

Greenwood Baptist Church
Brian Bond
September 27, 2026
The Tension of Grace
Proverbs 16:7

All right, how's everybody doing today? All right. I'm dragging a little bit today. The infection that I had a couple of weeks ago has kind of come back. I am under medical treatment. But if I just stop and take a little nap, just be quiet until I'm done, if you don't mind.

And then this other issue — I've got some new glasses. I don't know if y'all can see this. My wife hates my glasses. She said I look like a '70s sitcom star. Well, she said "star." I mean, that's good. But how many of y'all like my new glasses? Take note. I normally wouldn't broadcast family business, but I'm a little sick, so I don't know that I'm totally responsible for what I'm saying.

We're glad you're here. And for those who are joining us online and those who are joining us through our overflow rooms, we appreciate you being a part of our family and taking your time on Sunday morning to join us in worship as well.

Today we're going to talk about something that has become kind of a big deal. Over the last year and a half, I've done more counseling sessions on this than I have on anything else. And the thing that I'm going to talk about today, that I've done all those counseling sessions on, is this: how do you deal with tension and conflict within your family? We're going to go through some basics. We're going to go through particularly what Scripture says about our family relationships, and then how we navigate them.

Those can be a difficult thing, because, man, ain't nobody can push your buttons like somebody who knows you, who has known you for your whole life. Am I right? There's nobody that knows just how to say, "Hey, say this to him and see what he does." They know. And you know the same thing. So sometimes the family controversies or disputes can be a little harsher, because we kind of suspend the rules there. Well, they're family.

But I want us to look at what the Scripture says are basic rules about how to deal with conflict. Proverbs 17:27. **"A truly wise person uses few words; a person with understanding is even-tempered."** And that's hard to do. When somebody in your family is angry with you or saying things that bother you, it's hard not to pop back at them, because we have a lot of history there that we can draw on that makes us angry sometimes.

Second thing. Romans 12:17-18. **"Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone."** Sometimes we suspend that first one because we think, well, they're family. So even

if I say something really mean, we're still going to be family afterwards. What are they going to do about it?

A lot of times, in an argument or a dispute that we might have with somebody outside our family, we're a lot more careful to follow the laws of God. But sometimes within our family, we throw those out the window for a while. We figure, well, this is a family dispute, and yeah, it gets a little ugly, but in the end we all love each other, so on and so forth.

But Scripture says, never pay back evil with more evil. In other words, do not respond — when your response is intended to bring as much hurt to the person you're responding to as they brought to you, that's returning evil for evil. So we need to be careful about how we respond. We need to do things in such a way that everyone can see we are honorable, to be honorable in our responses.

And then the last one: as much as it depends on you, be at peace with all people. Here's the deal. If there's a dispute between you and someone in your family, make sure that that's their doing, that you're doing everything you can to be at peace with them. Now, that doesn't mean you're going to be. When it says do all that you can to live in peace with everyone — you can do everything that you can, everything right, everything that is honorable, and there can still be conflict. That's just life. But we need to make sure that we're the ones doing everything we can to live in peace.

Sometimes one of the biggest questions that I get when people come to me for counseling is, at what point can I just be done with them? And I think that's the wrong question. Now, I fully understand there are things that happen within families that are way wrong. There are times that boundaries need to be set. There are times that there needs to be distance. And there may be a time, in some circumstances, in an extreme circumstance, where you need to be away from them maybe for life. I understand that.

But 99.9 percent of the time, the conflicts that we have within our family, they can be resolved, or at least be made peaceable. That doesn't mean they will be, but they can be. And we always need to treat them in such a way — look, this is our family. These are people. Hopefully they'll love the Lord like we do. If they don't, then we have another reason to try to keep peace, so that we can share the gospel, so that we can be a part of the gospel message to them. But either way, we need to approach it in such a way that we want them to have a favorable opinion of us in the end. And we need to do it in an honorable manner.

James 1:19-20. **“Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.”** Now, I know some of y'all in your minds right now are going, but you don't know about my uncle blank, blank, blank. Or you don't know how my cousin is, or how my sister is. You're right, I don't know. But the truth of this verse remains. Human anger

does not produce the righteousness God desires.

