

Subject: *The Fifth Commandment*

Scripture: *Exodus 20:12*

The fifth commandment is special and unique for two reasons.

- It is the first commandment about our relationship with others

The first four commandments have to do with our duties toward God, and the last six have to do with our duties toward our fellow man. The fifth commandment deals with the relationship of children and parents. The home is where children learn about authority and obedience. If children are not taught to respect their parents, they probably won't respect other people.

- It is the first commandment with a promise from God

We should obey this commandment for the Lord's sake, but He graciously added the promise of special blessing for those who keep it. In every child's room, when they are old enough to read, a sign should be posted that says: "Caution: Dishonoring parents may be hazardous to your health." How do we honor our parents?

1. Respect your parents

All Ten Commandments can be stated in terms of respect: 1) Respect the one true God; 2) Respect the unique spiritual nature of God; 3) Respect the Lord's holy name; 4) Respect the Lord's holy day. "Honor" comes from a Hebrew word that means to be heavy, to have weight. The same word is translated "glory." If someone is honored, they are highly valued and very significant. You should think highly of your parents. You should talk respectfully to your parents, and you should talk respectfully about them. Children should never call their parents "my old lady" or "my old man." We should respect them when we are with them and even when they're not around. Show me how a teenager speaks of his parents when he's talking to his friends—that will be the test of whether he respects them. This command is unconditional and is not based on whether the parents deserve respect or not, and this command has no time limit. We should always honor our parents as long as we live.

2. Obey your parents

Honoring your parents has to do with attitude and obeying your parents has to do with action. We obey them because we honor them. After a visit to America the Duke of Wellington sarcastically said, "The thing that impresses me most about your country is the way parents obey their children."

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Children may say, "My parents are not always right." The Bible says obey your parents for this is right. We should obey our parents "in the Lord," that means we submit to their authority because the Lord put them in charge. To obey your parents is, in a sense, to obey the Lord. The only reason not to obey your parents is if they tell you to do something the

Lord forbids or they forbid you to do something the Lord commands. God holds parents responsible for how they raise their children, and God holds children responsible for how they honor and obey their parents.

2 Timothy 3:1-2 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy....*

In Romans 1, when Paul is describing all the horrible sins of the lost world he mentions “disobedient to parents” right in the middle of the list that includes “backbiters, haters of God, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things.” Then the Bible says that those who do such things are “worthy of death.”

3. Help your parents

Proverbs 10:5 *He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*

Children should help their parents around the house. It is a disgrace for children not to help with yard work and house work. Some children feel like the boy who asked his dad about an old family picture on a shelf, “Hey Dad, is that when Mom first came to work for us?”

4. Thank your parents

The Bible says that in the last days people will be unthankful. Gratitude begins at home. Children can take so much for granted. When was the last time you thanked your parents for a comfortable home, good food, clothes, your bed, and for paying the bills? You say, “Well, that’s their job, that’s their responsibility.” That’s true, but they still like to hear a word of appreciation now and then. Here are a few reasons why you ought to thank your parents:

- a) They brought you into this world
- b) They care and provide for you
- c) They mold and shape your life
- d) They teach you about God and His will

5. Pray for your parents

You need to ask God to guide and bless them. If I knew then what I know now, I would have prayed for my parents more than I did. It’s not easy being a parent. We all know there are no perfect parents, and there are no professional parents. All parents are amateurs who learn as they go. It’s called “on the job training.” Pray for your parents because almost every decision they make will affect your life in some way. Ask God to give them wisdom and a heart to do the right thing.

6. Be a blessing to your parents

It ought to be our goal to bless our parents and bring them joy.

Proverbs 10:1 *The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.*

Proverbs 23:15 *My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.*

Proverbs 23:24-25 *The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.*

Being a parent can be a great blessing or a heavy burden.

7. Enjoy your parents

You probably won't live at home with your parents all of your life. You'll probably leave them or they will leave you. Enjoy being with them and spending time with them. Realize that your parents are some of the best friends you will ever have. You won't have your parents forever. One day they will be gone and all you'll have is memories, so make sure they are good ones.

8. Forgive your parents

When your parents make mistakes, and they will, be sure to forgive them and don't hold grudges. Only perfect children can expect to have perfect parents. We should forgive one another. Here are some great verses for the family:

Ephesians 4:32 *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

1 Peter 4:8 *And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

Proverbs 10:12 *Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.*

Do you remember what Noah did when he came off the ark? He planted a vineyard, and the Bible says he was drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. He had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham did something that was awful. He saw his father and went and told his brothers, and then those other sons did something beautiful. The Bible says they took a garment and walked backward into Noah's tent and laid a covered their father so they would not see his shame. That's what forgiveness does.

9. Listen and learn from your parents

The Bible tells parents to instruct and train their children in the ways of the Lord.

Proverbs 1:8 *My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.*

Proverbs 6:20-21 ²⁰ *My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: ²¹ Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.*

Proverbs 13:1 *A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.*

Children, you need to listen and learn all you can from your parents. Someone has figured out that the peak years of mental ability must be between age 4 and 20. At age four we have all the questions and at twenty, we know all the answers. You know the older you get, the wiser your parents seem to get. No one cares more about you than your parents. Think of it like this. Suppose you were going on a long road trip, and your parents had taken that trip several years before you. They could tell you about the roads, the good places to stop, and the dangers to watch out for. That's the way life is. Your parents have been down the road ahead of you and they've learned some things. Be wise and learn from their experience.

10. Care for your parents

Our parents care for us when we are young, and we should care for them when they are old and needy. Christ taught us two important lessons on this. In Mark 7:9-13, Christ rebuked the Pharisees who said it was alright to disregard the fifth commandment and not care for their parents if they had pledged a gift to the synagogue. In John 19:26-27, when Jesus was dying on the cross He was concerned about his mother Mary, and told his disciple John to take care of her.

1 Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Believers who don't take care of their parents are worse than an infidel or unbeliever. If your Christian faith doesn't work in your family, it doesn't work at all.