



Five Tips & Two Tricks to Navigate Overbearing Relatives During the Holidays

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Compliments of Boundaries Restored

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The holidays are here, and that means time spent with relatives—some of whom might be a bit too enthusiastic, opinionated, or overbearing.

Whether it's Aunt Susie's unsolicited advice, Uncle Bob's political rants, or Cousin Julie's endless questions about your life choices, the season can become more stressful than festive.

But what if you could handle it all the way Jesus would?

He set the perfect example of maintaining healthy boundaries, handling overbearing people with love, and keeping peace in situations where others might try to stir the pot.

Here are five tips and two tricks to help you navigate your family dynamics, reclaim your peace, and stay true to your boundaries this holiday season.

Let's walk through them together and apply the wisdom Jesus modeled, all while keeping your joy intact.

Tip #1: Choose Your Battles Wisely

Not every comment or question requires a response. Jesus was strategic in how He responded to those who tried to provoke or distract Him, and we can learn a lot from that.

Scriptural References:

“But Jesus knew their thoughts, and He said to them, ‘Why do you reason evil in your hearts?’” — Matthew 9:4 (TPT).

Jesus didn't engage in every debate or question. He knew when to respond and when silence was the best choice.

“Then Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’” — Matthew 19:21 (TPT).

Sometimes, the best way to handle overbearing questions is to simply not answer in the way people expect. Jesus knew when to redirect and make others reconsider their assumptions.

Practical Takeaway:

When Aunt Susie brings up a topic you know will lead nowhere good, choose not to engage. A simple smile and changing the subject might be all that's needed.

Tip #2: You Won't See Them Again Until Next Holiday Season

Remember, the holiday season is fleeting.

The awkward moments will pass, and before you know it, you won't have to deal with them again until next year.

Jesus modeled resilience and patience, reminding us to endure in love.

Scriptural References:

“And He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!’” — Luke 24:25 (TPT).

Sometimes, Jesus had to be direct in His rebukes, but He always did it with a long-term perspective, knowing that the true value was in their growth.

“Jesus replied, ‘You don't realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.’” — John 13:7 (TPT).

The temporary discomfort you feel from an overbearing relative won't last forever.

Take comfort knowing that in the grand scheme of things, it's a brief moment.

Practical Takeaway:

Don't let one or two interactions define your entire season.

Focus on the good moments and keep in mind the brevity of the time you'll spend together.

Tip #3: Take the High Road—Be the Bigger Person

It can be easy to get caught up in family drama, but Jesus showed us how to take the higher road.

By not reacting impulsively or starting conflict, we can preserve peace.

Scriptural References:

“And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’” — Luke 23:34 (TPT).

Jesus chose grace over anger, forgiveness over retaliation. Even in the face of cruelty, He showed love.

“Jesus said, ‘Let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!’” — John 8:7 (TPT).

Jesus exemplified the power of restraint.

He didn’t get involved in petty disputes, showing us that we don’t need to fight every battle.

Practical Takeaway:

When your relatives start something, take a deep breath.

You don’t have to engage.

You can let it roll off you like water off a duck’s back.

Be the one to de-escalate and bring peace.

Tip #4: Decide to Enjoy Your Holidays Regardless of What's Happening

Jesus lived in peace and joy, regardless of the chaos around Him. He focused on His purpose and chose joy, even when things weren't going as expected.

Scriptural References:

"I have spoken these things to you so that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy may be made full and complete." — John 15:11 (TPT).

Jesus wants us to experience joy, no matter our circumstances.

"Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." — Nehemiah 8:10 (TPT).

Let the joy of the season come from within.

Don't let outside forces determine how you feel.

Practical Takeaway:

It's your holiday too.

Set your intentions to enjoy your time, even if there are some bumps along the way.

You can enjoy your meal, your surroundings, and your family—on your terms.

Tip #5: Don't Let Them Steal Your Joy

Overbearing relatives may try to push your buttons, but Jesus shows us how to stay anchored in joy and peace.

No one else has the power to steal your peace unless you let them.

Scriptural References:

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” — John 14:27 (TPT).

Jesus gave us His peace, a peace that surpasses any holiday drama.

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” —

Philippians 4:7 (TPT).

Peace is available to you.

You just have to decide to embrace it.

Practical Takeaway:

Stay focused on your own peace.

If someone tries to stir up conflict or negativity, gently remind yourself that their actions do not determine your peace or your joy.

Trick #1: Set Boundaries with Love

Jesus knew when to set limits and maintain His boundaries. We can do the same with overbearing relatives—without feeling guilty.

Scriptural Reference:

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated, His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them.” — Matthew 5:1-2 (TPT).

Sometimes, you need space and time to refresh and focus on what’s important.

Jesus withdrew when needed.

Practical Takeaway:

It’s okay to set boundaries.

Politely excuse yourself from certain conversations or moments when needed.

Don’t feel bad for prioritizing your peace.

Trick #2: Redirect Conversations to a Positive Topic

Jesus often redirected conversations in a way that helped people see a broader perspective.

You can do this too with your relatives!

Scriptural Reference:

Jesus replied, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’” — Matthew 19:14 (TPT).

Jesus redirected conversations toward love and peace, focusing on what truly mattered.

“Jesus said, ‘Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.’” — Mark 4:9 (TPT).

Sometimes, a simple redirection of topic can bring the conversation back to a more peaceful or meaningful place.

If the conversation starts to take a negative turn, gently guide it towards something lighthearted or positive—anything that keeps the mood enjoyable.

Navigating the holidays with overbearing relatives doesn't have to be stressful.

By following these tips and tricks, and handling each situation the way Jesus would, you can protect your boundaries, maintain your peace, and truly enjoy your holiday season