You might be able to sit down and convince me that you have every right to be angry, but that doesn't change the truth of this verse. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. Our anger toward someone that's offended us, or somebody that's done something — even though it may be justified, even though 99 percent of the world would say, well, I understand why you're mad — it's not going to make things better. And we need to recognize that on the front end. So many times we're just looking for an excuse of why it's okay for us to be angry, why it's okay for us to retaliate, why it's okay for us to do what we want to do.

Now, I want to get into just a little bit about where all these relationships fall. The first one I'm going to talk about is parent relationships: parents and kids, kids with parents. The Bible says children obey your parents. But in Exodus 20:12, it says, **“Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”** This passage is not talking to ten-year-old kids. This is talking to adults. It's saying to honor your father and mother, and then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God has given you.

So what does it mean to honor your parents? That doesn't mean that you have to do everything they say. It doesn't mean that if they say, well, we don't care about your wife's family, we want everybody here at Christmas every year — it doesn't mean you have to do that. It doesn't mean you have to follow the life choices they've laid out for you. You don't have to be in the career that they want for you. You don't even have to necessarily marry the person they want you to marry.

But what it does mean is that you still honor them. You recognize that they've raised you. And for some of y'all, you might be going, well, they barely raised me, or they didn't do this, they didn't do that. No parents are going to be perfect. And some are less perfect than others. I understand that. But the way that you honor them is by speaking respectfully of them and to them. It doesn't mean that you do everything they say.

But honoring them — here's the deal about it. It's a command. This is one of the Ten Commandments. And it's the first command that comes with a promise. Do this, this is going to happen. Honor your father and mother, then you'll live a long, full life. Do this, this happens. So it is important that when we look at our relationships with our parents, we also look at our relationship with our God, because it's our God who has commanded us how to treat our parents.

Look, it doesn't mean that we blow aside or blow away everything that your parents may have done. It doesn't mean that we pretend they're perfect. It doesn't mean that we pretend that whatever they did might not have some consequences. We'll get to that in just a second. But what it does mean is that we honor them as best we can. That's a command of God.

Now, here's the second thing that comes from God. It's in Genesis chapter 2. This is where God brings forth to Adam a woman that is made to be a helper like him. And he says, **"This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."**

Now, parents, this one's probably for you. You need to recognize that when your son or daughter enters into that relationship, they move out of the house. They enter into that marriage relationship with another individual. If it's a man, they marry a woman. If it's a woman, they marry a man. Just to make that clear. Nothing else is a marriage. That's marriage. That's what God has defined as marriage. So they're together, right?

Now, as their parents, one of the things that's hard to do is let go of being the one that they listen to all the time, that they're dependent upon. As a matter of fact, when they're growing up, you get to give them all kinds of opinions and thoughts without any care as to whether they like it or not, because that's part of your job as a parent. I'm here to teach you the straight and narrow.

But now they're adults. They're in a union. There's another family. They are a family. And so as a parent, my job changes. My job is not to tell them what to do. It's to love on them. It's to care for them. It's to do the best I can for them. And the number one thing that parents get caught up doing sometimes is trying to manipulate their children into doing what they want. That's not your job.

As a father and as a mother, the most important job that we have is to raise our kids up in the ways of the Lord. It's to show them how to follow Jesus. It's to teach them that God is involved in every aspect of our lives. And you live that out with them. But then there comes a point where you say, okay, I've showed you those things. You know those things. Now it's up to you to go live them.

And they may not do it the way we thought they would. They may not do it exactly, in the beginning, the way we wanted them to. But it's not my job to call them up every Sunday morning. Hey, are you getting up for church? Why aren't you getting up for church? You need to get up for church. Get up. It's not my job to do that anymore. Now, at some point, if they start dropping off, I'll say, hey, man, you need to be careful. Just as fatherly advice, I'm giving that to you. But it's not my job to make them anymore.

Now, when my kids were little and they woke up, they knew we were going to church on Sunday morning. There wasn't no debate. There wasn't no argument. There wasn't no "but I want to do something else." I don't care. Get up. Get dressed. We're going to church whether you want to or not. When they were kids, that was the way it was. That's one of the ways we taught them how important it was. Now they're adults. Now I hope they go to church. Now I'll help them any way that I can, but it's not my job to force them.

