.

Once Sarah, Grace, and I were going to a meeting that started at 5:00.

CHAPTER ONE: HOME SWEET HOME: IN CRISIS

Our family is often late because some of the people in our family take longer to get ready than others. There are five in our family. Three of *us* are fast and two of *them* are slow. (Names have not been listed to protect the guilty.) On this particular day, we decided that we would leave at 4:45. Sarah and I were ready on time and waiting in the car. But Grace was still flying around the house gathering together her large collection of assorted, unnecessary items. If this had happened at a friend's house, I probably would not have minded. I would have thought, "It's no big deal. We'll just be a little late." But in our own family, it is different. I expect everyone to be considerate of everyone else's schedule. Sarah and I have had experience with this, and we were trying to be creative. We started to sing a little song while we waited,

*Be patient. Be patient.
Don't be in such a hurry,
If you get impatient, you only start to worry.
Remember, remember, that God is patient, too
And think of all the times when others have to wait for you!*

So, no problem, right? Well, unfortunately, there **was** a problem. Grace finally came (about 5:00) and we were still singing. You must understand that Grace, being the littlest, can get her feelings hurt easily. If someone in another family had been singing this song, she probably would have thought it was a funny joke, but since it was her own family, she took it personally. We didn't realize she felt this way until we arrived at our destination and Grace called home and told Mom she was really sad. She said, "Sarah and Stephen are being mean." From that incident we learned that showing patience is more than just singing a song. Actually, by singing the song, Sarah and I showed that we were not demonstrating patience. Instead, we were just irritating Grace by rubbing in the fact that she was late.

Another obvious point is that since we are running a marathon with our family, and only sprints with our friends, we are spending a lot more time with our siblings. After all, we see our family every day. Now, we may be defending ourselves in our mind, saying that we have a lot of good reasons why we can't get along with our siblings. I'm sure we could explain in detail why it is not our fault. But that's not the right attitude. We want to win the marathon and God has given us our families to help us. God doesn't want one of us to win; He wants the whole family to win. We have to learn that we aren't running *against* each other, but *with* each other.

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If we only ran sprints with our family, we would be fine. But we are locked into a family marathon. Is there a remedy? That's what this book is about. Just think if you could finish the marathon and still be friends with your family—better yet, best friends!



Stephen's Definitions

Brother — A practically perfect person who helps his sisters learn character.

Book — A random selection of words compiled to make a point that some people may not like.

Expectations — An idea that you hope someone will do at a certain time, in a certain place, to a certain person, in order to benefit you in a certain way.

Patience — A character quality which children under five instinctively aim to develop in those around them.

Home — A place where you can say what you think, but no one listens.

Friends — People who usually have the same virtues, the same enemies, or the same faults.

Family trees — They seem to produce a variety of nuts.

GRACE'S SECTION

How It All Started

I was sitting in the car one day when Sarah said to me, “Grace, I have an idea. I think we should write a book to help brothers and sisters get along.”

I thought, “Oh, boy! Here we go, another one of Sarah’s big ideas!”

Sarah, Stephen, and I have all noticed that many brothers and sisters have damaged friendships. We agree that this is a huge problem. Everywhere we look, families seem to be having trouble. That is why we agreed to Sarah’s idea of writing this book.

Actually, we shouldn’t be surprised if it’s hard to get along with our brothers and sisters, because Cain and Abel, the very first brothers that ever lived on this earth, didn’t get along. They not only fought, but Cain actually killed Abel! Their fighting probably started when they were little.

The good news is that it doesn’t have to be that way. God has the answers we need. You see, God is the One who has put us in families. This was His plan. He put each one of us in a family that is just right for us. Our brothers and sisters are blessings and gifts from the Lord.

Since We Are Not Perfect...

