

God on Other Human Authority

The Ten Commandments

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We've had a number of messages on the fifth commandment found in Exodus 20 and I invite you to turn there with me. As you do, we had about three messages on the role of children toward their parents, two or three others from parents to children, and dealt with as many aspects of family life as we reasonably could that are taught by this commandment, but even with all of that, we have not exhausted the meaning and the application of the fifth commandment. It's really remarkable what we're going to see this evening. There is more to this commandment than simply family relationships and Scripture is very clear on this. But let's take a look at the verse first to get it set in our mind, and then we'll just walk through this here this evening together.

Exodus 20:12 says,

12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

And you read that on a first reading and you say, "Well, it's talking about family relationships," and it most certainly is, but it actually as you take into account everything that Scripture says, this command also instructs us on other relationships. It stands as sort of a category for the way that we respond to authority in every area of life and that's what we're going to see here this evening. We're going to see the far-reaching effect of the fifth commandment and you're going to see the utter impossibility of keeping it perfectly. This commandment, like all of the others, searches us, it condemns us for our ungodliness and unrighteousness, and it points us to our spiritual hopelessness so that we would turn to Christ alone for salvation.

The Puritan Ezekiel Hopkins says this about the fifth commandment. He says, "This command of honoring our parents is very large and comprehensive and is not to be limited only to the grammatical signification of the word but extends itself to all that are our superiors." And I've alluded a time or two to Psalm 119:96 which says, "Your commandment is exceedingly broad." The law of God is far broader than we realize and it is searching and it exercises its authority over every motion of our inner man and over all of our conduct. There is no aspect of life anywhere in the universe, human life, at

least, that is outside the moral law of God. Everything that we do, everything that we say, everything that we think, every heart motivation is regulated by the law of God.

And just to point this out even within the context of the 10 Commandments themselves, you know, you think about the 10 Commandments, at least until we started this series, people maybe could give you two or three of them, you know, you shouldn't murder, you shouldn't commit adultery, you shouldn't lie, but the commandments go far further than that, and the moral law of God is absolutely comprehensive. And you see this in the 10th commandment in verse 17, just to give you a sense of how far-reaching it is. It says, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor." The law of God forbids you from coveting in your heart, in the recesses where no one sees, the law of God goes there and commands how you shall be in your own heart. And so it's far more than simply external behavior and Jesus draws this out in Matthew 5 when he says that the command against murder actually also forbids the hatred that leads up to murder, and he goes on and says in Matthew 5 that the command against adultery actually forbids the lust that leads to the physical act.

So God's law goes to the inner man itself and so it's very broad, it's very comprehensive and, you know, it's one of the reasons that sin is so easily expanded and developed in the culture in which we live and even within the church, I think can be directly traced to the failure of the church to teach the 10 Commandments in a meaningful way and show people the far-reaching effects of the law of God. The law of God cannot convert anyone, it cannot make anyone new, but one of the things that it does do even on unbelievers is that the law of God has a restraining effect on the sin of man because it teaches men to fear God and to fear the consequences of their action even if they don't do so out of a love for Christ.

It reminds me of a young woman many years ago that I witnessed to, and her life was very rebellious and there was a context for me to talk with her, and I spoke with her about her sin, I warned her, I said, "You are in such danger of eternal judgment. Turn back. Come to Christ because you're in danger of going to hell with the way that you're living your life. Your house is on fire," I remember telling her. And she rejected all of that, she couldn't get away from me fast enough, and her life continued on a self-destructive path. Very very sad to look back and remember, but years after the fact, I heard through other sources, I heard secondhand that she said, "Long ago I would have committed suicide except I was too afraid to based on what I had heard from Don." And that's kind of what I'm talking about here is that the law has a restraining effect on people and a knowledge of God's word has a restraining impact even if someone never comes to Christ. It's one of the functions of the law, it's one of the gifts of God to society is that the law of God restrains this ungodliness and it restrains sin even if people do not have any interest in spiritual things.

