



Forget Fouling Your Family...

Mark 3:25

"If a family is divided, it can't stand."

"Timeout!" the coach is yelling at the top of his lungs from the sideline. As he huddles up his team, he asks this question: "What are you doing? You're fouling your own teammates!" WHAT? Why would a player foul his or her own teammate? They'll never win the game that way!

It may seem hard to believe, but this example is very much the same as the act of talking badly about your family to your friends. God wants family members to be loyal to one another and to honor one another so that they can stand strong for Him. Here's an example: You're in a conversation with a friend at recess and you say, "My brother's a pain! He's spoiled and mean!" Then you go on to tell the ways that he drives you crazy. OR these: "My mom is always yelling at me!" or "My dad got a speeding ticket." The words you speak about your family to your friends matter to God. It may seem small and silly, but once again, your words tell your friends a lot about yourself.

Consider changing the way you talk about your family to your friends. Telling them to pray for you because you're having a difficult time obeying your parents or honoring your sister or brother is totally different than calling them names or sharing their secrets. And to be a good friend to others, try encouraging them to get along with their families when they're having a difficult time. You might say, "I'll pray for you to honor your mom," or "it's nice to have a big brother—I'll pray you two can get along better." Also, when your friends put down someone in your family, be prepared to defend them in a loving way. Tell your friends about the good qualities in your mom or dad, sister or brother. Even when they're annoying you!

Friends encouraging friends *not* to foul their own families is a big way to give glory to God in our friendships. In doing so, we help God build an even larger family—the family of Christians all over the world. Isn't it cool to be a part of a winning team?

Discuss the following questions with your parent/s:

- 1. Read Exodus 20:12. Why do you think this commandment is so important?**
- 2. What does the verse above mean: "If a family is divided, it can't stand"?**
- 3. Other than words, what are some other ways we can dishonor our family in front of our friends? Can our actions speak just as loudly as our words?**
- 4. Galatians 5:14 says, "The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Who is your first neighbor?**

This game is over, but what comes next? Letter "G" gives away something...what do you guess?