

## TOOLS FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

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I'm sure you can think of more than one occasion when someone hurt you intentionally. Let's face it: we live in a broken world with people who are just as broken as we are. Someone's insult or disregard can really hurt. How have you reacted to these kinds of provocations?

I feel deep regret when I recall times when my reactions were less than God-honoring. Our first impulse is to lash out and argue or—if we're truly being honest with ourselves—we look for ways to hurt them right back. But God desires for us to "...live at peace and help each other have a strong faith" ([Romans 14:19](#)). How do we help our children navigate living at peace when we might find it difficult to do as adults?



Your children definitely face situations when others try to hurt them. As parents, that can make our blood boil! But God says to "do your best to live at peace with everyone" ([Romans 12:18](#)). This doesn't mean we teach our children to become the punching bag or that they *always* have to walk away. However, we can help our children sort out the harmful behavior of others and provide them with tools for dealing with difficult people. Here are three suggestions:

1. Look for the good in a person. When someone's giving them a hard time, it's easy for kids to overgeneralize and label the whole person bad. Help your child find something good, or even admirable, about the other person. We are all made in God's image ([Genesis 1:27](#)), and each person is worthy of respect for this reason alone. Maybe you have a story from your own experience about how a negative relationship helped you grow in faith, love, or empathy.
2. Partner for peace. God desires that we live peacefully with one another ([Ephesians 4:1-3](#)). This takes hard work with people we find difficult. Jesus tells us to deal with those we disagree with in private ([Matthew 18:15](#)). Show your child how you learned to make peace with a classmate, neighbor, coworker, or even a relative.
3. Making peace may mean walking away. As Isaac found with Abimelech, sometimes the only way we can make peace is to put some distance between ourselves and the other person ([Genesis 26](#)). This doesn't mean defeat or giving up. Often it takes great strength and character to simply move on. Talk with your child about setting healthy boundaries and how to walk away when someone refuses to make peace.

God requires us to make peace with others. This can be difficult in the broken world that we live in. Help your child set boundaries, show empathy, and work with others for peace.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [A Christian Response to Bad Behavior](#)