So it's very broad, its impact is very far-reaching, and that's true of the fifth commandment here tonight. So the fifth commandment, as I said, it stands as a category for how we respond to authority in every area of life. Now when I first heard that, when I

first was introduced to that concept, I was skeptical that that was the case. I mean, it says honor your father and mother, it doesn't say anything on the surface of the command in that verse about other aspects of authority. And so I was skeptical at first and then I started studying it more deeply and seeing what the rest of Scripture has to say and I was utterly persuaded by the end. So what I want to do tonight is simply kind of walk you through how we know the fifth commandment is broader than just family relationships so that you would feel something of the impact and the responsibility to honor authority wherever it may be placed over you, and even going further to see that Scripture calls upon us to honor all people, not simply vertically to the ones who gave birth to us, this is a command that is to regulate all of our relationships in all of life. It is very broad indeed. The psalmist in 119 spoke most accurately when he spoke about the exceeding broadness of the commandment of God.

So what I want to do is take you through three lines of evidence for this point and then we'll draw some application together at the end. First of all, number 1, how do we know that the fifth commandment is broader than simply the parental relationship? Well, first of all, we see it in the biblical development of the terms "honor" and "father." When you've traced the usage and the commands to honor in Scripture, and when you trace the usage of the term father in Scripture, you see clearly that Scripture calls for honor to more than simply parents, and that's the point that I want you to see. This is a broad command. This is a broad command that affects the way that people think about government authority, the way that people would respond to police, the way that people would respond to matters in the workplace, the way that people would respond to authority in the church as well as in the home, and that's what we want to see. And we see this biblical development, first of all, because Scripture calls for honor, calls us to honor more than simply our parents; it calls us to honor others as well.

I want to take you to the last book in the Old Testament, there's three verses here that I want to start with, the last book in the Old Testament. If you turn to Matthew and then go back one book, you'll be in the book of Malachi and this prophecy which was some 400 years before the time of Christ is addressing Israel and addressing them in their sin, and specifically in their failure to honor God in the way that they should. And in Malachi 1:6 it says this, I'll give you a moment to turn there. Malachi 1:6 says, "A son honors his father," and so you have a direct invocation of the spirit of the fifth commandment, "A son honors his father and," it goes further, "a servant his master." So this principle of honor goes not just from the son to his father but the servant to his master, and then God goes on to say, "Then if I am a father, where is My honor?" God takes the fifth commandment and uses it as a rebuke to Israel, showing that society is structured in a way that a son honors his father and a servant honors his master. The honor there, the point that we want to see here is that it is expanded beyond the simple role in the family life. It's expanded to other spheres of life as well horizontally and then vertically as well as God demands his honor that is his due from his people.

Now with that in mind, go to the New Testament, 1 Timothy 5:17. It speaks of the principle of honor in relationships in the church body, and this is particularly fitting as just a few weeks ago we were talking about elder leadership in the church, we looked at

this passage, now we're looking at it from a different perspective where we see in 1 Timothy 5:17, we see the word "honor" being used in relationship to how a congregation responds to its elders. Verse 17, "The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." Now I would never refer to this verse out of, you know, a sense of deference to the role that the elders hold in a local church, but this is Scripture, this is what the Bible says is that a local church is to consider its elders worthy not just of honor but of double honor. This is the word of God expanding that concept of honor, respect, deference, care, to the elders in the local church.

So this is far outside the realm of the immediate family, the biological nuclear family, it's been extended to the master/servant area there in Malachi 1, it's extended in the local church to the way that a congregation responds to its elders. But it goes further in Scripture, the way that this term "honor" is used. Turn past the book of Hebrews and James to 1 Peter 2 and let's read the fuller context that will lead up to the verse that we want to talk about. 1 Peter 2:13 says, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God." So he has invoked the principle of the will of God, he has commanded believers to consider themselves as bondslaves, as servants of God, servants of his will; this is what God's will is for you and it's all in the context of submission to human institutions. Then he goes on and says in verse 17, he bookends the summary of it with the word "honor" when he says, "Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king."

Now this New Testament word for honor comes from a Greek verb timao and one lexical source defines this word for honor in this way, what is Scripture saying when it talks about honoring these different categories of relationship that we have seen. Well, this Greek word means "to honor; to hold in esteem; to place value on someone or something. It includes showing respect to all people in general and recognizing those with specific status and needs." Now what does that mean? How are we to understand this as we contemplate the various web of relationships that we have? Well, we've just seen from 1 Peter 2:17 that it is utterly comprehensive, it says honor all people. And so God calls us to honor all people, not merely our parents, and not even merely those who are in positions of authority in a secular, an ecclesiastical, or an employment relationship, this extends to every relationship in life. This is stunning in its breadth.

