

Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 104 – Love those who are over you

Beloved in Christ: **The 5th command is under brutal attack from the Devil.** I hope this is obvious. But it is the way he attacks this command that is most notable. Satan does not directly attack Law 5. Rather, he attacks it using 2 backhanded methods.

1. He has worked hard to promote the idea of individualism – that life is all about independence and personal rights. “I can live however I want.” “You can’t tell me what to do.” “I have freedom to choose.” The Devil knows that when the “individual” is exalted in his own self-worth, he is less likely to honor others, let alone honor and obey them.

2. He has worked hard, not to attack fathers directly, but to give a substitute father. The most common substitute father is the state. The state then promises to take care of you and have your interests at heart. It will make sure you have a guaranteed income, free health care, affordable housing, and freedom to live however you want and punishing people who speak against your sinful choices. Of course, the state must steal to provide these things, but that’s the Devil’s way.

These are increasingly wicked moves, so give close attention as we examine God’s 5th law today.

Our headings are:

Prescriptions of Law 5

Prohibitions of Law 5

Our goals are: That as the redeemed of God through Jesus, you **will begin to earnestly consider how to obey this 5th command, so there may be order in all levels of society, so that Christ’s kingdom can advance on earth.**

What is the fifth command?

Exodus 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

104 Q. WHAT IS GOD’S WILL FOR US IN THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT?

A. That I honor, love, and be loyal to my father and mother and all those in authority over me; that I obey and submit to them, as is proper, when they correct and punish me; and also that I be patient with their failings– for through them God chooses to rule us.

Prescriptions of Law 5

1. God requires you love your neighbor and so you must honor all your fathers-not just your biological fathers, but all those who are in authority over you, including your mother and your big sister.

God used your closest father – the one you should love the most - to represent all fathers.

a. You must honor your political fathers – those in authority over you in the civil government, even if they are bad.

Isaiah 49:23 - Kings shall be your foster fathers, And their queens your nursing mothers...

b. You must honor old men...like Elisha called out to Elijah...!

2Kings 2:12...Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!"

c. You must honor your spiritual fathers...like your pastor, elder, and deacons.

1Corinthians 4:14 - I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.

d. You must honor your economic fathers – your employers.

Ephesians 6: 5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

e. It is legitimate to include husbands as a father, as wives are under the authority of their husbands. A godly wife will honor her husband irrespective of his education, employment, wealth, or social status.

2. How do you honor your fathers?

a. Have a good heart toward your parents. Honoring starts in the heart...even of your civil leaders. Always think about what good you can do for them.

Leviticus 19:3 - 'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths...

b. Speak well to and of your parents. This does not mean you defend wrong things your parents might say or do. It means you speak with respect **of them and to them**. Don't not criticize their weaknesses. Be patient with them. Pray for them.

1Timothy 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and **all who are in authority**, that we may lead a quiet and **peaceable life in all godliness and reverence**.

c. Honor your parents by your actions, as when Solomon rose up from his throne when his mother entered the room.

1Kings 2:19 Bathsheba therefore went to King Solomon, to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her and bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne and had a throne set for the king's mother; so she sat at his right hand.

Joseph bowed, out of respect, to this father Jacob, even though he was Prime Minister of Egypt and provided for him. He cared for his brothers – which was really an honoring of his father who raised him.

Shem and Japheth honored Noah by covering his nakedness.

Ruth honored Naomi by getting food for her.

So honor must be with more than in symbolic things. Follow the example of young storks that instinctively bring food to old storks that can no longer fly.

Spiritual fathers-Elders: Show high reverence to your elders because they are there under the Lord's directions. It is not because of their great ability you are commanded to respect them. **It is because of the honor God put on them.**

1Thessalonians 5:12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake...

Civil Fathers – Kings: Jesus paid taxes and you too are to submit to earthly authorities. **Fight in the military if need be.**

1Peter 2:17 - Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. **Honor the king.**

Economic Fathers – Honor and obey the one who might be taking advantage of your good nature and not rewarding or recognizing you for all your good work.

Ephesians 6: 5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in **sincerity of heart, as to Christ;**

3. Parents have a duty to make it easy for your children to honor you.

Ask yourself: Is the way I deal with my children making it easy for them to honor me?

Pray for your children.

Instruct your children so they are adequately prepared for their tasks.

Admonish them when they are wrong...so they **get a sense of what their sins deserve.**

Encourage them when they are struggling...to know they are not fighting alone.

Keep your word as a parent...this is how you picture your heavenly Father.

Set a good example for your children that is worthy to be followed. Let them not see a yeller or a drunkard!

