

Is It Okay To Cut Ties With Toxic Family Members

by Tim Conway

This sermon addresses the question of when it is appropriate to cut off toxic family members, emphasizing the need to balance biblical principles with real-life situations. It explores the tension between honoring parents and following Christ's commands, highlighting the importance of being guided by Scripture and prayer in handling difficult family relationships.

Scripture: Exodus 20:12, Matthew 10:34, 1 Peter 3:1, Ephesians 6:1, Romans 13:1, Proverbs 22:6, 1 Corinthians 7:15, James 4:7, 1 Timothy 5:8, Colossians 3:20

Topics: "Family Dynamics", "Biblical Boundaries"

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Transcript

Somebody asked this question. I think this is a good one. Hello, Pastor Tim.

When is it okay or is it okay to cut off toxic family members? I think this is a great question because this comes up. I have to field this question from time to time. People get people in their life and family specifically.

When is it okay or is it okay to cut off toxic family members? You understand toxic. That can be a broad term. Some people may consider somebody toxic for good reasons and maybe some for bad reasons.

Anyway, you get the feel. My mother is mentally ill. Likely bipolar disorder has been heavy into drugs and alcohol.

She's been violent, emotionally abusive with my family for the majority of my life to the point that my dad stepped in to take my brother and I away at a young age. I've forgiven my mother for the things she's done and I've even rekindled the relationship with her multiple times. Unfortunately, she still makes me afraid for my life, my safety, and well-being.

I even consider when I one day have kids if I want her around them due to her explosive and unpredictable behaviors. This possibility adds to my fear of having a relationship with her. I'm now moved out living on my own.

Last year, I made the choice to cut ties with her. Although much time has passed, I'm second-guessing myself if this is biblical and how Jesus would have me handle this. What should I do? Thank you.

Okay, well, I'm going to throw this at you all. Somebody asks you this. You're in a church and somebody comes to you with this very situation and they say, could you give me counsel on this? So remember, basically, we want to be a people that are guided by scripture, but we all recognize this, that scripture has principles that we can apply.

Many, many, many, many of life's situations does not have a specific chapter and verse that you can go to that specifically spells out your situation and how to deal with that exact situation. And God designed it that way. God has given us his spirit and his word, and he wants us to depend on him.

The fact is that God usually doesn't give us exact and specific instructions to deal with the things we encounter in life. Like if you just, if you go into the scriptures and you say, oh, hey, look at Jericho. When Israel marched into the promised land, you know, the way to take a walled city, march around it once a day for six days, and then on the seventh day, march around it seven times and all the walls fall down and conquer it.

So that's how you, that's how you conquer a walled city. Do you know the problem with that? You never find that they did that again. One of the problems that we can have as Christians is we basically, we just want a set of rules, but that's not how God set up the Christian life.

He didn't, he didn't do that. It's not, it's not just God gave us a book with a set of rules that describes every possible scenario that we come across in life. And so let me ask you this.

Is there a time to separate yourself from a toxic family member? And if you're, I mean, could you imagine a situation and we have to fill in potential details here, but is there a potential situation where you could imagine, yes, I have to disassociate myself? I mean, if you're taking general biblical principles, can we see that there could be times when that might be appropriate? Well, let's ask a different question. Let's ask this question. Is there ever a scenario in where God tells me to disassociate with somebody else to avoid them? My son, I mean, you're going to get enticed by these people.

Don't, don't go with them. I mean, basically there's warnings about who your companions are, but when you come over to the new Testament, is there ever a scenario? Is there ever a situation where God says, avoid them? There is a form of godliness. There's a text I dealt with just on Sunday.

There's a form of godliness. There's an appearance of godliness. And it says, avoid people like that.

Or how about this? You go to first Corinthians chapter five, and you've got the fact that Paul says, don't associate with them. And he said, look, I'm not talking about the people out there in the world. I'm talking about people, people in the church, people that profess to be a brother or sister.

They call themselves a brother and they're involved in these kinds of sins. Don't even eat with them. Any other places in scripture you might think of where we're told to disassociate with somebody? There's actually multiple times, multiple times.

We might look at second Thessalonians. Let's look at that. Second Thessalonians.

One of the things that we don't want to do is we don't want to start by saying, oh, well, it's unloving to disassociate with somebody. So I could never do that. No, no, no.

If we're wanting to be biblical, there are times to do that. And this is very interesting. Second Thessalonians chapter three.

If you look specifically at verse six, now we command you brothers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who's walking in idleness. Idleness. And he says down in verse 11, we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busy bodies.

You know what? If you find somebody in the church that won't work, what does it say to do? Keep away from any brother who's walking in idleness. Look down at verse 14. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.

Titus chapter three, verse 10. It says, as for a person who stirs up division after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him. There's a very similar statement made over in Romans chapter 16.

I mean, one that's very profound is second John doesn't get a whole lot of mileage, probably because it's so short. And when's the last time you heard somebody quote second John? Rarely, but don't skip over it. And especially this second John, it says, verse eight, second John, watch yourselves so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.

Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the father and the son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, what teaching? Well, the sound teaching of the apostles, the sound teaching of the gospel.

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked deeds. You really want that to drive home. You know what? When Mormons or Jehovah's witnesses come to your door, and I know that doesn't happen.

I don't think we've ever had that happen here. Not even once. I think because we are living here, it's been simultaneous with COVID.

And I think it became politically incorrect for people to show up at your door like that. But in the U.S. we get people all the time. But you know what? It says not to even greet them.

You know, you can act friendly, you stick out your hand, you shake. I guess people have to make a call on when they come. You know, when do I do this? If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting.

Maybe, I mean, it means something. It definitely means something. And you know, you go through these verses and there's no question about it.

There are texts in Scripture that tell us not to associate, not to avoid people. It tells us not to greet people. That is a reality.

Now, there's a tension here because for one of the things, this isn't just anybody. This is a mother. This is not necessarily somebody that's causing division in the church.

This is not necessarily somebody that is teaching false doctrine. Now, they might, especially when you get crazy people and if there's some kind of mental illness or there's a demonic problem or something. Yeah, oftentimes there's a flakiness when it comes to the things of Christ, the things of Scripture.

That is very common. Very common. But it's a mother.

And you know what's interesting about that? Just think with me here. When Matthew 15, Jesus is rebuking the spiritual leaders and he said, you know what? You, by your commandments of men, you've basically just nullified the commandment of God. And what did he say to them? What was the thing that he put his finger on? You remember, right? They were basically what financial resources they had that they could have helped their parents with.

They had some convoluted thing where they basically said, well, we've kind of offered that to God and we call it Corban. And so we can't help our parents. Sorry, mom and dad, but this money has been dedicated over it.

But they didn't really give it away. It was still theirs to do with what they want. And Jesus said, for one, God said that you should honor your father and mother and anybody that curses father and mother, they should be put to death.

And he said, you know what? You've nicely just negated God's commandment by making your own commandment. Which what's the significance? The significance of that folks is that even when you're an adult, God expects you to have a special reverence and respect and honor for your parents. So now there's a tension here because on the one hand, I've got this principle where yes, there are times when God would have me disassociate from people.

And on the other hand, I'm dealing with a mother. And I would just say this again, God has not called us to live simply by a list of rules. And you know what? What may be true today may not be true tomorrow.

And we need to be people of prayer. We need to be, doesn't scripture say that if we acknowledge God in all of our ways, he will direct our path. You know what a verse like that tells me is that daily I need to be acknowledging my ways before the Lord.

Why? Because he hasn't given me a book that without prayer, I simply can go to that just has all this list of rules about how I should live my life. I need to be reading it and getting the flavor of it. And then I need to be asking God for guidance in how to apply it, which means I may take Jericho today in this manner, but I may take Ai tomorrow in that manner.

I may deal with my mom today this way. I may deal with my mom tomorrow that way. And here's the thing.

Peter anticipates a situation which is similar. It's not a mother, it's a husband. And you remember what Peter said, let's all look at it.

First Peter chapter three, over and over and over again, I find that first Peter chapter three is a very helpful principle, not only for a wife married to a lost husband, but oftentimes in situations just like this. Now, just follow this. Likewise, wives be subject.

I recognize that we have other relationships where subjection may not be the issue, but you have a wife be subject to your own husbands. So that even if some, you see, some of you are going to have husbands that are saved, but some of you are going to have husbands that don't obey the word. Well, that's it.

That's Peter's way of saying they don't know the Lord, that they may be one. You see that again, reaffirms they don't know the Lord. You're trying to win them without a word.

It doesn't mean the husband never heard the word of God. It doesn't mean that he never heard the gospel. He's never heard about Christ.

It just means that the wife doesn't have to preach to him all the time. She can seek to live a godly conduct. That's what wins them.

They're won without a word by the conduct of their wives. Their conduct speaks louder than their lips. That's the point.

And they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external. And see, one of the things that you need to think about is these people, before you just chop people off, I recognize you've got a church disciplinary situation.

Somebody calls themselves a brother, and they're living in fornication, adultery, whatever. Yes, disassociate. Don't even have them over.

I recognize that. I recognize if you've got a Mormon, that they're out there up and down your streets, and they're trying to deceive people with a demonic deception. Yeah, there can be a place.

I'm not bringing them in. I'm not shaking hands with them. I'm not going to join in their wickedness.

But you're dealing with a family member here. And just like this woman dealing with a lost husband, you may be the only gospel bearer in the life of this lost mother. And so you want to be careful that you just don't sever your relationship when you are maybe the only source of light in her life, which that's where this wife is.

She's the source. Now, I recognize there can come a time when Paul says, hey, if that lost party doesn't want to abide with the saved person, then let him go. But that's not what we're faced with here.

There's no indication the husband wants to leave here. Paul's dealing with another thing over there in 1 Corinthians 7. But listen, to the wife, he says, do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair, the putting on of gold jewelry. Verse 2 said, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

So again, it's that emphasis of conduct. If you go to verse 4, by adorning, but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. Let's see, we could turn this thing around and we could talk to a lost or to a saved husband about how he should deal with a lost wife.

And obviously he's not in a position of submission to her, but many of the same principles by his conduct, by the way he loves her, but we're dealing with a wife. Notice this. This is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by submitting to their own husbands.

As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, and you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Now, I think that statement right there is especially applicable to what this person is asking. You say, why? Well, because you see what's being said.

Why would he say that you do good, don't fear anything that's frightening? Why would he say that? Why would he say that? Well, you can imagine. I mean, imagine. What's the context? The context is a wife living with a lost husband.

What could be frightening in that situation? Well, yeah. Well, yeah. There can be some things that are frightening.

What is Peter basically telling the woman to do? Be afraid and run around the house and scream hysterically? Have this godly, meek, quiet, control her mouth, conduct in front of whatever he's like. And you know what guys that don't obey the word can be like. And there can be some frightening things, right? I mean, men can be stronger.

They can be abusive. And don't fear anything that's frightening. In other words, trust the Lord.

You see, didn't you get a sense in this that there is something frightening? And so, listen, what I would say is this. If I'm a father and I need to protect my children, well, that's different than if I'm single and I've got a mother over here who does crazy things. There is a place to seek to be light to her, to seek even at times, try to win her without a word.

Listen, if you've already tried to communicate the truth and repeatedly done it, and you realize that this creates hostility, there can be a place to select your conduct, be godly in front of the person, try to honor that mother, call her on Mother's Day, call her on her birthday, visit her, try to be light. If you've already tried to share the gospel and she just violently reacts, if she's open, take the opportunity, pray for opportunity. You never know if you pray for opportunity, you may go over there and she may open the door to a conversation.

And trust the Lord. I mean, look, even if you have a mother that has a demon, if you're a Christian and you're trusting the Lord, God is in the business of stopping demons in their tracks from harming his people. And so there comes to a place that we need to trust.

And look, we have to size it up. If I'm asking God for direction, how he guides me today may be different than how he guides me tomorrow. And how he guides that person over there may be different than how he guides me.

It's kind of like the demoniac. What do you tell the demoniac? Well, go over there and tell everybody. What do you tell the leper? Don't go over there and tell anybody.

So listen, what God tells one person to do today may be different than what he tells that person to do tomorrow. And what he tells me to do today may be different from what he tells you to do today. And God is very much in the business of doing that.

There's no specific list of rules on the vast majority of things that we have to deal with. Yes, God has given us commandments that are pretty, pretty, I mean, look, there are some things we don't have to be praying for all this leadership about. God has been very clear.

Very clear. Let the thief no longer steal. If you have to ask God whether it's appropriate to steal or not, it's not.

You don't have to go any further than that. There's many things like that in Scripture. But you get all sorts of things like this, where it's like you have to wrestle.

You have to weigh it out. I mean, you love your mother. You want to respect your mother.

God has given this mother a saved child. Most mothers in the world don't have saved child. And the fact is that Peter is putting at least some degree of possibility on somebody acting godly actually winning the lost person.

And so, look, sometimes it can just be easy to just avoid, to just cut off the relationship. That can be the easy route. It can be hard to actually work with people that are not easy to work with and bear with them.

But, you know, I will say this. There's no question about it. You get a sense in the Scripture that God puts, you think about it, it made it into, not only made it into the 10 commandments, it is the first commandment with promise and it is the first commandment on our interacting with other human beings.

Those first four commandments, they have to do with our interaction with God. As soon as God hits interpersonal relationships among men, the very first one is honoring parents. Hudson Taylor would not take any young person into the China Inland Mission if the parents did not support.

And he really believed that God honored that. And he saw some situations where there was real need and somebody desperately wanted to be involved in China Inland Mission, but their parents were against it. And he refused them and they went and took care of the parents until the parents died.

And then they came and were involved in it. But he saw God's blessing on that. And over the years, I've really been a big advocate of people, like young people when they want to get married, if the parents didn't agree.

I don't believe I ever married any couples if the parents were in disagreement. Of course, you know, as people get older, you know, there's just, I guess you have to consider different factors here. But there's no set of rules.

But anyway, that's probably enough said. Anybody have any observations on that? Any thoughts that have been percolating? Well, yes, as a father, you need to be a protector. And so because he doesn't have children, see, sometimes you can be building these scenarios, and you're reacting now to a scenario that isn't even real.

That's why I didn't go there a whole lot, because that isn't his situation. But yes, if I'm going to protect my children, now look, if I have a mother like that, then my children are never, ever, ever, ever, ever going to be with her without me there. And if I ever discern that my children are in danger, or it's just, you know, whether something has happened, or whether I just perceive that is not a safe place for them to be, then I'm not going to expose them to that.

So, I mean, somebody has to, if you have children, you have to be in a position where you're assessing that. Is there safety here? But I think if, you know, if you're there, look, I mean, you're dealing with a mother. My assumption is that typically a son, especially as you get older, a son can hold back a mother if

necessary.

You know, a son can be in control if he determines. But everything about that relationship, if she's unstable like that, everything about that relationship would be according to my design. Like, it's all going to happen.

Like, if she makes a request, it's all going to have to go through me as to whether I'm going to consent to that or not. If she all of a sudden, you know, comes by the house, I want to take, you know, I want to take my granddaughter out shopping. You know what? Is that going to offend her if I say no? Yes.

Am I going to say no? Yes. I mean, I'm going to protect my daughter. And if you let the discomfort of saying no allow you to, or put you in a position where you basically buckle and then your child goes and something happens, yeah, you need to be willing to take a stand.

I mean, it's, you know, I know this is a different scenario, but when you all were growing up, I just basically had a policy. Once it was Aunt Mida, you guys are not spending the night anywhere, especially the girls. And, you know, we had situations where you'd have one of the girls would have a friend in the church and the mom was saved, the dad wasn't, or the brothers weren't.

Well, that's just, you don't let your daughter go over there and spend the night when you've got a lost father or lost brothers. That's exactly how bad things happen. And it's just, no, it's not happening.

Does it offend people? Yeah, it offends people, but it's like, it doesn't matter. I am not going to put, I mean, look, if you just hear the statistics on how many girls end up being violated by a cousin, an uncle, a friend of the family, it is so common. How does it happen? Well, it happens because dads and brothers drop the ball.

They allow that girl to get into a situation. And so, you know, no, you got to, as a parent, you've got to be protective. And I recognize as everybody, as your children get older, you got to let the reins out, but God helped each one of us to know wisely how to do that, when to do that.

There was one time we were at my grandpa and grandma's Richmond and they were watching something on TV and it had foul language and I just swept all of you into a back room and then they changed it. One time we were at the Ouellettes and something indecent came on and I gathered you all up and we went home. Did we, I don't think we ever, I mean, 10,000 times when it was movie night, we turned whatever we were watching off.

And then I would, you know, that would be a time for teaching the family. This is why we turned it off. And even the ones we didn't turn off, typically when it got over, now we're going to assess it.

We're going to view it through the lens of truth. What was wrong, children, what was wrong with that movie we just watched? And we're talking more ideology and just the ideas that were being propagated. If, I mean, anyways, we just, we kept pretty tight clamps on you.

And of course, when you were young, nobody got schooled outside of our home. We were going to be protective there. And, you know, we, we tried to let you interact with the neighborhood kids.

And the very first day you came back and told us the words they said, and that was the end of that. And so, yeah, we, but see at the same time, what people need to recognize is we were, we were taking you to

church. We would take you out evangelizing in horrible parts of the city.

And so it wasn't like, on the one hand, we protected you. On the other hand, we exposed you. So you, you, except for Grace, you all were pretty street smart.