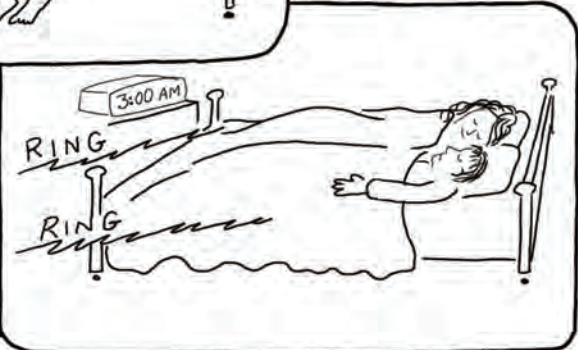
Obviously, kids aren’t perfect like grown-ups are (ha ha ha). Therefore, we don’t always get along perfectly. And since we know our brothers and sisters better than we know anyone else, that makes it more challenging to get along with them.

For example, I am very relaxed around Sarah and Stephen because I know them so well. As a result, I am not “on guard” most of the time and can easily become careless in my actions, attitudes, and words. I am not as careful to do what is right. After all, they already know that I have a lot of faults; I don’t need to worry about my reputation when I’m with them.

Whenever people are careless and respond without thinking, it leads to problems. A few years ago my dad had gallbladder surgery. The night after his surgery he was very sore. He had a hard time getting from the chair to the bed. Mom was helping him so he wouldn’t pull or stretch anything. Very slowly he crawled into bed, carefully lay down, and went to sleep.

In the middle of the night ... Ring! Ring! The phone rang, and, boy,

MAKING BROTHERS AND SISTERS BEST FRIENDS



was my mom surprised when she saw Dad spring out of bed and run to get the phone. OUCH! I think my dad was a little surprised, too. He was so sound asleep that he had forgotten about everything until he got to the phone ... then he remembered the surgery.

Dad was trying to be really cautious before he went to bed, but then when something unexpected happened, he forgot all about being “on guard.” Ouch! That hurt! In the same way, since we are not always “on guard” in our family, it is easy for problems to arise.

Learning to Have Jesus' Responses

One time when I was about three years old, I was having a great time playing at the park. Right in the middle of my fun, Sarah came to me and said it was time to go home. I didn't want to go home at all. I wanted to stay and play at the park all day! The right response would have been for me to submit to Sarah and to do what she wanted. Instead, my “automatic response” caused trouble for me (and for her). I ran away from her, hid in the slide, and tried to think of any possible way to stay longer at the park. After all, I thought, “Sarah is not my mother.” Finally, it took a mutual effort between Stephen and Sarah to drag me home. Actually, I don't remember this story but Stephen and Sarah have told it to me many times. They say they remember it well, because it happened every time they took me to the park!

Excuses...

1. Have you noticed that sometimes brothers and sisters don't even try to get along? Several girls I know often complain about their brothers and sisters. They tell me:

- “My brother is so mean to me.”
- “I hate it when my sister baby-sits me.”
- “My siblings are the biggest pests in the world.”

They don't seem to care about this relationship, and definitely are not planning to take any steps to correct things.

2. Then there are some who just make excuses. They think:

- “Well, no one gets along with their brothers and sisters, so why should I?”
- “Get along with them? That is impossible!”
- “They don't like me, so I'm not going to worry about it.”
- “We're not as bad as *that family!*”

MAKING BROTHERS AND SISTERS BEST FRIENDS

3. Other people actually do **want** to improve but they don't take any **action**. They may recognize the problem, but are always too lazy to do anything about it. Sometimes I realize, "Well, I could get along with Sarah better in this way," or "Stephen and I could handle this situation better," but I just think about it and don't do anything.

Do any of these examples fit your family? Then continue reading this book. Also, remember that God is on our side, and although this book won't give you all the help and answers you need, the Bible will.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Cor. 10:13)

SARAH'S SECTION

The Incredible Influence of a Godly Family

This is the exciting part of this chapter! Godly families have incredible influence. The benefits to the Kingdom of God will be tremendous if we are willing to seek His best in this area. Few people realize how much influence they have on those around them. John 13:35 says, “*By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*”

