

How To Get Along With Your Siblings

(appropriate for Mid-Schoolers and older)

Michael R. Daily Feb. 2012 (30 minutes)

How many of you have a younger brother? What are they like? Now I want you to think about your younger brother if you have one. If you don't have one I want you to imagine that you do have one.

What kind of feelings would you have if I told you that your younger brother was going to be more successful than you? What if I told you they were going to have more money than you? And that they were going to be more highly regarded than you? What if I told you that your younger brother was going to end up being your boss? How would you feel?

Now let's change things a little bit. Instead of me telling you, what if God said it? What if God was the one who said that your younger brother was to be your boss? Now what would you think? Would it make a difference?

If God says it and it still bothers you what does that indicate? It means that you think you are a better, more righteous judge than God is! That is the same attitude that got Satan kicked out of heaven isn't it? So, if God says something we need to be OK with it, even if he says our brother is to be the boss. Does that ever happen in real life – the younger brother becoming the older brother's boss? Yes, it does.

Tonight we are going to look at some examples in the Bible of when the younger brother became the boss of the older brother and see how they handled it. Some handled it well. Some handled it poorly.

Bad Example: Cain

Genesis 4:1-8

Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD." 2 Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. 4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; 5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. 6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." 8 Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

(Hebrews 11:4)

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

(I John 3:10-12)

By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 12 not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

Who was the older brother? Cain. And what happened in this situation? Cain got angry and killed his brother. Why? Because God liked Abel's sacrifice better than Cain's.

What God is saying to Cain is, "I like what your brother did better than what you did. Do you have a problem with that? Sin is crouching at the door. How are you going to handle this?"

So, how did Cain handle this? Not well. He killed his brother.

Was it Abel's fault that God did not like Cain's sacrifice? No. Abel did not do anything wrong. So why did Cain get angry and kill him? Because he was jealous. Instead of hating Abel how should Cain have handled this situation? By being happy for his brother and asking God to help him (Cain) please God in the future.

Jealousy: Hostility toward one who is perceived to have an advantage.

Bad Example: Joseph's brothers

Genesis 37:3-11

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. 4 His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms. 5 Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; 7 for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf." 8 Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. 9 Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." 10 He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

How do Joseph's brothers feel about him? They hated him. Why? Because Dad loved Joseph more than the other brothers. Was this a good thing for Dad to do? No. Its not good for parents to love one child more than another – that is not God's will – but sometimes it does happen. Other times our parents love all their children the same but it can still feel, sometimes, like they don't love us as much as the other children. Whether its true or just feels that way, does not being loved as much as your brother give you the right to hate him or hurt him? No. Just because your parents sin, that does not mean its OK to hate, hurt, or kill your brother.

Why is that? Because God is in control of your life. Nothing happens to you apart from His plan for you. Just because someone else sins doesn't change that. God loves you and He will give you the grace you need to accomplish His will in this situation.

(Psalm 32:10) - Many are the sorrows of the wicked, But he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him.

(Psalm 37:39-40) - But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in time of trouble. ⁴⁰ The LORD helps them and delivers them; He delivers them from the wicked and saves them, Because they take refuge in Him.

Why else did Joseph's brother hate him? Because God had said in a dream that Joseph will be his brothers' boss and will rule over them. They did not handle it well. They were angry and jealous.

Joseph had a second dream and what did God reveal in that dream? That he would also rule over his parents as well as his brothers. How did his Dad handle this news? He handled it pretty well. He was a little shocked at first but if it was from God then it was OK with him. The brothers on the other hand were deeply angry and jealous to the point of selling Joseph into slavery in Egypt.

Even though the brothers did not respond the way they should have and sinned against Joseph, God was still in control of Joseph's life and, by His grace, used Joseph to save the nation of Israel from extermination due to starvation (not to mention saving Egypt as well).

(Genesis 50:15-21)

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!" 16 So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father charged before he died, saying, 17 'Thus you shall say to Joseph, "Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. 18 Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." 19 But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? 20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. 21 So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Good Example: Aaron

Moses had a brother named Aaron. Was Aaron the older brother or the younger? According to Exodus 7 Aaron was 3 years older than Moses. Moses was the little brother.

Exodus 4:10-16

Then Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." 11 The LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say." 13 But he said, "Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will." 14 Then the anger of the LORD burned against Moses, and He said, "Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. 16 Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him.

Have you ever seen a movie about Moses? Moses goes boldly up to Pharaoh and says something like "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go!"

