

GOD'S GUIDE TO A GREAT LIFE
Sermon Series on the Ten Commandments

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HONOR THEIR PARENTS, FOR THEY ARE HONORING GOD

Exodus 20:12

For most of us this command makes sense, especially if you're a parent. This doesn't mean it's the turn of our little ones or teens to squirm uncomfortably in their seats – we all are children of our parents: this is for all of us.

But there might be a few for whom this command will be a struggle. Perhaps one (or both) of your parents was abusive or absent. Perhaps one (or both) was unfaithful or simply unkind. The grace of God is greater than their mistakes, or ours. Today we see the continuing love of God expressed as this command. The Fifth Commandment reminds us not only that we honor God when we honor our parents. It also reminds us that when we care for our parents, we are also caring for ourselves:

1. THE REQUIREMENT TO HONOR: "HONOR your father and your mother"

a) To Honor my parents, means to Obey them [esp. young children]:

- Proverbs 1:8-9 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

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

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

b) To Honor my parents, means to Respect them [esp. teens and young adults]:

- Leviticus 19:3 "Each of you must respect his mother and father . . . I am the LORD your God." God has some fearful things to say about disrespecting your parents (Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Deuteronomy 27:16; Proverbs 20:20). Just thank God we don't do stoning anymore.

- But we do die in a certain way when we disrespect them: Proverbs 30:17 "The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures."

c) To Honor my parents, means to Care for them [esp. mature adults]:

- 1 Timothy 5:4, 8 say that "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

- Mark 7:8-13 reveals the Corban alibi: "I don't have to help my parents because of my promises to God".

- Jesus demonstrated His perfect obedience by providing for the care of His mother (John 19:26–27). This demonstrates that the Fifth Commandment included caring for parents in their later years.

2. THE RECIPIENTS OF HONOR: “Honor your father and your mother”

- Jesus spent His young life in subjection to both His earthly parents, not just to Joseph. God says mothers deserve equal respect. And one of the ways a father leads his family is by honoring his wife and insisting that his children honor their mother as well.
- Parents should be seen as representing God to their children. They are seen in the Ten Commandments and in Creation to be a unity, representing the oneness and stability of the home. He who honors them therefore, honors God Himself. The 5th commandment is foundational to the rest of the commandments about relating to others.

3. THE REWARDS OF HONORING YOUR PARENTS:

“That you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”

There are four blessings in the Bible from honoring your parents:

- 1) It enables you to live long in the land. (Exod 20:12)
 - For us today it has a personal application – a principle, not a guarantee; quality of years, not just quantity.
 - For Israel then, it also had a national implication.
- 2) It will be well with you. (Deut 5:16)
- 3) It is the right thing to do in the sight of God. (Eph 6:1)
- 4) It is pleasing to God. (Col 3:20)

What if one or both parents were abusive or absent or unkind or unfaithful? Here are four reasons to forgive, if that is a need in your life:

- Forgive them for your sake – like it or not, you often become what you hate.
- Forgive them for their sake – the command to “honor” includes forgiveness.
- Forgive them for your children’s sake – it’s hard to carry your children, while carrying your own excess baggage. Let it go.
- Forgive them for God’s sake – we were forgiven by God when we were unlovable (Romans 5:8). Forgiven people should be forgiving people. If God never let go of my sins, where would I be? (Mat. 6:14-15)

Final Thoughts:

As an imperfect dad to fellow parents: if we have done anything to make it hard for our children to honor us – let us humble ourselves to ask God’s help to do a better job, and start being more honorable today.

For us imperfect children who may have struggled to honor our parents: let’s realize that when we care for them, we not only honor God, but God is helping us care for ourselves, so: HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER. Whatever kind of parents they were.