Reconciliation in Religious Families

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Reconciliation in Religious Families

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CONTEXTS
- Conflicts
- Differences
- Mistakes
- Selfishness
- Everyday Life
- Irritations
- Marital Struggles
- Relational Distance

BENEFITS
- Allows us to let go
- Keeps us together
- Gives us hope
- Helps us change
- Heals relationships
- Strengthens marriage

SPIRITUAL
Praying to God for help

RELATIONAL
Forgiving and being forgiven

PERSONAL
Admitting mistakes and taking responsibility

PRACTICAL
Working to fix problems and make amends

MOTIVATIONS
- Religious beliefs
- Seeing a bigger picture
- Responding to God's Love

"Prayer is very helpful, when we have conflicts and arguments prayer can calm us down...God leads us through prayer to recognize our sin and to improve our marriage."

"You know I've had to ask my kids for forgiveness. So I hope that would at least be one evidence that they could say: We're real people, we haven't got it all together, but we can accept and love each other because we extend the forgiveness of God and the grace of God to each other. And we each know that we need it desperately."

"Rather than have just that one more retort, I will just seal my lips. At least I can do that rather than fan the flames and then hopefully work on it and heal it, or resolve it and solve it when we're calmer."

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
- What circumstances lead to a need for reconciliation in religious families?
- What motivates religious families to reconcile?
- How do religious families reconcile?
- What benefits do religious families receive from reconciling?

ABSTRACT
How do religious families resolve conflict and heal relationships? Through an in-depth study of interviews with 198 highly religious families, we explored motivations, processes, and outcomes of reconciliation. Through this analysis we have identified spiritual, relational, personal and practical processes, in the context of everyday family life, that help families strengthen relationships and resolve differences.

METHODS
Using a team-based approach to data analysis and coding, 152 accounts of repentance and/or reconciliation were identified in qualitative interviews with 198 families from the American Families of Faith (AFF) project (Marks 2015). An in-depth analysis of these pre-identified quotes revealed a process of reconciliation within family—including contexts, motivations, and benefits of reconciliation.