And that same thing is true when your child is married to someone else. You're to be a friend and advisor, and love your kids. But be careful about trying to manipulate them or make them do what you want to do, because there are some greater responsibilities involved.

Jesus' mother and his brothers came to see him in Mark chapter 3, when he was fully involved in the ministry. He said, whatever the Father tells me to say, I say. Whatever the Father tells me to do, I do. And what they were there for — there are some that think, and other places said, they thought that Jesus was going a little too far. Maybe we need to kind of simmer him, slow him down a little bit. Whatever it was, they came to see him.

“They stood outside and sent word for him to come out and talk with them. There was a crowd sitting around Jesus, and someone said, ‘Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you.’ Jesus replied, ‘Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?’ Then he looked at those around him and said, ‘Look, these are my mother and brothers. Anyone who does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.’”

Now, does that mean that he didn't care for his parents? No. When he was on the cross, he told John — he said, look, “Behold thy son. Mother, behold thy son.” He made sure there was somebody there to take care of her. He honored her. But here's the deal. He had a greater responsibility at that time in life than to take off and go visit with his mom and his brothers. He was following God. God had told him what his ministry was. And he needed them to know that that was number one in his life. And if you are a parent and you've raised a Christian kid, then you want that to be number one in their life.

A friend of mine called me a couple of weeks ago. I've known him, gosh, since I was twenty-something. We were both youth ministers and we did camps together. I saw him when he finally brought this girl to camp, and then they ended up getting married, and it was great. And now they have adult children.

He was calling me about trying to help them raise support to go on a mission trip to a certain country. And I knew of that country, and I was like, man, that's a dangerous place. Can be a dangerous place. He said, I know. And I said, well, how do you feel about that? He said, well, we've talked to them a little bit. We wanted them to know what it was like. But ultimately, we want them to do what God wants them to do.

And I could tell — if it were me, I'd be like, I'm sorry. I called a bunch of people. Nobody's interested in helping you. Must be a sign from God you're not to go. I mean, it would be hard not to do that. But I so respected the fact that he was willing to say, they believe this is where God wants them to go. And so he was going to help them, even when it sent an icicle around his heart to think of them going there.

And that's the truth sometimes, parents. When our kids are following the Lord — now there's a whole other deal when they're not. What do we do then? We've got to pray for them. We've got to be there if they want advice. You can't make them do something. But in this case, they're following the Lord. But it doesn't look like what we would have wanted. I'd have wanted him to get a job — maybe be an accountant — and for her to stay home, stay here where it's safe, and not be going over to countries where they could be killed or kidnapped or something else. That wouldn't have been my choice. But it's not my choice as to what God calls them to do.

And so, parents, you have to respect that if you've taught your kids to love God and they do, God may lead them somewhere that you never anticipated and that makes you uncomfortable. And you've got to let them go. You've got to let them follow that path. They may not choose to have kids when you want them to. They may not choose to raise their kids the exact way that you wanted them to. But you have to understand, they're accountable to God. They're those children's parents. And if they ask you, tell them what you think, kindly. But be careful about trying to manipulate them.

Don't use it. If they need some help and you want to give it to them, give it to them. Not saying you have to, but if you want to, give it to them. But don't use it as manipulation. "You remember last June when we helped y'all out? Christmas is rolling around. We're counting on y'all coming to our house this year and nowhere else, because we helped you." Don't be using that as manipulation. If it's a gift, if you want to give it to them, give it as a gift without strings attached.

You base a lot of this on this: as fathers, we share a name with our Heavenly Father. There's a reason why he's called Father and we're called father. Because we're to be — even though we fail at it, all of us — we're to be an earthly example of what our Heavenly Father is going to be to them. And you want to be a good father. You don't manipulate your kids when you're a good father. You tell them honestly. You love them. And at some point, you let them go.

And you realize — one of the hardest things is realizing, this is what I want to happen. I want my kids to seek God first. And that's kind of hard, because there was a long time they saw me first. But that's not the way it's supposed to end up. You want them to seek God first. And so when Mary and his brothers came to see him, Jesus wasn't being rude. He was just telling them, look, y'all are my family. But God chooses my days and my paths. And so that's the way that it was.