Imagine the things you normally see in a grocery store. I often see parents yelling at their kids, unhappy faces, anger, teasing, selfishness, and brothers and sisters who are fighting and arguing. I remember one time sitting in our car, in a parking lot, waiting for Stephen. I was trying to study but was very distracted by the people in the van next to me. I couldn't see into it very well, but I could hear screaming and yelling. Needless to say, the family in that van was not getting along. They were literally screaming at each other in intense anger. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It is sad that this is what many people are used to and even expect. But think of what a contrast families will be who show the humility, kindness, and love that Jesus commands—especially if they show it even to their own *brothers and sisters!*

We are often surprised at how much people watch our family. They make comments about us when we didn't even think they were noticing. This is a constant reminder that we are representing the Lord Jesus Christ everywhere we go. People are just not used to seeing families that get along. I remember one time our family did a presentation at a church. Afterwards, a lady came up to talk to me. Instead of saying something about our music or the presentation, she said, “I wanted to tell you how impressed I was by the way you and your sister got along together.” I was surprised. I didn't think we had done anything special. My internal reaction was, “Even if we do not get along well at home, do you think we'd fight **in public??** ... let alone **on stage??**” Nevertheless, that was what impressed her. We are definitely not a perfect family (you will find that out by reading this book!), but we want you to realize that families who are trying to do what is right *will* be noticed.

Wherever you go, you, as a strong, loving family, will be so rare that you will stand out brightly. Do not underestimate the importance of this testimony. By obeying the Lord in your relationship with your family, you will be lifting up a banner for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ that will be seen by many. This godly strategy is “fighting the good fight.”

MAKING BROTHERS AND SISTERS BEST FRIENDS

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” (Is. 59:19b)

Application

- **Accept** God’s design for your family. God is the One who has given you the family that you have. His ways are perfect and He has a purpose for what He does. If you are upset about a certain aspect of your family (such as who your brothers and sisters are, how many you have, or your birth order), you are actually upset at God. *“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the things formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay?”* (Rom. 9:20-21a)
- **Thank** God for your family, for each of your brothers and sisters, and specifically for anything about your family which you do not like. It is essential that you do this if you want to successfully apply the other things in this book. *“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”* (I Thess. 5:18)
- **Choose** now that you want to do whatever it takes to establish a godly, strong, edifying relationship with each of your brothers and sisters. Just reading a book will not fix things in your family. It is up to you to choose that you will obey the Lord and seek His best, whatever the cost.

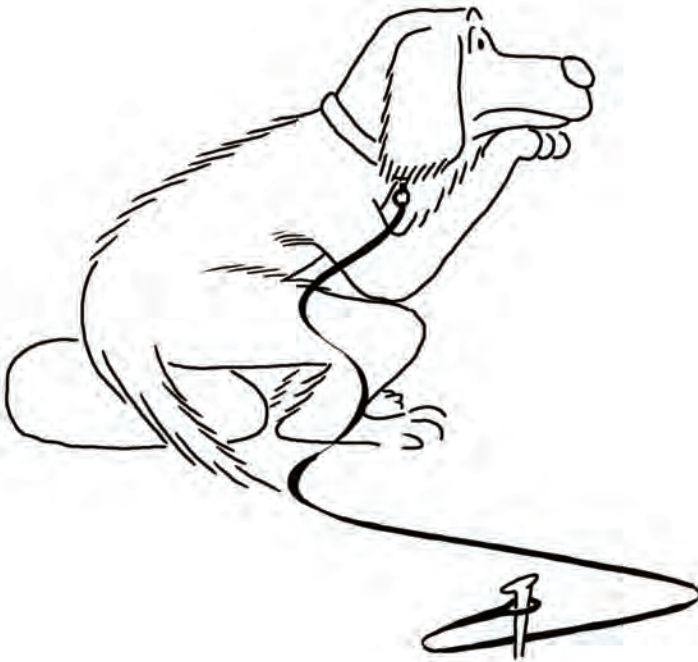
This is not just for your sake, not just for their sake, not just for your parents’ sake, but for the glory of the Lord, for the defeat of the enemy, and for a dynamic testimony to the lives of everyone with whom you come in contact! Godly families are few and far between in this *“crooked and perverse generation”* (Phil. 2:15) in which brothers and sisters are looked upon as irritations, unsolvable problems, and blemishes in your life.

