



THE BIG IDEA

Not-so-typical families have tough conversations.

THE BIBLE

Genesis 25:21-34, 27:1-45, 32:3-20, 33:4-12;
Matthew 18:15-17. James 1:19

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

DISCUSSION

- Have you had an awkward interaction with a family member? Tell us about it!
- What are some reasons a family might need to have a tough conversation?
- What's the longest amount of time one of our fights with a family member has lasted? What started the fight and how did it end?
- How often do we have tough conversations? What are those conversations like?

YOUR ATYPICAL FAMILY COULD BE EVEN MORE ATYPICAL

- Like we've been saying for the last couple of weeks, every family is an "atypical" family because no family is perfect. And because no family is perfect, every family occasionally has to have a tough conversation.
- Maybe those tough conversations happen because of a difference in opinion, an unwise choice someone made, hurt feelings, or a misunderstanding that needs to be addressed.
 - Typical families either avoid having these conversations or they have them – but they don't go very well.
 - "Atypical" families, on the other hand, approach their tough family conflicts and conversations differently.
- For the last couple of weeks, we've been saying that your "atypical" family can be used by God to do amazing "atypical" things in the world – but how?
- Last week, we talked about how "atypical" families pray for each other when there is conflict. Today, we'll discover a second thing "atypical" families do.



SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

SCRIPTURE | Genesis 25:21-34, 27:1-45

- So far in this series, we've met two families: the family of Adam and Eve (the world's very first family) and the family of Abraham.
 - Both of these families were "atypical" and imperfect in their own ways.
 - Disobedience to God, lies, murder, conflict, and disagreements make the stories of these families far from perfect.
- Today, I want to introduce you to another family. This story is about the family of Isaac and Rebecca, and their sons Jacob and Esau. Isaac was the son of Abraham, which means Jacob and Esau were Abraham's grandsons. But Jacob and Esau's story isn't the story of brotherly love. It was an imperfect relationship from the start.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Genesis 25:21-34 and 27:1-45 together.*
- Competition, jealousy, deception, conspiracies, costumes, heartbreak, and soup — there's a lot going on here! But here's the bottom line . . .
 - With his mom's help, Jacob tricked his brother Esau into giving up something of great value.
 - With his mom's help, Jacob tricked his dying father into giving him a gift that was never intended for him.
 - Instead of owning up to his bad behavior and making things right, Jacob ran away — again, with his mom's help.
- Can you imagine being a member of this family? That's a lot of pain, deceit, and cruelty for one family!
- When conflict happens, but you're too stubborn, angry, ashamed, or afraid to have tough conversations with your family, it leaves room for some ugly things to grow.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Genesis 33:4-12 together.*
- Amazingly, Esau didn't let the years of separation from his brother fill him with hatred and anger. Instead, Esau wanted to have a relationship with Jacob again.
- But Jacob and Esau's conversation could have gone very differently.
 - It makes sense that Jacob was afraid to meet with Esau. He was probably ashamed to admit the wrong he'd done, but he was also afraid that Esau might retaliate.
 - Esau could have screamed at Jacob, attacked him, or even killed him. That would have been understandable, right? Jacob had stolen so much from Esau and never made it right.
- But against all odds, Esau didn't show up to kill Jacob. He showed up with open arms, ready to have a conversation. Esau's willingness to have a conversation with Jacob, even after what Jacob did to him, is pretty amazing — and it was absolutely essential to healing their relationship.



SCRIPTURE | Matthew 18:15-17

- Many years after Jacob and Esau reconciled, Jesus preached a sermon to a group of His followers. Part of that sermon was about having tough conversations.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 18:15-17 together.*
- God loves to see us living at peace with each other – but not fake peace, where we smile at each other but secretly hate each other.
- Like we learned two weeks ago when we read the story of Adam and Eve, God designed us to be in relationship with God and with each other.
- When we refuse to have tough conversations with each other, it separates us from each other. And when we hang onto bitterness and anger, it keeps us from having a closer relationship with God, too.
- Throughout this series, we've been saying that, if you want God to use your family to do "atypical" things, sometimes you have to be the first person in your family to do something "atypical." That's what Esau did, and it's what Jesus teaches us to do.
 - When you've hurt, or been hurt, by someone in your family, the typical response is staying angry, avoiding each other, and getting bitter.
 - But Esau chose to do the "atypical" thing. He met with Jacob and had a tough conversation.
- This might seem simple, but it's so "atypical." **Not-so-typical families have tough conversations.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

ATYPICAL FAMILIES HAVE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

- Just like a tough conversation changed Jacob and Esau's families for the better, being willing to have a tough conversation can change your family for the better too.
- Every family has conflicts they struggle to solve or make right. But "atypical" families choose to have tough conversations in order to stay in relationships with each other.
- Having tough conversations . . .
 - Makes room for healing and repentance.
 - Helps us learn to communicate and understand each other's perspectives.
 - Gives us a chance to create a solution together that benefits everyone.
- But how do you have tough conversations? Having tough conversations with a family member doesn't have to be complicated. It could be as simple as . . .
 - **Asking**, "Hey, can we talk about what happened?"
 - **Being patient** when they share their feelings and perspective.
 - **Really listening** to their point of view.
 - **Being honest** about what you think and feel, even when it's hard.
 - **Admitting** when you're wrong.



- **Valuing your relationship** more than being right.
- Think right now about a conflict you have with a family member. Now imagine how that conflict could be transformed if you were willing to have a tough conversation about it.
 - How do you think a tough conversation could change your attitude or perspective?
 - How do you think a tough conversation could change the person you're fighting with?
 - How do you think a tough conversation could begin to change your family's pattern of behavior in the long-term?

DISCUSSION

- Why is it sometimes difficult to have tough conversations with your family? What would make it easier?
- Which part of a tough conversation is easiest for you? Which part is most difficult?
 - Starting the conversation.
 - Being patient when they talk.
 - Really listening to their point of view.
 - Being honest about what you think and feel.
 - Admitting when you're wrong.
 - Valuing your relationship more than being right.
- What's one example of a tough conversation you've had with a family member? How did it go?
- Is there a tough conversations you need to have with someone in your family? What's stopping you from having that conversation?
- Read James 1:19. How could you apply this verse in the next tough conversation you have?

MUSIC | "Don't Give Up on Me," by Andy Grammer

- "Are there any tough conversations we should have as a family?"
- When conflicts happen, typical families get bitter and avoid resolving their conflicts. But **not-so-typical families have tough conversations** that help them heal and grow.
- If you commit to resolving your conflicts with your family through tough conversation, imagine how God might be able to use your family to do "atypical" things in the world!
- Play the song "[Don't Give Up on Me](#)," by Andy Grammer