

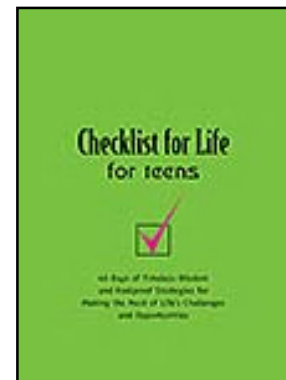
Siblings, “Deal with It”

In a family of several children, what needs to be said about conflict and disagreement? It’s a basic truth that siblings will have their problems...with each other. **What is also a basic truth is that family is important;** therefore, the need to “deal with it” could not be more important or essential for the overall effect of cohesion and community. If a family finds it impossible to get along – and love each other – than what is to happen in the *bigger world* with potential friendships, marriage and other extensions of community.

The parents should be role models to their children; thus, they should exhibit the effort and emphasis on love, friendship, and forgiveness. When parents fail to model this valued relationship, then the children become discouraged – even desperate – in harmonious or amicable relationships with siblings, peers, parents and the like.

With the parent’s domain is to also maintain a *level playing field*; or by all means, to not show favoritism or preference of one child over the other. Resentment, jealousy, and anger can reach *fever pitch* and, needless to say, can be very divisive both between children and with the parents.

Children have a unique sense to see this partiality – and will carry the experience into their adulthood.



Homework:

Please try to do these:

- Realize that God wants to change your character through interactions with others
- Believe that Jesus wants you to treat others with kindness, respect and love
- Appreciate your family (and be thankful)
- Treat your siblings and cousins with kindness
- Place a high value on your family
- Defend my siblings or other relatives

Things to Do:

- ✓ Thank God for each member of your family
- ✓ Identify the main reason (s) for conflict
- ✓ Read Luke, chapter 6 to learn more about *getting along*
- ✓ Make a list of qualities of the one – in your family – that *bugs* you the most
- ✓ Give a sibling something of value (to you) as a token of your kindness
- ✓ Bless the members of your family by asking God to bless them

Siblings, “Deal with It”

Some thoughts of my own:

- When a brother or sister can also be friend, how much the better...
- The strength of any relationship depends on mutual desire and commitment.
- When one or both act on selfish or singular benefits, the relationship suffers...
- Friendships will suffer *setbacks*, but love covers many shortcomings
- No matter how much give to a friendship or relationship, the response of the other is essential to ensure that the relationship has worth or meaning...
- Sometimes relationships can be strengthened through adversity; yes, adversity may *take a toll* – but as with the individual life – can be used to build character and strength...
- When my youngest son was very young (about three), he would say “I’m not going to be your friend unless you...” This proposition is cute (coming from a child) but is not healthy for mature people. When a relationship depends on meeting the other person’s expectations – as an ultimatum – you are not their friend, but are being used as something far less... **Friends do not leverage their relationship through such conditions (of want) and coercion...**
- **Still, friends do help each other and – in the best of a healthy relationship – put the help into action out of love...not out of pressure of losing the friend, etc.**
- Understanding (good communications) is essential to a friendship; miscommunication and even cross-words (or criticism) may occur – intentional or not. Again, love has a way of leading toward mending the hurt and shoring-up the problems...

The believer is called (or instructed) to be at peace with everyone – as much as it is possible; thus, he should be *open* to developing friends and relationships. A word of caution comes when the effort is not appreciated or valued by the intended recipient and – worse yet – the effort is used against you. Jesus called us to love even our enemies – or those who aim to hurt us; and as difficult as it is, the model and guidance of Christ remain relevant to our lives.

Even in love however, the believer should always pray for guidance and grace in caustic or adverse relationships – as boundaries may have to be established so as the other person” is not apt to stir up dissention or have free reign to destroy your life. Prayer will enlist the power of God to protect the soul of the saint...against what could be a spiritual battle in essence. If you believe the scriptures and study the Word, you will understand this last statement in detail. **Remember that the most important relationship is with Christ.** A solid, strong relationship with Christ is the foundation for all other relationships and friendships – in and out of the family.