Now, Ephesians 4:30-32. **"Do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."**

Now, he meant that for strangers, not for your family. No. Some of you are thinking, is that right? Okay, then. No. That's the way we're to treat people. And believe it or not, that Uncle Bocephus

that you don't like to talk about is a people too. And we're supposed to treat him like this.

And ultimately, here's what it comes down to. It comes down to pleasing God with the way that we deal with our family. So instead of asking the question, well, here's what they did, what should I do to them — it's, okay, here's what happened. How can I most please God by what I do now? And I understand there's a whole bunch of circumstances, a whole bunch of different things, and I'm not going to tell you there's a cookie-cutter answer about how to do that. But there is a call on our lives, if you're a believer, to honor God, to please God by the way you deal with it, by the way you deal with people in the conflicts in your family, in all those situations. What would most please God?

Do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. So if there are people in your family that don't know Christ, the way that you honor God by dealing with conflicts in your family is a witness to them. It's a testimony to who God is. He has identified you as his own.

Now here's the hard part. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. That thing about this thing called grace — we're to forgive other people. We're supposed to get rid of bitterness, rage, and anger.

And nowhere in there does it say, hey, forgive the people that express real remorse. Because that's the first thing. Well, I can forgive them, but they don't seem remorseful for what they've done. Is that what the Bible says? Only forgive those who have been properly remorseful, shown proper repentance? No. Well, why do they deserve to be forgiven? They don't. That's what grace is. Because guess what? You don't either.

And when you forgive people in your family or outside of it that don't deserve it, you're testifying to what Jesus did for you — that he forgave you when you didn't deserve it. You're extending grace that you've been given. And I understand that can be difficult, because, man, that's the thing about family and people that are close to you. People, they know your buttons. I already went through that. But ain't nobody can hurt you more than your own family. There's nobody can hurt you more than people that you have loved for a lifetime.

But if we only forgive people that are strangers and we don't forgive those close to us, that's not much of a testimony, is it? Do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way that you live. Bring joy to God's Spirit by forgiving people that don't deserve it.

Well, I can forgive them, but they're just going to do it again. They're just going to do it again. Maybe. Jesus already went through that. The disciples came up and said, Lord, how many times should we forgive them? And this seems like a generous number to me: should I forgive him seven times? He said, no — seventy times seven. That's the number for infinity. Over and over

and over and over and over and over again.

Why does that matter? Because God's done that for you. God didn't just forgive me one time when I was seven years old. He's forgiven me over and over and over and over and over and over and over and over again. He's forgiven me so I couldn't even count them. And I'm called to be like him. That's one of the hard things. But we're called to be like him.

Now, here's the last verse I'm going to give to you today. And this one is dependent upon what we do, upon our actions. And there's a promise that goes with it. **"When people's lives please the Lord, even their enemies are at peace with them."** When you please the Lord by the way you love, the way you live, the way you forgive — when your life pleases the Lord, even their enemies are at peace with them.

I remember reading this verse at one time when there was a conflict going on, and I felt like I really had enemies. And I'm sitting around going, all right, what do I do? What do I do? How do I deal with this? And then I read this verse and I thought, that's it. There it is. It's not a verse that says go around and attack them from behind, draw them into a trap, do whatever. It says, simply: when my life pleases the Lord, even my enemies are at peace with me.

That is the key to dealing with any of the conflict that you have in your life. In the way that you deal with them, do it in such a way that it pleases God. Not, well, they did this to me, what should I do? Ask the Lord. Ask people to pray for you. But recognize it's not about getting even. It's not about getting back at him. It's not about revenge. Revenge belongs to the Lord. Those are our natural man thoughts.

And I understand there may be boundaries that need to be set. I get that. But ultimately, my response to someone that hurts me or hurts my family is this: what would please God? What would please God? Now, that doesn't mean you've got to just let people run over you. I'm not saying that at all. Jesus didn't do that. What I'm saying is, what's the response that would please my Heavenly Father? Because that's the way peace comes.