That never happened. In real life Moses was afraid to speak and tried to get out of the mission God had for him by saying he was not good at speaking. So, what did God do? He said that Moses' brother Aaron would do the talking for him. So, in real life Aaron would stand before Pharaoh and speak boldly while Pharaoh looked at him with rage while Moses stood in the background.

So, Aaron did all the talking but who got all the credit? Moses. Which one became famous? Moses. Which one was played by Charlton Heston in the movies? Moses.

How do you think Aaron feels about all of this? How did he handle it?

Exodus 4:27-31

Now the LORD said to Aaron, "Go to meet Moses in the wilderness." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. 28 Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him to do. 29 Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; 30 and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. 31 So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped.

Aaron was OK with it. And what did God give Aaron for his obedience?

How many times is Aaron's name mentioned in the Bible? Over 300 times. How many people does God mention 300 times in the Bible? Not very many.

God also made Aaron the chief priest of the nation of Israel. But most important of all, God rewarded Aaron in heaven for his willingness to fulfill the role God gave him.

Instead of being jealous when God gives more of something to our brother we need to remember that God's plan for us is different than for our brother and if we focus on doing what God wants us to do we will be rewarded in heaven. **(I Corinthians 3)**

(Exodus 7:1-7)

Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. 2 You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. 3 But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst." 6 So Moses and Aaron did it; as the LORD commanded them, thus they did. 7 Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

Good Example: David's brothers

This next passage is about the selection of David to be king of Israel from among his brothers. David was the youngest. How would you feel if God said your little brother was to become king of the nation instead of you?

I Samuel 16:7-12

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." 9 Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." 10 Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." 11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." 12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he."

By the way, what if God decides to make your sibling look cuter than you? Are you OK with that? It may be that God's plan for you works best if you are a little less attractive than your sibling. If you were more attractive you might be tempted to become a model instead of the engineer or pastor God wanted you to be. So, maybe God chose to make you a little less attractive to make it easier for you to fulfill His plan for your life. But His plan for your sibling is different. Are you OK with that? Let's see how David's brothers handled their little brother becoming king.

I Samuel 22:1-2

So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him. 2 Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.

They handled it well. They chose to follow and take orders from their little brother as their military leader. If we are not careful it is easy to become jealous and full of hate toward our sibling if they seem to have more of something than we do. But in real life things are never perfectly balanced. We will have more of some things than our siblings and they may have more of other things. That's part of God's plan for each of us.

Instead of being jealous that our brother or sister has more, we need to remember that God is in control and His judgments and plans for each of us are true and right. Let's focus on fulfilling the plan God has for us and trust that He will reward us for obeying Him.

Appendix – Additional Verses on Getting Along With Siblings

Psalm 50:16-21

But to the wicked God says, “What right have you to tell of My statutes And to take My covenant in your mouth? 17 “For you hate discipline, And you cast My words behind you. 18 “When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, And you associate with adulterers. 19 “You let your mouth loose in evil And your tongue frames deceit. 20 “You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother’s son. 21 “These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes.

Romans 14:10-13

But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written, “AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD. 12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way

Matthew 5:21-24

“You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. 23 Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

Proverbs 6:16-19

There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, 19 A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

Psalm 133:1-3

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, Coming down upon the beard, Even Aaron’s beard, Coming down upon the edge of his robes. 3 It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing—life forever.

Luke 17:3-5

Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him. 5 The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”

Matthew 18:15

“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

Proverbs 18:19

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a citadel.

1 John 2:9-11

The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

1 John 4:20-21

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Luke 12:13-34

Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." 16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." 22 And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! 25 And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? 26 If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! 29 And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. 33 "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

James 4:1-12

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." 7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. 11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

Luke 15:11-32

And He said, "A man had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. 13 And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. 14 Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. 17 But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' 20 So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate. 25 "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28 But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. 29 But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; 30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.' 31 And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.'"

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How To Get Along With Your Siblings*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Genesis 4:1-8, Hebrews 11:4, 1 John 3:10-12*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Genesis 37:3-11, Genesis 50:15-21*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalms 32:10, Psalm 37:39-40*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Samuel 16:7-12, I Samuel 22:1-2*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalms 50:16-21, Romans 14:10-13*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 6:16-19, Psalm 133:1-3*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 17:3-5, Matthew 18:15*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I John 2:9-11, I John 4:20-21*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How To Get Along With Your Siblings*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 12:10, Proverbs 18:19*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 12:13-34*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *James 4:1-12*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 15:11-32*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 5:21-24*

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