

Case Study # 1

Esther is the mother of three children and a grandmother to eight wonderful grandchildren. She loves them all dearly and has established a years-long tradition of hosting a family get together on Sunday afternoon once every other month. Esther's two daughters, Emily and Rachel, live in the same town as Esther and attend with their families quite regularly. Esther's son Robert lives in another state but manages to bring his family once or twice each year. They are a close-knit Christian family.

Esther's husband, Victor, was one of the first people in their town to contract coronavirus. He felt ill for a few days at home but once admitted to the hospital, he was moved to the ICU, intubated for several days and went to be with Jesus in less than a week. Esther's last memory of Victor is saying goodbye as he was wheeled from the ER into the hospital. Esther hasn't hosted her Sunday get-together since.

Esther is alone now, isolated due to the pandemic. She has her groceries delivered and watches church on her iPad each week. While she cherishes the FaceTime calls with her family, she is fearful the virus will harm them as it did Victor. The news on TV is overwhelming and she doesn't know what to believe about the virus. She is beginning to withdraw and doesn't engage in the FaceTime conversations as she used to.

Other than his dad's funeral, it has been a year since Robert and his family visited his mother. He is growing more concerned about his mom's demeanor and lack of engagement. She hasn't been writing or calling as she used to. In a recent FaceTime conversation, Robert and Emily discussed Esther's withdrawal while their children occasionally 'photobombed' to greet their aunt or uncle. Thinking it would be good for everyone to get together, Robert offered to bring his family for a visit. Emily, concerned that would overwhelm mom and put her at greater risk of the virus suggested they wait. Robert and Emily both got frustrated and raised their voices so everyone could hear. Robert called his sister overprotective and uncaring while Emily hollered that Robert is the uncaring one for wanting to put mom's health in jeopardy.

They ended FaceTime angry and without saying goodbye.

These questions can apply to the above case study or to a current conflict from your personal life. For the case study, you can assume either Robert's or Emily's role.

1. How have you contributed to this conflict?

Who has been affected by your thoughts, words and actions?

2. In spite of your sinful nature, how does our heavenly Father view:
 - a. You?
 - b. The person with whom you are in conflict?
3. In light of how your heavenly Father views you both:

- a. What is your worth to God?
 - b. What is the other person's worth to God?
4. Review 1 John 3:1 (*See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*)
- a. Whose are you?
 - b. What comfort does your relationship with God give you in the midst of this struggle?
5. In Christ, we are called as new creatures to put away our "old self" and put on our "new self" in Christ.
- a. How can you put away your old self in this conflict?
 - b. How can you put on your new self in Christ?
 - c. What would your contrition and repentance look like?
6. Describe the material or substantive issues needed to be resolved in your conflict?
7. Identify what relational issues need to be reconciled in your conflict.