

RESOLVING FAMILY CONFLICTS
WHEN THE FUN STOPS FOR PARENTS
1 SAMUEL 15:22–23; LUKE 15:11–24



The Heart of the Matter

Every family has its headaches and heartaches. Because human depravity runs deep, it is impossible to rear our children from infancy to independence without encountering times that call for straight talk and tough love. While parents continue to love their children no matter what, they cannot escape those occasions when wills clash, rebellion reaches an impasse, and things get downright impossible. For any number of reasons, some adolescents and young adults who still live at home will reach a place where they simply refuse to obey their parents. All attempts to restore the harmony in the parent-child relationship prove futile. The result? Harsh words and ugly reactions as parents stand their ground and sons and daughters react in stubborn defiance, refusing to back down. The parents pray, but nothing changes. They reason with the disobedient child, but it's a dead-end street. They apply different measures of discipline, but things only get worse. And the realization that their other children are being neglected—or negatively influenced—as they spend their time and energy dealing with the rebel complicates their struggle. This is one of those times when the fun stops for parents.



Discovering the Way

1. An Analysis: Rebellion (1 Samuel 15:22–23)

We all think we know what rebellion is, but what does the Bible say it is? And what is God's opinion of it?

2. A Story: A Rebellious Son (Luke 15:11–24)

As we review this familiar parable of the prodigal son, let's take a closer look at the ethnic and domestic scene (15:11–13), the lifestyle and consequences (15:13–16), the realization and decision (15:17–19), and the return and restoration (15:20–24).



Starting Your Journey

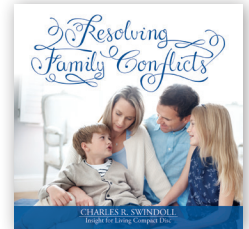
How should you respond to the rebel in your family? Four lessons: no rebel can be allowed to ruin a home; if the rebellion necessitates a separation, then go there; let go of your child and release him or her to the consequences; and when true repentance occurs, let grace abound.



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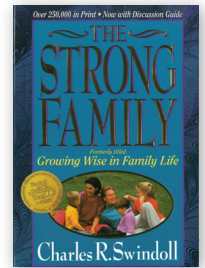


Tools for Digging Deeper



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RESOLVING FAMILY CONFLICTS
RESOLVING THOSE PARENT/CHILD CONFLICTS
MATTHEW 5:23–24; 18:21–35



The Heart of the Matter

Conflicts are inevitable in every family. And learning how to resolve them is of vital importance. Sometimes parents are the ones who create conflict. Moms and dads are often too busy and preoccupied, which leads them to be impatient and irritable. As a result, they wound their sons and daughters by what they say and do, leaving scars that don't go away. It's not uncommon for children to offend their parents as well. As children get older, they often act selfishly, respond angrily, or thoughtlessly blurt out words that hurt their parents. This behavior also results in lingering and painful feelings that only intensify over the years. When conflicts remain unresolved, unhealthy consequences occur—like deep wounds that get infected and fester. Unless conflicts are dealt with appropriately, there can be a permanent breakdown in relationships that time alone will not heal. Who knows how many families today have grown apart due to silence and unresolved conflicts? Who can guess how many wrongs have been swept aside, causing unmentioned family secrets to linger? Reconciliation is essential if we wish to cultivate healthy and wholesome relationships. But . . . how?



Discovering the Way

1. An Important Word We Need to Define

Before we discuss resolving family conflicts, we need to define the word *forgiveness*.

2. Two Major Issues We Must Address

First, what do we do when another feels resentment toward us because we have offended him or her (Matthew 5:23–24)? Second, what do we do when we feel resentment toward another because he or she offended us (Matthew 18:21–35)?



Starting Your Journey

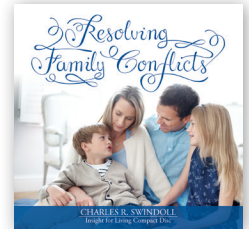
When facing conflict, the single most important response is based on this awareness: *it's always my move!* It's your move to *seek* forgiveness and reconciliation, and it's your move to *give* forgiveness.



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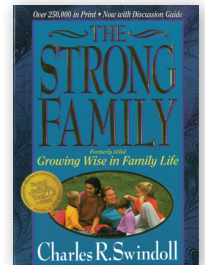


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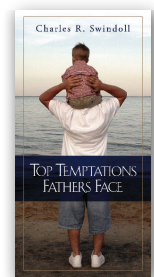
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