And why would that be? Theologically why would we do that? What's the ground for this that God is pointing out to us? Well, let's just think for a moment. All people are created in the image of God, not simply our parents. All people who hold authority in your life do so by the sovereign plan of God. Scripture says that no one has authority except that God has given it to them. And so as we interact with others, as we interact with authority, we should be mindful of so many things, mindful of the fact that merely as a human being we're dealing with someone who is created in the image of God, no matter how defaced the image might be by their sin. And so we honor them, if nothing else, for the sake of the

fact that they represent the image of the living God. They are relational, moral creatures that reflect, however poorly, something of the image of God, and so we honor the image of God in them. We're mindful that those, as I said, those who hold authority do so by his sovereign plan. We honor them, in part, because we recognize that they are going to give an account to God, they will give an account to God for the way that they held their authority and all of them fall short of his standard, all of them are going toward a stricter judgment with the authority that they hold, and out of love and compassion and care for them, we honor them in the midst of the responsibility that they hold.

So we are to recognize that all people are entitled to honor from us, we are to recognize the hand of God in them and honor the ones that he has made. And there's another way that we can look at it and I felt a particular responsibility building up to come to this point in my exposition of the fifth commandment and we need to be candid with one another here. You know, as our society continues to break down, and as government continues to get more and more corrupt and culture and society gets more and more corrupt, there are elements in the Christian church that are responding to that with an increasing sense of disdain for authority and becoming increasingly vulgar in their criticisms of it. There are podcasts that are out there where people boast in smoking cigars and drinking scotch and have pretty profane takes on the nature of government, all of this being done in the name of Christ. Well, you know, you and I need to look past that and we need to be restrained from imbibing that too fully because Scripture calls us to honor those who are in authority.

So much so, look over at 1 Timothy 2. Let me remind you of this and, you know, what I'm about to read is a rebuke to my own prayerlessness in this matter, but this concept of honor is seen in the way that we get down on our knees for them. 1 Timothy 2:1, and remember, beloved, this is the word of God to us. This is the authoritative word of God in terms of how he commands us to live, and those of us who claim Christ as Lord, those of us that have been born again by the Spirit, those of us that have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, we are under moral obligation to respond to the commands of the one who has called us by his own glorious grace. And what does he say to us in addition to honor all people, honor the king? Well, we are to take the spiritual resources that are at our disposal, we are to take the gifts that God has given to us, take the access that we have to the throne and to use it on behalf of those who are in authority over us.

Look at 1 Timothy 2:1 and there is no way to reconcile this with the profane attitude that is marking an increasing number of Christians in this matter today. I am very disturbed by it because it is something that is seeping in deeply into the realm of the people that we would hold as friends. 1 Timothy 2:1 says, "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This," this prayerful demeanor toward authority, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a

teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension." The mark of Christian virtue, the mark of Christian character is not profane mocking of those in authority, it is marked by those who have a prayerful attitude toward authority no matter how much we might disagree with their leadership. When it comes to being in the presence of God, we honor God by honoring them with our humble prayers and we seek the Lord's intervention in them without wrath and without dissension.

Now in our politically charged, politically divided environment, I realize this is counter-cultural and the truth of the matter is, I think that's one of the indications that the fact that it's right, is the fact that this is not what is predominant. We walk on a narrow way. We walk on a narrow path that leads to heaven and God calls us to live differently as believers, to live differently in response to the atoning work of Jesus Christ in our hearts. And look, one of the reasons that we do it is this, you know, I mean, it was right at the heart of that passage I just read, the atonement is at the heart of it as he talked about Christ giving himself up as a ransom for us. You know, those of you that, you know, have that rebellious streak toward authority in your heart, you know, and we all do, but you just need to remember this: the one who has all authority is God himself, and the one who has all authority had the right, the prerogative, had every reason of justice to condemn you for your sin and rebellion against him, and did he exercise it against you? Did God use his authority to condemn you as you deserved? He didn't. He was merciful to you instead. He showed kindness to you in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God came and opened your eyes and gave you the gifts of repentance and faith so that you could believe in Christ and be saved. The one who had all authority came to you, the rebel, and showed mercy to you. Well, isn't it obvious that by a spiritual symmetry that this would have a transforming impact on the way that you respond to authority that you don't like? This is serious. This is where the fifth commandment takes us and I confess my concern for the direction of evangelicalism on this point.