Grace was the one that would, she would just stare and make eye contact with scary people. We're glad Hunter's protecting her now. But yeah, we, I mean, look, we lived on the East side and crazy people were out there and strange things happen.

And so it's not like we moved to a gated community and we protected you that way. It's like, we came to the inner city and we exposed you to a lot. And at the same time, we were also protective.

And so there, there was a balance there to show you what the world was like. And we didn't shelter you from that to show you the needs of people. But you know, in, in, in many ways, God protected, I mean, we had demonic things happen.

Like we were here pounding on the house for a whole season there. It was just part of the spiritual warfare, but you realize none of the four of our children ever heard it one time. God just protected them.

I mean, I heard it very plainly, but they never heard it. And so it was just the kind of thing where, you know, even, even like we had, what I would say is modern day demoniac walk into the service. And I had been talking about Balaam and Beli.

And before this guy came into the church, then he came in and all the children shouted. I think I told this story before. And anyway, this guy went out and was somehow after the, after the prayer meeting, this guy ended up in our van.

There's a long story. I don't want to get into it. As we were driving down the road, he just looks over at me and he begins to quote, I think it's numbers 32 verbatim.

This is a street guy. He's quoting. He's quoting that account of Balaam and Beli.

He wasn't even there when I was talking about now and where Balaam says to his donkey, if I had a sword, I'd stab you. And so we got this guy out of there and we're driving along and all the kids are freaked out. And Joshua says, dad, is he talking to you? Is he quoting scripture? I said, oh, but it's like God protected.

I mean, I had Joshua in my arms when some lady, some demon voice is coming out of there. So, I mean, we were there in those situations, but we tried to be wise. We purposely, you know, we homeschooled and we tried to get, find some like church leagues for sports, or they had homeschoolers associations and we tried to get, get them involved in sports or even some classes to help in subjects that were necessary.

So, I mean, we did, we, we tried to give, and plus we had a church, a prolific church that was growing with just enormous amount of kids in it. And so how many of those children were your ages? Probably it was in the minority, but we were older, but than most of the people in the church. But anyways, they, they weren't in a certain sense, they weren't sheltered, but in another sense they were, but I mean, you know, Ruby's mom was not the most stable and, you know, I never remember leaving any of you just with her.

It's probably not something we would have done. And I mean, for the most part, her, her craziness came out at certain times, but, but even, you know, we were, we were even somewhat hesitant even with my

parents and just, you know, knowing the church they went to and the things that they believed. And, you know, they lived far away.

So just most of the time it was not an issue. And it was, it wasn't until you were all older that we let you all go over there, stay with them for a few days while we were at a conference or something. But, but I'll tell you this.

Do you know what happened when a priest had a daughter that it was found out was not a virgin? They burned her on his doorstep. Now, I mean, that's, obviously that's not a situation of rape or where somebody, you know, some family member overpowered her, but you know, it's very interesting that it's done on the dad's doorstep. That's how he's spoken really loudly to me that fathers, you better take care of your daughters.

You have a responsibility. If she ends up being defiled somehow, you are at least partially responsible. And I, I mean, if we let our daughters go places where they get taken advantage of that, that's, that's a problem.

Where are we at quarter after 0830? Well, two questions. Any other comments? We got three minutes. I think anytime we get into multiple authorities, we run into the risk.

It's the same thing with the government. I think that as Christians, the expectation is that Caesar should know nobody more faithful in his empire than Christians. Yet if Caesar, there's a place to render to Caesar, what's Caesar's and to God, what's God's.

And so the thing is that when it comes to government, there's a time when we as citizens have to say no. And it's the same with family members. I mean, Jesus specifically said he came to bring a sword, not peace.

So he sets people against each other. But the thing is nothing about that statement negates the fact that we should honor our father and mother that there's nothing, there's no indication. In fact, all the reverse, there's no indication that, that because Jesus said, I'm bringing a sword or because he says, uh, let the dead bury their dead.

Or one of the things you have to read in there, what's actually happening. He's not, the idea of burying his father was the fact that there was an expectation in that culture that he would live with that father until the father died and was buried. It's not like, well, my father just died.

Can I, can I not at least go to the funeral? I don't think that's, that's the issue there. The issue is, well, there's this expectation that I'm going in and in many cultures, there is exactly that there's an expectation, especially if you're the oldest son, that you are going to take care of your parents. And Jesus is saying, my authority trumps that.

