

Lesson 9 / July 28, 2024

Family Therapy

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 9**Focus:**

Home can be a place where everyone is honored.

Lesson 9**Bible Basis:**

Galatians 5:24-6:2;
James 5:16;
1 John 3:16-18

Lesson 9**Memory Verse:**

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.
—Romans 12:9-10

Students will watch a video about the royal family as they explore God’s plan for honoring our family members.

Materials:

None

➤ **Have you ever heard the saying, “We’re one big, happy family?” In your own words, what does it mean?** (It seems to be saying that families always get along and are happy together.)

➤ **What’s one time in the past week or two when your family was happy together?** (Encourage your students to share brief, positive stories about happy times in their homes.)

➤ **Now, what’s one time in the past week or two when your family was *unhappy* together?** (Encourage your students to share—without details—brief stories about conflict in their homes. Don’t let this spiral out of control into a therapy session or a major gripe fest! Be prepared to redirect any teens who overshare.)

It would be great if families were always happy together. If parents and siblings and grandparents and cousins always got along, the world would be a beautiful place.

Sadly, we live in a fallen world . . . and that means families are *not* always happy together. Even in loving homes, there will be disagreements. Sometimes we say, through gritted teeth, “I love you, but I *really* don’t like you right now.”

In the last few years especially, you may have seen or heard media about a royal family feud in England.

➤ **Have any of you heard about this family feud? If so, what have you heard?** (Allow students to share what they’ve heard.)

Prince Harry, the younger of the two princes, split from the royal family in 2020 to live in the west with his American actress wife Meghan Markle. They made claims about incredible drama and dysfunction happening in the royal family behind closed doors. Moving

seemed like a good way to have more boundaries and a simpler life. However, even four years after they split from the royal family, there are still headlines about feuding between Harry and Meghan and the other members of the royal family.

Play the following video for your students [3:00; stop at 1:28]:

Royal Family issues blunt warning to Prince Harry

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AT4Xf14vEI>

This example is over the top, of course, but it's true that each family has a set of challenges they need to deal with.

➤ **Rather than moving to a different country or publicly gossiping about other family members, what are some ways that families can resolve problems and restore harmony?** (Accept all reasonable answers.)

As long as we live on planet Earth, there will be problems and disagreements in families. However, we don't have to let those problems mess things up for good! The New Testament has some excellent pointers toward family unity and happiness. Let's look at a few of them today.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Lesson 9 / July 28, 2024

Family Therapy

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 9**Focus:**

Home can be a place where everyone is honored.

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James 5:16;
1 John 3:16-18

Lesson 9**Memory Verse:**

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—Romans 12:9-10

Materials:

- Ruled notebook paper
- Pens or pencils
- Optional: Whiteboard and markers (or screenshared document)

If your class is meeting online, invite students to have supplies ready at home.

In our discussion earlier, the royal family had a lot of bad feelings and disagreements to overcome. Regrettably, they still appear to be at odds with each other.

Of course, the royal family's conflict is on a much larger scale than most, but family conflict is real. When we don't overcome bitterness and work to love each other, families can be torn apart. That's why one of the most important things we can do after a conflict is *forgive*.

➤ **In your own words, what does it mean to forgive someone?** (When a family member hurts us, we often feel like we have the right to hurt them back [revenge]. Forgiveness means that we give up our right to hurt them, and instead seek to bless them.)

➤ **Why would forgiving someone show honor to that person?** (Have a volunteer read the memory verse and answer this question about the other concepts in this verse: Sincere love, hating evil, devotion, etc.)

Forgiveness is not an easy thing! Our natural instinct when we get hurt is to hurt the person in return. But when we work to *bless* the one who hurt us, we're well on our way to forgiving them.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). **As we wrap up today's lesson, think of someone in your family who's hurt you in the past few weeks. Maybe it's your mom or dad. Maybe it's your brother or sister. Maybe it's your second cousin, twice removed.**

Even if you have a terrific, loving family, people who live with each other are still going to hurt each other. It's part of life. The good news is that hurts don't have to fester—we can move past them with the power of forgiveness.

We're going to write a short letter to God about the person in your family that you need to forgive. Craft your letter in two parts.

In the first part, tell God that you want to forgive the person. Then ask Him to bless the person in a specific way that you know they'll appreciate. For example, if your mom hurt you and you know she's having a rough time at work, pray that she'll have a great day on the job tomorrow. If your sister hurt you and she's saving money for her class trip to Chicago, pray that she'll earn more than enough!

Now, here comes the second part of your letter. Tell God one way that *you* will commit to blessing your family member in the week ahead. Maybe you can ask your mom every night how things are going at work, and really listen to what's on her mind. Maybe you can make a small contribution to your sister's Chicago fund. Then close your letter by asking God to help you truly forgive and love the person who hurt you.

If you have a whiteboard in your classroom (or screenshared document), you might write a short sample letter to God on the board: *"(1) Dear God, I want to forgive my mom for yelling at me last week. Please bless her at work tomorrow, because I know she's been really stressed lately. (2) I want to bless her, too. I'll ask her how her job is going every night and listen to what she says. Please help me to truly forgive and love Mom this week. Amen."* Give your students a few minutes to write their own letters to God.

➤ **As you wrote your letters to God, did anyone start to *feel* more forgiving and loving toward the family member who hurt you?** (Chances are that some of your students' feelings will begin to change. But make sure they understand that warm fuzzies are not a prerequisite to forgiveness and love! Rather, real love and forgiveness are actions undertaken by our will, whether we feel like it or not.)

Even when others hurt us, when we forgive them, we can move toward love and harmony. This week, work to bless that family member who hurt you. You might be surprised at how blessed you are in return!

If time permits, invite (but don't require) students to share a summary of what they wrote in their letters to God.

Close in prayer.

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