I'M PERPLEXED...

Question: What if my brothers and sisters “don’t care” about our relationship?

Answer: First of all, it is probably not true that they “don’t care” about your relationship. They may *think* they don’t care, *say* they don’t care, *pretend* they don’t care, or *want you to think* they don’t care, but really, they *do* desire your friendship. Do not be discouraged. It will mean a lot to your brother or sister that **you do care**. Your effort will not be in vain.

Secondly, **you** are the key to the solution. It usually only takes one person to clear up a conflict. If one person is willing to obey the Lord, amazing things can happen. It is not your responsibility to force them to work things out; it is your responsibility to be sure that **you** are obedient to the Lord and then to leave the results to Him. *“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”* (Heb. 6:10)



HIS STORY APPLIED TODAY

The Impact of One Decision

Life would be a lot easier if we could just make wise decisions all the time. Have you thought about how amazing it would be if we could be like King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived? I have. But did you know that Solomon had a son named Rehoboam who made an extremely foolish decision?

When Solomon died, all of Israel gathered together to make Rehoboam king. The people approached him with a question. They said, “Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now, lighten the harsh labor and make things easier for us. We will then serve you.” Rehoboam answered, “Give me three days to decide and then I will tell you my decision.”

In the meantime, Rehoboam wanted to get some advice. First of all, he talked to the elders, the old men who had served with his father. They told him he should answer favorably and gently to the people.

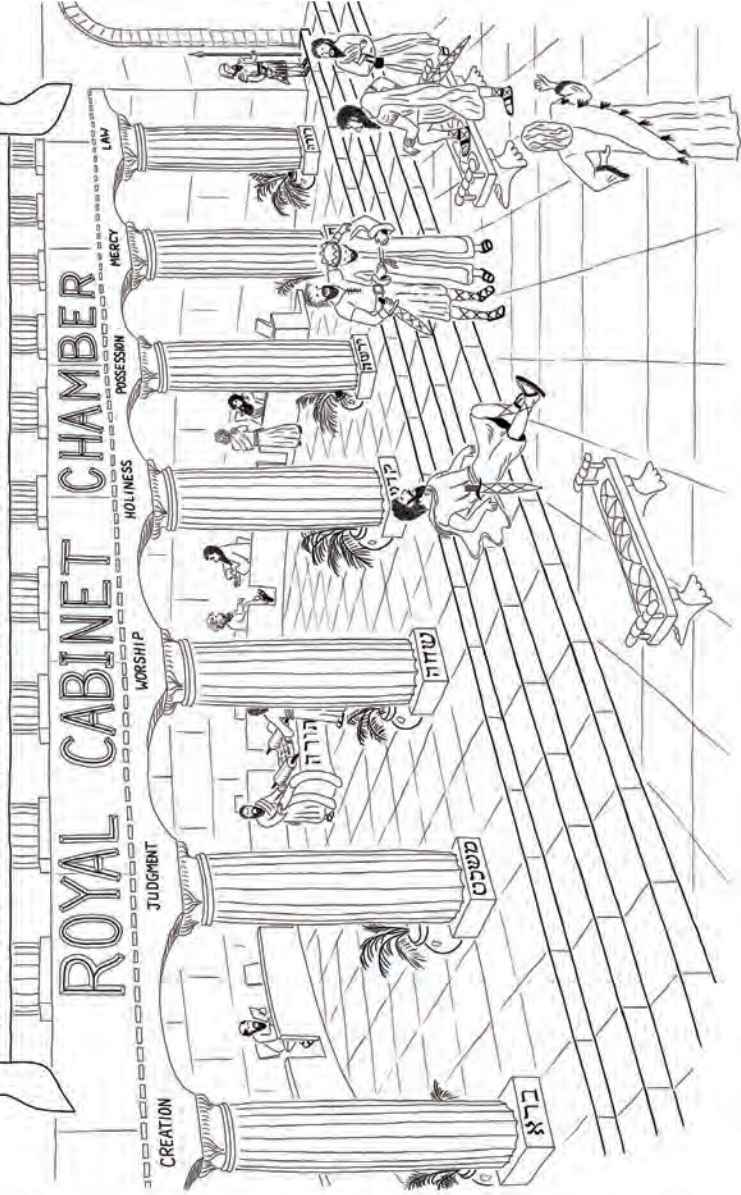
But King Rehoboam rejected the wise advice of the older men and went to talk to his friends that he had grown up with. They gave him the opposite counsel. They said, “Answer the people harshly. Tell them that you will be even harder on them than your father was — that your father punished them with whips but you will punish them with scorpions.” Rehoboam followed this advice of the younger men and answered the people in this way. As a result, the people rebelled against him and the kingdom was divided.