Now, you know, there are limits to the fact, you know, Scripture says we must obey God rather than men. You know, if the government, as it's tried to do to some extent here and certainly more in other places, the government tries to regulate worship in the name of health regulations, telling people what they can and can't do in worship services, at a point like that, the government has overstepped its bounds. It's stepped beyond its fear of sovereignty and has invaded the prerogatives of God in his own kingdom and in this sphere of the church. And local church leaders have a prerogative and a responsibility to measure those things and if they interfere with the purpose of God in the church, then we are justified in ignoring those kinds of restrictions that they try to put on us. We're justified in that but we still guard our attitude in the way that we respond. We do it with diffidence. We respectfully disagree, as one pastor in Germany described it in a private correspondence to me. You know, we respectfully disagree and we do what we have to do. We don't call attention to ourselves. If it brings attention, if it brings the weight of authority down on us, we accept that but we don't yield to it because we can't yield to the authority that's trying to regulate the way that we worship our God. That's not their sphere. So we recognize that there are some parameters to that but, beloved, that's not the parameters and those limitations, that's not the primary area of concern and the primary

area of disobedience in the Christian church. This is being forgotten and there is no excuse for Christians to be forgetting this when it is set forth so clearly in the word of God. So we honor them, we recognize the limits of their authority because our primary responsibility is to honor the God who has called us to his own glory by his grace.

Now, so that's the term "honor" there; the biblical development of the term "honor" shows us how the fifth commandment extends but, secondly, also the term "father," the term "father" is applied in Scripture to more than biological parents. So when the fifth commandment says, "Honor your father and your mother," well, you read Scripture and you read the fullness of Scripture and you see that term "father" is applied in different contexts where honor is being given to someone who is not the biological father. We're not going to look at these, for the sake of time, I'll just mention them and throw out the Scripture citations so it's there in the transcript later on. David before he was king, called King Saul his father in 1 Samuel 24:11. Naaman's servants called him father in 2 Kings 5:13. Looking at it from a different perspective, the Apostle Paul calls the Galatians "my children" in Galatians 4:19, and he tells the Corinthians that he became their father through the gospel in 1 Corinthians 4:15. One more. Those of you that are trying to write these down, I realize your hand is probably cramping right about now. That's okay. In the second chapter of 1 Thessalonians, Paul says, he describes his prior ministry to the church at Thessalonica and he says he was like a nursing mother and an encouraging father to them.

So the father relationship is used as an illustration for other kinds of relationships in Scripture, and so we see that Scripture uses the term "father" to describe more than the man who sired us, it describes all manner of relationships of love and authority. So when you put all of these things together, and we're only dealing with one aspect of the argument right now, you see the way "honor" is used and extended to all people, you see how "father" is used and extended to a number of different relationships, the command to honor your father and your mother therefore we conclude as we let Scripture interpret Scripture, this command affects more than biological relationships. The Bible, the word of God, teaches us to apply this commandment broadly. We are to show honor to all people in all walks of life. It would apply to a student with a teacher. It would apply in a traffic stop to the cop. And multiply the examples ad infinitum. This command to honor is to regulate the way that we interact with everyone.

Now there's a second line of argument that I find persuasive here. We've looked at the biblical development of the term "honor" and "father," secondly, I just want to show you briefly a biblical development in Ephesians 6. So going back to the book of Ephesians, the fifth commandment, as we've seen multiple times, is quoted directly in the opening verses of Ephesians 6. Look at it there with me where it says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth." Now watch this, the commandment on its strict, the four corners of the commandment, is directed to honor your father and your mother but notice where, having stated that principle, notice what Paul does with it as he continues on. He turns the commandment and applies it to fathers; in the immediate context of the fifth

commandment, it provokes in Paul's mind under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as he was writing this letter, it provokes him to apply the principle of honor into other relationships in life so that in verse 4, he reverses it, as it were, and says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Then he goes on applying the principle of honor in the master/slave relationship. Verse 5 of Ephesians 6, "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free."

Now watch, Paul states the fifth commandment and then he expounds on it and says this applies, this principle of honor applies to the way that fathers deal with their children, the way that slaves deal and respond to their masters, and it's not simply a matter of external conduct, he is specifically saying, look at verse 5, this goes to the sincerity of your heart. This is not by way of eyeservice but as one who views himself as a slave of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. We are to embrace these things, you are to embrace this principle of honor with the affections of your heart in gladness and joy and in submission to Christ himself, not resenting the authority that is over you, not defying it, not disobeying it, but gladly conforming yourself to what it requires.

Then he goes on in verse 9, "masters, do the same things to them." He puts a reciprocal obligation on masters to treat their slaves with honor, and in today's context, employers treating their employees with honor. "And give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him." The one who holds the authority is to hold it with honor to those that are under it, the ones that are under the authority, honor the authority that is above them. This is the moral order of God and how pleasant life would be if people lived this way. Can you imagine a culture where this was honored in both directions? Can you imagine the conflict that would immediately dissipate? The way of God is good. The way of God is wise. This is what he calls us to and the violent argumentative spirit that permeates all of our culture could not be anymore diametrically opposed to the fifth commandment than what it is. And all of the contention and the divisiveness is in violation of the fifth commandment. The fifth commandment alone condemns our society, condemns our country from top to bottom as those who hold authority, use it against those underneath them, who exempt themselves from their own laws and requirements.

All of this shows that there is great guilt and judgment before God all around us. We live in an environment of judgment and condemnation simply for the violation of the fifth commandment alone. It's frightening to contemplate, and the conviction and the fright of it all should drive us as the people of God to our knees in prayer, it should drive those who are not believers to repentance and faith as they see their need for a Savior from their sin, but understand, as I used to say when I taught on the Sermon on the Mount, when God says these things in his word, it's important for us to understand he's not

bluffing. These are not suggestions, they are commandments. And the violation of the law of an eternal God calls for eternal punishment. God is not bluffing in the way that he orders the moral universe and the violations of it will one day be called to an account.

So as Jonathan Edwards taught in his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God," one of the things that we see, and he used this as an illustration, is that the weight of our guilt is so great that it is like we are being held over the precipice of hell by a mere spider's web that is ready to snap at any moment and drop us into the judgment that we deserve. That's how serious this is. We cannot joke our way out of this. We cannot ignore it. I mean, people do ignore it, that's one of the reasons why we need to teach on it, right? But this doesn't go away simply because people ignore it. God's word is eternal. Heaven and earth will pass away but his words will not pass away and there will be an accountability, and Scripture says that judgment starts with the people of God on things like this.

So how do we respond, what does it cause us to do? Well, it should provoke in us a spirit of repentance and it should also provoke in us a spirit of prayer as we look out on this lost world around us and just cry out, "God, have mercy on them! God, send revival! God, stay Your hand of judgment that there might be time for people to repent, and show mercy and send Your Spirit that the gospel of Christ would be believed and people would be converted and escape from this horrible dimension of your wrath that we obviously deserve! God, have mercy on us!" And I just don't, you know, I just don't see how the cynical attitude of so many in the church is ever going to provoke that kind of praying, that kind of crying out for mercy, that kind of prayer for revival. If you're cynical and hateful towards the ones that you're mocking, when are you ever going to get around to praying for them and seeking their good like some people prayed for you and prayed for the good of your soul when you, yourself, were in rebellion to God? Where is that going to come? Where is the mercy of Christ in this? Where is the love of Christ for sinners? Where is the love of Christ that looked out on Jerusalem and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how many times I wanted to gather you under My wings like a hen covers her chicks and you were unwilling to do so!" This goes to the fundamental nature of the way that we view the world in which we live and it's all direct implications of the fifth commandment and how Scripture applies it to us.

So, yes, I'm worried about this, so to speak, I'm exercised over it, I'm concerned about it for the broader church and even within this room. We need to keep our politics subordinate to the fifth commandment. We need to keep our politics subordinate to a desire for the salvation of men and have that influence the way that we speak to them, the way that we speak about them, and the way that we pray for them. So the word of God is addressing us, the word of God is rebuking us here tonight.

Now thirdly, how do we know that the fifth commandment expands and applies more broadly? Well, we've seen it in the development of the terms "honor" and "father," we've seen it in the development of the argument in Ephesians 6 and, thirdly, we see it in the biblical development of the whole concept of authority. The whole concept of authority.