See, I'm just responsible for my actions. I'm responsible for my actions and how it relates to God. And then God is responsible for the results. You think you're going to come up with some response, the perfect thing to say, where they're going to go, oh, I get it. If that happens to you, you should just get on your hands and knees and thank God right then, because you've just seen a miracle. Because it doesn't happen that way, does it? Respond in such a way that it pleases the Lord, and then let God handle circumstances.

It's tough. I understand, when it's family, when it's people that you love, people that you care about, people that you've trusted, people that have contributed to your raising, contributed to your life — and something's gone off the rails. It doesn't mean that those relationships can't be fixed, as much as they can. But what it means is we've got to take our attention off, all right, so

what do I do to them? What's the right thing to do to them? And start putting it on God. What do you want me to do here?

Sometimes it may be create some distance for a little while. Sometimes it may be expressing love to him and seeing how that works. You seek God and ask him what he would have you do. And when you find the way that pleases him, even your enemies will be at peace with you. That's good news.

Would you bow your heads and close your eyes, please? The first part about having peace is having a relationship with Christ. There are three simple things you need to do to begin a relationship with Christ, and I'm going to give them to you right now.

First one is this: you've got to admit you're a sinner and ask forgiveness of your sins. The Bible tells us in Romans that **"all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."** So you've got to just admit it. Hey, I have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And then you ask God's forgiveness.

The second thing is, you've got to believe in Jesus. Jesus is God's Son. The Bible says, **"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him would not perish but have everlasting life."** Jesus wasn't just some random guy. He was God's Son. He died on the cross for your sins as a perfect sacrifice. He's the only one who could die in your place. And then on the third day he rose from the grave and proved to the world that he was exactly who he said he was and is. You've got to believe in Jesus.

Third thing, you've got to confess him as Lord. He's proven his love for you, and he died for you on the cross. Romans 10:9-10. **"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."**

Now, if you'd like to do that today, if you'd like to know your sins are forgiven, if you'd like to know that you're in right relationship with God — and that's forever. Jesus said, anyone my Father gives me is in my Father's hand, and no one can snatch you from my Father's hand. It's forever. And that you'll be with him in heaven. If you'd like to know that your sins are forgiven, that you're in right relationship, and that that is forever, I want to encourage you to pray this prayer of salvation with me right now. You can repeat it after me. Just pray in your heart. God will hear you. If you'd rather do it in your own words, that's fine too. But if that's you, I want you to pray this with me right now. So let's pray.

"Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for loving me, and thank you for Jesus. God, I know I'm a sinner. Forgive me of my sins. Come into my heart and my life and cleanse me. I believe Jesus is your Son. I believe he died on the cross for my sins. And I believe he rose on the third day. So today, I trust Jesus as my Savior, and I confess him as my Lord."

Now, without anybody looking around, I want to talk to those of you who prayed that prayer today for just a moment. There are a couple of ways on the screen that you can contact us. Also in your bulletin that you take with you as you go. What we'd love to do is just get in touch with you and answer any questions, pray with you, encourage you, talk to you about the next steps in following Jesus. It doesn't mean you've joined our church. We're not going to ask you for anything. We just love helping new believers, and we love to help you.

Now, if you prayed that today, I'm not going to ask you to stand up. I'm not going to draw attention to you in any way, but I would like to pray for you. So if you prayed that prayer today, would you just look up at me right where you are? Just look up at me right now so that I can see you. Yes, sir. I see you. Okay. Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. I see you. Thank you. Okay.

I want you to know that if you prayed, the last verse I read to you says, if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Not you might be. Not maybe. It's you will be. And the reason is that God himself does the saving. And if God saves you, you're saved indeed. So thank you for being here today. And let me pray for you right now.

"Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for your goodness, your mercy, and your love. I thank you for these that have come today and made a decision to trust and to follow you. Lord, help them, Father, to hear your voice, to know where you're guiding them. Help them, Father, to find the right church, whether it's here or somewhere else. Lord, I pray they'd find a place where the Word is taught and they can grow in their faith. And Father, we thank you for just allowing us to be a part of their journey. We pray blessings upon them. And Father, we thank you for the life-changing decision they made today. We pray and we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen."