

# Family: Past, Present, and Future

## Living with Tension

Hi Revive Family,

Happy New Year!! We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and we're excited for what God has for us in 2021!

This week, we're wrapping up our series on FAMILY. First, when we look at Jesus and how he viewed family, we have to acknowledge that we live in this tension between two competing realities:

1. Family is important
2. We must be willing to go against our family

And the result of having to live with this tension is that family conflict is pretty much guaranteed. And there isn't an easy formula or set of rules that can quickly resolve all of our family drama – and that's okay. However, there is one specific area that we look at in this week's devotional that is often the source of conflict – and that is our desire to control our family.

In Mark 3 we read of this interaction between Jesus and his family:

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind. [...] Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." Mark 3:20-21; 31-35

Jesus' family came to 'take charge' or take control over Jesus – a very common and natural things to do because we often feel we know what is best for others in our family. But sometimes we may take things too far and try to be too controlling and too overbearing when we need not be. For this week, let's reflect on our own family dynamics and how issues of control may be impacting our relations with each other.

Let's also look beneath those expectations to see what the underlying assumptions and beliefs are that may be feeding into those expectations. And let's open ourselves up to God and asking him to show us more of His heart for our family.

Reflection questions:

1. Are there ways that we might be trying to control other people in our family, and what effect do we think that has on them?
2. Are there ways that we feel burdened or pressured by our family wanting us to be or behave a certain way? If so, take time to be in this tension and spend time with God to discern whether this is a time to align with family, or to agree to disagree.
3. Is there anyone in our family that we need to give grace to, in the midst of tension and conflict that may exist?