Scripture emphasizes authority and submission in many realms and the concept of honor and respect is woven through all of it.

Look over at Romans 13. It's encouraging to me as you're turning there, it's encouraging to me to remember conversations I've had with other pastors who have this same burden on their heart; we don't mind that we might be a minority in it. Romans 13, "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear," look at it there, "honor to whom honor." He caps that entire section, that entire passage about honoring authority with the concept of giving honor to those to whom it is due. And he goes on in verse 8 and says, "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law."

So we see this concept of honor in relationship to the state. That is consistent with what we saw earlier from 1 Peter 2 when Peter said honor the king. Now beyond that, turn back to the book of Ephesians with me, Ephesians 5, and you see this principle of submission, of honor even if the word is not directly there, in the marriage relationship. Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body." Verse 25, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." Verse 28, "husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies." Verse 32, "This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband." Wives honor their husbands with submission. Husbands honor their wives with sacrificial love.

Then we saw that principle working out in Ephesians 6, we saw the principle of honor stated in the church from 1 Timothy 5:17. It was recent enough that we looked at Hebrews 13 and 1 Peter 5 that I won't repeat those texts here in this message but, beloved, don't you see it, don't you see it? There's a principle of honor that applies to every relationship, and then specific applications in more specific relationships in the workplace, in the home, with parents, with the state, and the church, and on it goes. So legitimate authority is entitled to reverence and honor. God has called us to honor all authority that he has placed over us, and he has called us to honor with respect and deference and love all people. Everyone in our life is entitled to this from us.

So where does this leave us as we come to the conclusion of our time in the fifth commandment? You know, after preaching on it so long, I'm kind of sad to leave it behind. It's a little bit melancholy for me at this point to leave such rich texts of Scripture and to move on, as we must do. But where does it leave us? It leaves us here, how should you be thinking about this? Well, first of all, you need to realize that this fifth commandment covers all areas of authority in your life. It starts with your parents, and as we said at the beginning of this series on the fifth commandment, it starts there because that's the first authority that we know, that you're born into a family, you have parents, and that's the first relationship of authority that you know. But as you grow older, as you move on into life, you transition from being a child and start transitioning into adulthood, all other manner of authority is brought to bear upon you in education, in employment, in other areas, and the principle of honoring your parents is to have been so inculcated into your soul that you naturally and reflexively extend it to others who gain authority over you in times that follow. And when you realize how pervasive this command is, as we realize that together corporately as well as individually, it should be dawning on us that apart from Christ we are hopelessly lost. We are hopelessly lost. This pervasive commandment over every area of our lives and we couldn't even begin to count how many times we have violated it either in direct action, in words of defiance to those that are in authority, striking out against others in authority, to say nothing about the inward attitudes of our heart that the law of God also regulates. Let me remind you that 1 Samuel 16:7 says God is not like a man. Man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart and we are going to give an account for our hearts in this matter, and the truth is that none of us have kept this command perfectly, none of us could, sin and rebellion is woven too deeply in our hearts to obey this in the pure, pristine, perfect manner which the Lord our God requires.

So this command excludes us from any claim of self-righteousness whatsoever. This command shows us, this command alone, let alone the four that we've studied already, the first four, let alone the other five yet to come. This command alone, like all of the other commandments, utterly condemns us and shows us our hopelessness. And beloved, it is precisely at this point, at that point of hopelessness, that the Lord Jesus Christ enters in. It's precisely at that point the law becomes our tutor to lead us to Christ. The law teaches us of our sinfulness. It teaches us that we cannot meet the righteous standard of God and therefore we must have a Mediator, we must have a Redeemer, we must have a Savior otherwise we will be utterly condemned, and at that point, Scripture comes to us and tells us that Christ bore our sins in his body on the cross, 1 Peter 2:24. You get some kind of glimpse into the magnitude of the work of Jesus Christ on your behalf when you realize that when he died, he was dying for every one of your violations of the fifth commandment in addition to all of the other unrighteousness in your life. His death covered the many ways that a man, a woman, a boy or a girl, have dishonored their parents. His death covers and pays for the sins of those times where we have violated and rebelled against the authority that is over us. We cannot, we cannot, we cannot excuse the rebellion, we can't excuse the sin by diminishing it, by denying it, or by lowering the standard. That's not the way to take care of your sin. The only remedy for sin is to flee to Christ, to flee to the cross, and to cling to the old rugged cross, as it were, as that one

place where your sins were atoned, to cling to the one who shed his precious blood in order to wash away all of your sin.

