

Subject: *God's Moral Law – The Fifth Commandment*

Scripture: *Exodus 20:1-12*

Not all of us have children, but all of us have parents. None of us have perfect parents and none of us are perfect children. Two things are special about this commandment.

- This is the first commandment concerning 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 first commandment begins by setting up a structure of authority: we are to have no other gods but the one true God. In the same way, God has set up authority structure on earth, and He begins with the fundamental authority of parents and children. In the home children are to learn what authority is and how to obey. We live under God's heavenly authority and under our parents' earthly authority. In fact, their authority is an extension of God's authority.

- This is the first commandment with a promise attached to it

We should obey this commandment for the Lord's sake, but He has 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."

We rarely hear the word "honor" these days. The Bible commands us to honor certain people. First and foremost, we are to honor God.

Revelation 4:11 *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

We are to honor our father and mother, the elderly, government officials, and church leaders. We are also to honor certain things ordained by God such as the Sabbath Day and marriage. The Bible describes certain actions as honorable or dishonorable, and the Bible teaching on honor reflects God's character and commandments. So how do you honor your parents?

1. Respect your parents

To "honor" means to attach weight or significance to someone. To honor means to esteem someone highly because of who they are or what they have done. If someone is honored, they are highly valued. You should think highly of your parents. You should talk respectfully to your parents, and you should talk respectfully about them. Don't ever refer to your mother as "the old lady" or your father as "the old man." Not only should we respect them when we are with them, but 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.

2. Obey your parents

Obeying parents has to do with actions, while honoring them has to do with attitude. Honoring is the motivation behind obedience. 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.*

A child may say, “But my parents are not always right.” The Bible says to obey them for this is right. We should obey our parents “in the Lord,” that means we submit to their authority because the Lord has placed them in authority over us. To obey our parents is, in a sense, the same as obeying the Lord. The only exception on obeying our parents is if they tell us to do something the Lord forbids or they forbid us 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 unbelievers he mentions “disobedient to parents” right in the middle of the list with other things like “backbiters, haters of God, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things.” Then the Bible says that those who do such things are “worthy of death.” Someone asked a little boy, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” “I want to be alive!”

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 can and should help mom and dad with work around the house. It is a disgrace for a young man not to help his dad with the yard work. It is a disgrace for a young lady not to help her mom with the house work. A lot of children have the attitude of the little boy who asked his dad about old family picture, “Hey, Dad, is that when Mom first came to work for us?” A teenage girl wanted to go to the movies so she asked, “Mom, can I have some money to hit the flick?” “Yes, but first you can stash the trash, spread the bed, swish the dish, and flop the mop.”

4. Thank your parents

Scripture teaches that one sign of the last days is that people will be unthankful. Gratitude begins at home. We take so much for granted. When was the last time you thanked your parents for your home, for your food, for your clothes, for a bed to sleep in? When was the last time you thanked them for paying the bills? You say, “Well, that’s their job, that’s their responsibility.” And you’re right. But they still like to hear a word of appreciation. I want to give you four reasons why you ought to thank your mom and dad:

- a) because they brought you into this world – they are the source of your life
- b) because they provide for you
- c) because they mold and shape your life
- d) because they teach you God’s ways

5. Pray for your parents

You need to ask God to help them. Had I known then what I know now, I would have prayed more for my parents. It’s not easy being a parent. We all know there are no perfect parents.

Do you realize there are no professional parents? No, every parent is an amateur. We all learn as we go along—call it “on the job training.” You need to pray for your parents because almost every decision they make will affect you. Pray that God will give them wisdom and a desire to do the right thing.

6. Be a blessing to your parents

It ought to be our aim to be a blessing to our mom and dad, and to please them.

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. What heartaches some parents have to endure because of their children. Are your parents rejoicing because you are their son or daughter?

7. Enjoy your parents

You won't living at home with your parents all of your life. You will probably leave at some point. Enjoy being with them and spending time with them. Realize that your parents are the best friends you will ever have. Ask yourself, “Would I want my children to have the same feelings for me as I have for my Mom and Dad?” You won't have your parents forever. One day they will be gone and all you will have is the 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. When I talk with couples before they get married, I tell them that forgiveness is essential for a good marriage. It's like oil in the engine of your car. The same holds true for parents and children. 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 Noah and the ark? 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 saw his dad and went and told his brothers, and they did something wonderful. The Bible says they took a garment and walked backward into Noah's tent and laid a cover over him so they would not see their father's nakedness.

9. Listen to your parents

The Bible tells parents to instruct and train their children in the ways of the Lord. Children need to listen to their advice and learn all you can from them. Someone has figured out that the peak years of mental ability must be between age 4 and 20. At 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. When your parents give you advice and counsel, do you really listen?

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

No one cares more about you than your parents. Think of it like this. Suppose you were going on a road trip out west, and your parents left a few weeks 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 it is our duty and privilege to care for them when they are old or when they are in need. When Jesus was suffering in agony on the cross, He cared about his mother, Mary, and told his disciple John to care for her.

1 Timothy 5:8 *But if any provide not for his own, and specially 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 at home, it doesn't work at all.

The Ten Commandments are God's moral law. They are like a mirror to reveal our sin. Even the best of children don't honor their parents as they should. We may have dishonored our parents by our actions or our attitude. And God knows it. We stand guilty. But there is good news. We broke God's law, but Jesus died for our sins and said, "It is finished" (paid in full).

We have no choice about what family we would be born into. But we do have a choice to be in God's family. It is a choice to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

John 1:12 *But as many as received him (Christ), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*