

# How to Honor Your In-Laws

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In the early years of marriage, learning to navigate the choppy waters of the extended family can all boil down to how to honor your in-laws. When you show honor to your in-laws, you are directly showing honor to your spouse. No matter how different you are from them, you can still communicate respect and learn to be as positive as possible.

Regardless of whether your mother-in-law remembers your birthday, make sure she gets a nice card from you on hers. You may need to compromise your expectations in order to honor your in-laws. This doesn't mean you have to force yourself to be extremely connected with them. You don't have to call them "Dad" or "Mom" and watch TV with them every Sunday night. But since you are choosing to marry their son or daughter, it's your job to find ways to care for them (even if that care and respect are not always reciprocated.)

Paying attention to the little things is often the simplest way to begin. When you are at their house, make yourself useful. Take out the trash, do the dishes, or offer to run errands. Decades years later, my mother-in-law still talks about when I won her over by doing the dishes the first time I was at their house for dinner. She doesn't just mention that first time, though—I've continued to do them every time we're all together. It's still a very simple gesture of appreciation and honor to her. While the rest of the males tend to eat up and then go watch football, I simply take a few minutes to help clean up. It's so easy, and yet it is very significant to Cathy's mom.

Whatever you choose to do to honor your in-laws, remember that your primary job is to be supportive of your wife or husband no matter how much or how little you have in common with their family. Make it your goal to live out this simple biblical principle: *"Outdo one another in showing honor"* — Romans 12:10 RSV.