

Four Ways to Show Mercy to Your Family

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Mercy is love in action. You experience God's mercy every moment of every day—and God wants you to share that same mercy with the people around you! But sometimes it can be hardest to show mercy to the people closest to us—to our families. **Here are four practical ways you can show mercy to your family:**

1. Overlook irritations and offenses.

Many families get buried in the small irritations and offenses of everyday life. Instead of letting these minor things build up, mercy chooses to overlook them. As 1 Corinthians 13:5 says, “[Love] is not irritable or resentful” (ESV). And the Message paraphrase says it this way: “Be careful that when you get on each other’s nerves you don’t snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out” (1 Thessalonians 5:15).

2. Be kind.

It’s common for families to have someone who’s hard to love—someone who’s irresponsible or demanding or rude. But those people need your mercy too! The Bible says, “Love is patient and kind. . . . Love is always supportive” (1 Corinthians 13:4, 7 CEV). God’s kindness to you isn’t based on who you are or what you do. And he wants you to show that same kindness to your family members, even the difficult ones. The Bible gives clear guidance: “Don’t be hateful to people, just because they are hateful to you. Rather, be good to each other and to everyone else” (1 Thessalonians 5:15 CEV).

3. Let go of past hurts.

It’s easy to keep a mental record of all the ways your family members have hurt you. But that’s not God’s plan for you: “[Love] keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV). Instead of thinking about an offense over and over again, choose to let it go—and do this instead: **Don’t repeat it; delete it.** As the New Living Translation of 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 says, “Love is not . . . rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged” (NLT).

4. Believe God is working.

You must believe that God is working in the lives of your spouse, kids, parents, and other family members—even when you don’t see it. The Bible says you have to trust God: “Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance” (1 Corinthians 13:7 NLT). What’s the best way to trust God with your family? Pray for them—for your marriage, for your children, and more. As Psalm 28:2 says, “Hear my prayer for mercy when I call to you for help, when I lift my hands toward your most holy place” (GW).

As you show God’s mercy to your family, rely on God’s never-ending mercy towards you. The Bible promises: “The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning” (Lamentations 3:22-23 NLT).