We get a little bit of Spirit-enabled greater depth of insight this evening and saying, "Wow," for lack of a better word, "Look at how much Christ must have done for me. Look at how rebellious I am. Look at how defiant I am. Look at how unloving I am. Look at how unforgiving I am." And all of that defiance and an unforgiving spirit is a refusal to honor someone else with the grace that you say you have received on your own from Christ himself. You see something of that and you're saying that, "The blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses me from all sin? How great that sacrifice must have been. How wonderful that must have been. What spiritual agonies Christ must have felt as He endured the wrath of God against my sin on my behalf." Absolutely.

You know there's more than that as we contemplate Christ. It's not just that he died to wash away our sins, Christ actually in his perfect life, his perfect obedience to his Father, he kept the fifth commandment perfectly and he kept it for us. He honored his parents at the beginning of his life, Luke 2, and at the end of his life as he hung on the cross, he honored his mother by providing for her care and entrusting her into the hands of the Apostle John. Even in his dying agonies he honored his mother. Even in his dying agony he was keeping the commandments of God. How great and magnificent is he? You talk about someone worthy of honor, there you go. Christ is worthy of honor and his redemptive work of keeping the law for us and dying for the penalty that our sins deserved, that's good news for you and me. That's the only thing that gives us strength to walk out of this building without feeling a total crush of condemnation is that Christ intervened for us, while we were still enemies of God, Christ died for us and that's good news. Philip Ryken said this in his book on the 10 Commandments speaking about Christ, and I quote, he said, "In respecting His parents' authority, He is more than our example, He is the perfect child God demands that we should be. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has offered perfect obedience to the fifth commandment because when Jesus obeyed His parents, He was keeping God's law on our behalf."

So the fifth commandment instructs us, the fifth commandment convicts us, the fifth commandment points us to the Lord Jesus Christ. My friend, have you recognized the sin that is deep within your heart on these matters? Have you repented and put your faith in Christ? The law is designed to have that exact effect on your soul. May the Holy Spirit open your eyes and give you life.

Let's pray.

Father, we're mindful as we close of the words that we quoted earlier from 1 Peter 2, honor all people, honor the king. Father, we want to do this in honor of You. We are so grateful, O God, that You have been gracious to us in Christ. May the way that we honor authority be a reflection of the fear of God in our hearts, the love of God in our hearts, the gratitude that is in our hearts that You saved us from so much sin in the Lord Jesus Christ. We're grateful to You, our wonderful Savior, our merciful Savior, we are grateful to You for Your perfect life, Your atoning death, Your justifying resurrection, Your

marvelous ascension, Your faithful prayers for us as you intercede for us at the right hand of God. We thank You that You're coming again and we thank You for that coming promised day when one day You will glorify us and all sin will be put away. We will be made like You for we will see You as You truly are, and we will be made fit to be in Your presence throughout all of eternity when we're glorified when we depart this life. O dear Jesus, thank You for Your wonderful grace, wonderful mercy, Your wonderful kindness, Your wonderful sacrifice, Your wonderful love. May it transform our hearts vertically before You and as we recognize the wonder of Your grace toward us, Father, may it transform us into people who are swift to honor others, swift to honor them from the heart, to hold our tongues, to do away with our cynicism, our skepticism, all of the ugly manifestations of rebellion, and ever focused on Christ, Father, being transformed from one image of glory to another as You sanctify us in the truth. Help us all to that end and bless the hearts of those, especially the young people that are with us here that are still in rebellion to You and have no life, no spiritual life in them. Father, show mercy to them. We were all like that at one point, in one way or another. You showed mercy to us, surely You're not done showing mercy, are You, dear Father? Surely You're not done saving, are You, Father? Then show mercy and bring salvation to those that are in our midst that we love and that we pray for. But Father, we commit them to You and to Your hands and we pray that Your Spirit would soften their hearts, open their eyes, and lead them to the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray in the wonderful name of our Savior. Amen.

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