Protect your children—from dangers, not only from strangers, but from the internet, and their friends, sometimes.

Reward them when they do well. Leave an inheritance for your children, not debts for them to pay.

Give up your time to talk...and not just ask about their day...but about their desires.

4. Honoring parents (or teaching children to honor parents) must never be separated from God's plan of salvation and sanctification in Jesus Christ.

You will never honor your parents as you should unless you know the work of Christ for you.

Prohibitions of Law 5

1. God forbids having envious, contemptuous, or rebellious thoughts against any of your fathers.

2. God forbids you from speaking ill, cursing, mocking, or gossiping against those he has placed over you.

Genesis 9:22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two **brothers outside**.

Instead of honoring his father by covering his sin and covering his father's naked body, Ham **broadcasted his father's sin** on the streets...dishonoring him – mocking him.

Instead of honoring their father by speaking the truth, Jacob's sons lied and hurt their father...making him mourn.

Yet, this cruel dishonoring of their parents was a 10X multiplication of how Jacob had deceived his own father many years before when he joined with his mother and pretended to be Esau. Genesis 27:8

3. What actions does God forbid in this 5th law?

a. God forbids rebellion against your biological parents. A consistently rebellious son was executed.

b. God forbids any and all acts of rebellion against church leaders. One of the worst acts of rebellion is encouraging schisms.

c. God forbids strikes against your employers. Strikes may be legal but they are not moral; they are a form of blackmail. Be careful how you deal with this if you have to be a part of a labor union. Some Christians have asked for exemptions from unions on religious grounds. Others have been granted freedom from picketing or sinful actions as blocking entrances to work places.

d. God forbids rebellion – the taking up of arms against the state. This is why David refused to kill King Saul, even though Saul was trying to kill him. Instead, David ran away. Even though the State may be corrupt and harsh, the leaders are still your fathers. **Grounds for revolution are very limited.**

4. If you don't submit to those in authority over you it will result in anarchy.

Your house will be in confusion, churches will close, and traffic jams and robbery will be everywhere.

5. There is an order of importance of your different fathers, your father in the home being most important.

If you forget the order of importance of the fathers there will be anarchy. This is what happened **in**

communism where the civil father usurped the authority of the family and tried to be more important than fathers in the home. This was what **Hitler** did. This is **what the state is now doing in North America**. The state wants children to see it as the provider-in-chief. This is the backdoor method the Devil uses.

6. Concurrent with children's duties, God forbids parents from failing to do their duties to their children.

a. A father who doesn't discipline his children (as Eli) is working for their destruction.

1Samuel 2:22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 23 So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 "No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD'S people transgress.

Samuel ignored his sons' sins. David ignored his sons' sins-Absalom and Adonijah. They should have been more like Augustine's mother, Monica, who said she labored more for Augustine after his birth than she did for his birth. She offered Augustine breast milk when he was a baby, but she offered him the milk of God's Word – for years...even through years of rebellion. **Some parents push their children to do well in school and force them to study on Sunday,** or avoid church to go to school or study for exams. **If you do this, you are working for the destruction of your children.**

b. Civil fathers who imprison thieves rather than requiring them to work and make restitution to those from whom they stole are working for the destruction of those thieves. Civil governments are not given the task of rehabilitating criminals. They are to punish them if they were convicted of crimes. But this is another case of the state trying to be God.

c. An economic boss or father who "pinches his employees' belly so he could get fat" is making it difficult for his employees to honor him and work for his good. Not caring for his employees is an **attack against the image of God in his employees.** It is like the ravens that eat their own chicks.

Conclusion:

Honor all your fathers. If you don't honor your fathers, it is a **sign of unbelief**. Yes, your parents' demands may seem hard, and may **be hard**, but you have to obey and show you believe in God. **Fathers have an obligation** also. Fathers are to make it easy for subordinates to honor them by providing for them, loving them, instructing them, and disciplining them, rather than being cruel and crushing. Cruelty is **a sign of unbelief**.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Do you struggle to honor those the Lord has placed over you? Then let your mind be drawn back to what Christ has done for you in his life and his death on the cross. That is how you will be willing to

submit to him and his Word. Though pride and resentment of those over you are natural, honoring your father is supernatural. You have been given that supernatural gift of love as a redeemed child of God.

2. Great blessings come on the covenant community when children honor their parents – all of them.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you can't obey this command unless you learn to honor your Father in heaven. You can only honor him if you trust in Jesus...trust that he lived and died for you...so you don't have to die for your sins. May you call on the Lord and plead for faith to receive what Jesus did, so you can trust him.