



home is where the *hard* is

At this point you have been home for a few weeks, and for many of you, that has meant re-entering your relationship(s) with your family... in the close quarters of your house, no less. This is no easy task. Even for those of you who moved to (or back to) college or out on your own, the dynamics of relating with family can often be challenging at this stage in life. Our families are often incredible gifts to us -- places of support and resources that we may not have otherwise -- but they are also places where the true test of how our lives reflect Christ is certainly challenged. Add to *that* challenge that while you may have grown leaps and bounds in your life and faith over the summer, your family did not have the benefit of witnessing that growth as it happened. And on the other side of things, you did not have the benefit of contextualizing that growth to your family environment.

So when you step back into the very familiar dynamics of daily life at home, old patterns can take over new growth without you even realizing it. And yet, is there a more clearly appointed place where we are to live out the life of Christ in us than in our closest relationships, those with our family?

read

Numbers 12

reflect & journal

1. This is an obscure passage for sure, but an important one if you can stick with it. To help, identify the setting for this passage. Who are Moses, Miriam, and Aaron? What has been their role with the Israelite people? At what point in Israel's story is this passage taking place? Other helpful things to tease out of the passage: what is the "tent of meeting"? What was the big deal with "leprosy" and the seven days of confinement? (Google can be your friend).
2. In some ways, this may be a familiar scene for those with siblings (minus the whole pillar of cloud and skin smiting, that is). Siblings get jealous, judgmental, bitter, or backbiting - it's what we do, especially when one has had a unique experience from the others or when they disagree with another's actions. If you were to channel Miriam or Aaron's thoughts or experiences in the beginning of this passage, how would you describe them? How is Moses described (especially in verse 3)?
3. The steps God leads them through for reconciliation are important. Can you identify them? What is significant about God calling all three of them together (verse 4) to come and meet with Him? How might this help them remember their relationship as family? How does God call out Miriam and Aaron? How does God's punishment on Miriam bring all the siblings back together again?
4. When you find yourself in contentious relationships with your family, what is your typical response? Do you retreat, isolate, grumble, gossip, lash out? How does this story provide a different example? What would it look like for God to gather you and your family members together to remember the significance of your relationships?
5. In contrast to your response to question number 4, what would it look like for you to instead embody 1) Moses' humility, 2) Aaron's repentance, 3) Miriam's acceptance (the text doesn't specifically describe this, but I like to think...)?
6. How might these responses serve to bring about the life of Christ in your family dynamics? How might you be a catalyst to get this started (but don't forget the humility in doing so!)?

pray

- Reconciliation is a *hard* task. From the side of being wronged or hurt (Moses), but also from the side of having to admit when we have wronged or hurt (Aaron and Miriam). Maybe taking a look back at your TT's (How to experience God's love and forgiveness, How to Love by Faith, etc.) would be helpful.
- Praying for the person you are seeking reconciliation with is a good first step into remembering God's heart for them, and thus growing in your own heart toward them as well.
- Spend some time praying for your family members. Ask the Lord what role He has for you to play in bringing about life and goodness to your family community.