As life went on, Rehoboam and Judah forsook the law of the Lord. Therefore, the Lord brought punishment upon them; Shishak, King of Egypt, came up against them and attacked them. Why did all this happen to Rehoboam? There is a key verse that tells us why Rehoboam made these foolish decisions. It is the answer to why he had so many problems. (Read II Chronicles 12:14) “*And Rehoboam did evil because he **prepared not his heart to seek the Lord.***”

We are still young. We have many important decisions ahead of us. Like Rehoboam, we will make terrible mistakes if we do not prepare our hearts NOW to seek the Lord. A few chapters later in II Chr. 16:9 God tells us, “*The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.*” The Lord wants to show Himself strong in each of our lives. He is still looking today for people whose hearts are perfect before Him. The very best decision that you could make as you are beginning this book is that you will prepare your heart NOW to seek the Lord.

"LISTEN TO US REHO. DON'T LET PEOPLE PUSH YOU AROUND. YOU'RE THE KING. BE TOUGH! SHOW 'EM WHO'S BOSS. IF YOU'RE EASY THEY'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU. FORGET THIS COMPASSIONATE STUFF. THESE OLD MEN IN THE CABINET DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT. THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE TIMES. THEY'RE OUT OF TOUCH. THEY'RE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR REPUTATION. WE NEED CHANGE AROUND HERE. YOU CAN TRUST US REHO. WE GREW UP WITH YOU. JUST LISTEN TO US."¹

ROYAL CABINET CHAMBER



Self-Evaluation Quiz 1

1. My brother/sister is my...

- Pet.
- Slave.
- Enemy.
- Biggest problem in life.
- Best friend.

2. When I'm with my brother/sister I...

- Yawn.
- Contact the local pest control.
- Enjoy our time together.
- Look forward to heaven.
- Ignore them.

3. I pray specifically for my brother/sister...

- Everyday.
- Not very much.
- Only at mealtimes.
- When they are sick.

4. I tend to respond to family struggles by...

- Ignoring the problem.
- Blaming others.
- Sleeping through them.
- Escaping to the telephone or the television.
- Going to the Bible.
- Trying to forget about them.

5. When I'm in the middle of a busy project, and my brother comes in to annoy me, my usual response is...

- To make a big sign which says, "DO NOT DISTURB!" and tape it to my shirt.
- To say, "You can have 45 seconds to talk to me. On your mark, get set, go."
- To explain to my brother what I am doing and begin to delegate work.
- To remember that my brother is more important than my project, and determine how I can encourage him.
- To ask him to find out the daily news for me, the weather forecast, the gas prices, and how much milk we have left.

CHAPTER ONE: HOME SWEET HOME: IN CRISIS



Little Miss Grace

Little Miss Grace
Sat in her place
Writing *Fight The Good Fight*.
She thought and she paced
She wrote and erased
And struggled with all of her might!

Little Miss Grace
With despair in her face
Said, "Writing is not very fun.
This book is so long
It's all going wrong
I don't think I'll ever be done."

"Little Miss Grace
Quicken your pace,"
Said Sarah to hasten the book.
"There's no time for play,
You must not delay,
Please finish what you undertook."

Little Miss Grace
Run a diligent race
You must not give in to defeat.
Work into the night
Continue to write
Or your book you will never complete!

Little Miss Grace
Has delight in her face
"I'm finished! I'm finished," she said.
"You say, I'm not done?
That was just chapter one?
I think that I'll just go to bed!"