And yes, there are going to be things that you do that are going to be viewed by your parents and by possibly others that are observing. That is even going to seem like you hate father and mother. And so yes, but the thing is, Jesus is very specific, even with, even with adults, that that is the commandment he targets.

That is the commandment that is first in the 10. And it is one that Paul reiterates in the Ephesian letter. And certainly honoring parents comes.

I mean, I've had to, anybody that's had lost parents, you have to wrestle with that tension. And I've been there. And it's like, I want to be a light to my parents.

I want to honor them. I want to seek to care for them. If that ever becomes a necessity, I, you know, I want them to be able to enjoy the grandkids.

I want to be able to be, I want my conduct to be like the first Peter three thing, where if there's a possibility that my conduct could be used of the Lord to win them, that I want that to happen, but the claims of Christ are always going to take the day. And yet in the very claims of Christ, he's saying, you know, you guys, by your commandments of men, you basically undo the commandments of God. So he's very interested in having us keep those commandments of God and have respect for the parents.

But I mean, you see, I mean, you can imagine even this wife that Peter, Peter probably has people in mind. He doesn't take, take this right out of the blue. He was dealing with real people in his day.

He writes that first Peter epistle. I mean, he's talking to wives that all through this gospel age are going to have husbands of all sorts. And you know, what a lost husband can ask a wife to do all sorts of stuff.

Does there ever come a time when she needs to say no? Yes. There are times, obviously there are times he doesn't, he doesn't regard the word. She does.

Are there going to be times when he may say, well, I want you to do this or, you know, I don't go to church or he asked her to do some perverse thing or watch pornography with him or whatever you can fill in the blank. I mean, are there going to be times? Yes. There are going to be times that to our parents, we're going to have to say, no, we can't do that.

But we, um, there, we, we just need to, we need God's wisdom and we need to trust him. Like, you know, not fearing those things that are, that are so fearful. It seems like that's what this guy's getting into some fearful things.

But, um, you know, I, I think, I think, I think the area where we're going to find ourselves resisting mothers and fathers is where they explicitly want us to do something or not do something that Christ wants us to do the opposite of. And it's apparent from his word. Again, I mean, all those things come into the equation.

Like when I first got saved, I spent a good deal of time evangelizing the, all the high school buddies that I had and I recognized. And so I would go out with them. These days went out all the time.

I'd go out with them. I was in the bar. I'd have beer in my hand, but I wasn't there to get drunk any longer.

I was there to evangelize these guys. And, and I did, that's all I could talk about in those days to those guys. And, uh, but I came to realize that I would like, promise the Lord, I'm only going to have two drinks tonight.

And then I came home and I had four. Now you have to recognize I was coming out of days where I drank so much that four beers was nothing, but it was twice as many as what I had told the Lord I was going to do. And I would come home so grieved, but then the next week would come and it wouldn't be, yeah, I'm going to go out and party.

It'd be, I'm going to take the truth to these guys. And eventually, I mean, I can remember, I can remember coming home and, uh, anyway, I just, I realized being around these guys is too much of a temptation. I

can't, I can't do this because I'm too weak.

I mean, I don't, I don't have the ability here. And I figured, well, and I had plenty of opportunity to share the truth with them. And so I just figured, okay, I need to, I need to cut this relationship with these guys off.

But, you know, that's different than my dad. Huh? I, the thing is, I think I tried to help my dad go help him work on something. I'd go visit him.

Foul mouth just grieved me. Oh, it was so grievous. He was a drunk, foul mouth.

I remember he, and he'd try to provoke me. It wasn't just that he had a foul mouth. He was, he would purposely try.

And I remember being so angry, going out in the field and back and just asking God to kill him or save him. Cause he would not kill him because of some insult to me, but just cause he was so blasphemous to God. Cause he dishonored the Lord.

And yeah, I mean, I've been there. I've been in that tension before. I would have never left the kids with him ever, but I would take them there for him to see and enjoy, but never would I have left them with him.

And, you know, if he, if he wanted me to do something that was opposed to what Christ wanted, then, you know, I never ran into that a whole lot with my parents. Not near as, I think one of the things was moving to Texas and my mom living in, in North Carolina and my dad living in Michigan and just, they were so far away. I mean, my dad gave me a hard time about spanking the kids.

Like he was going to call CPS on me. I was like, dad, you're just full of hot air. And that can be a big thing right there.

Parents that don't want you to biblically discipline your children. That can be a big issue.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Alj-uK9LhE0.mp4>

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