

Honor to Whom Honor Is Due

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Exodus 20: 12

Let me start with a quote:

“Youth today love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, no respect for older people, and talk nonsense when they should work.

Young people do not stand up any longer when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, talk too much in company, guzzle their food, lay their legs on the table, and tyrannize their elders.” (Socrates 4th Century BC)

Wow, as if it was written today.

Where are we in the Ten Commandments?

We have arrived at the Fifth Commandment.

We read that Moses came down from the mountain carrying two tablets of stone. The Bible does not tell us what was written on each one. Some say there were five commandments on each. Others think Moses brought down a duplicate of the same tablet.¹ Those days covenants were given to the two parties. You had one for each party.

Traditionally, Christians have thought that the first tablet is for vertical relationships between God and humans, and the second is for horizontal relationships with the neighbor. We don't know what was written on each one, and I don't want to speculate. Both theories are good.

What I observe is that we move to the **Fifth Commandment or Word** where there is a shift from **“God-Human” to “Human-Human.”**

Jesus summarized the commandments saying:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37,39 ESV)

“God-Human” to “Human-Human.” (vertical, horizontal)

When the rich young man came to Jesus and asked him how he could inherit the Kingdom of God, he also quoted the second part of the commandments:

“You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 19: 18-19 ESV)

Jesus was testing this young man to see if he understood the Ten Words and whether his relationship with God was a priority.

Loving and worshiping God must come first.

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (Exodus 20:1 ESV)

“I am your God; I love you, and I would love to have a relationship...”

Then the neighbor...

John Calvin said:

“The first foundation of righteousness is the worship of God. When this is overthrown, all the remaining parts of righteousness, like the pieces of a shattered and fallen building, are mangled and scattered.... apart from the fear of God men do not preserve equity and love among themselves. therefore we call the worship of God the beginning and foundation of righteousness.”²

So what is the fifth commandment?

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12 ESV)

If the first section starts with the First Word, **You shall have no other gods before me**, the second section starts with Fifth Word, **“Honor your father and your mother...”** Honoring the father and mother is foundation of loving the neighbor.

Why is honoring our parents such a big deal?

We are not talking about abusive parents, or anti-God parents. In general, God granted us parents; or someone else who filled the void of absent parents, and they became your “parent”.

Why should honor them?

J.I. Packer gives five reasons, and I would like to quote them:

1. The family is the basic social unit; no nation is stable without family.
2. The family is the basic spiritual unit, in which God makes parents their children's pastors and teachers.
3. Children do in fact owe their parents a huge debt of gratitude for the years of care and provision.
4. Children need parental guidance more than they know, and impoverish themselves by rejecting it.
5. In pre-social security days the aged had only their own children to provide for them; and even in the welfare state aging parents need their children's loving concern, just as the children once needed their parents' care.³

As I reflect on my parents, I see how learning to honor them was helpful in learning to honor authorities in school, at the church or elsewhere. My parents taught me how to have healthy relationships at home. That shaped my ability to have other relationships, with my friends for example and with authority in general. Home is a big school. Home is a great school. “The **Home is the lab where children learn submission to authority.**”⁴ Now, there will be bad parents and good kids and good parents and bad kids. But in general homes are a good school where children learn honor, respect, love and obedience.

St. Augustine said: **“If anyone fails to honor his parents, is there anyone he will spare?”**

At home we learn that there is authority and structure in the world. “The family is where we learn about respect and obedience and hopefully (if it is a good family) about love and protection.”⁵

Let me remind my sermon title again: **“Honor to Whom Honor Is Due.”**

Do we honor anyone these days?

What happened to our society?

In 1960s American attitude toward authority had a significant shift. “Young people were anti-business, anti-government, anti-military, anti-school. But of all institutions that came under attack, perhaps the most significant was the family.”⁶

-What does it mean to Honor someone?

The word honor appears only in this commandment. But the concept exists from the beginning. (Right?)

The first four commitments we learn to honor God. (Right?)

“Because He is our author, He rightly holds authority over us. Our Father who art in heaven is worthy of, and entitled to, His children's honor.”⁷

The Fifth Commandment takes us from the heavenly Parent to the earthly parents.

“You shall *HONOR* the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.... You shall *HONOR* your neighbor as yourself.”
(Matthew 22:37,39 ESV)

The Hebrew word to honor is *Kaved*. It means “heavy” or “weighty.”

It is the word the Old Testament uses for the **glory of God**, for the weightiness of his divine majesty. To honor one's parents, therefore, is to give due weight to their position. It is to give them the recognition they deserve for their God-given

authority. To honor is to respect, esteem, value, and prize fathers and mothers as gifts from God.”⁸

-To honor parents means **obedience** to their guidance, especially while we are under their household. Even when we are grown up and out of the household, we should try to listen to them and do our best to do their wishes. May God give us wisdom to know how to do this. Sometimes it is not easy; *and sometimes when they are not capable to do make decisions on their own, they need us to help them.*

-Parents, you are responsible to teach your kids what is right and what is wrong.

Once a parent challenged me saying: “I will not send my kid to Sunday School. I want to raise my kid independent; one day he/she should decide which religion to follow.

-Parents, it is your responsibility to raise your kids in the instructions of the Word of God. If you don’t have the training, we the church can help you. We can assist you. We want you to bring your kids to Sunday School, and while they are there, we would like to have a Bible study for you, my dear parents. Our church is your family, and we would love to equip you.

-Children, on the other hand, your role is to listen and obey. It sounds old and not cool, I get it. I was a kid once as well. But believe me, I will not regret what my parents did to me. Never...

So, I am grateful for them.

Are you grateful for your parents?

I love how Paul writes about the relationship of children and parents:

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹**Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.** (Col 3:20,21 ESV)

Our obedience pleases the Lord. There is a healthy relationship between kids and parents. Children obey; parents, do not provoke your kids. Parents be careful not to overdemand things. May we learn from our Lord Jesus how he was obedient to his Father.

-The second part of the verse has a reward:

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12 ESV)

This commandment has a reward. Kids like rewards...

Paul mentions as well:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” (Eph 6:1,2 ESV)

Does this mean the kids who honor their parents live more?

I don't think so, living long in the land is more than chronology. “The phrase really has to do with abundant life.”⁹

This about knowing Jesus in your life. This is about having a purpose in your life.

What else can I give to my children? How fortunate I am if I passed to my kids the joy of knowing the LORD.

-David, Jonathan, and Saul

We know the story in the Bible about how King Saul was pursuing David to kill him. On the other hand, we have Jonathan, the son of King Saul and a good friend of David's, who tried everything to protect his friend David.

-Jonathan was careful to honor and respect his father. Yet, he had to make decision to protect his friend from his father's anger. **He honored God by disobeying his father.** He said to his father: **“Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?”** (1 Sam 19:5). **Jonathan was not dishonoring his father but was preserving his honor.**

-David on the other hand honored King Saul. He had an opportunity to kill him, but he did not. He did not touch the Lord's anointed King.

What am I drawing here? **We honor God.** If we see our earthly authority is not allowing us to honor God, we should carefully not obey them. Please be careful how to do this.

-I have tremendous respect to a young lady from Aleppo. Sylvie was committed Christian, but her parents were not. We invited her to go to Camp KCHAG in Kessab in the summer. Her parents disagreed and did not allow her to go. She obeyed them. Her obedience was important to keep her relationship with them. Her friends came back from camp and passed all the camp material to her. She was so thankful. Now years passed and still I remember her obedience to her father. She prayed for many years about her parents' salvation. Today Sylvie is a married woman with a wonderful pastor Nabil; they have kids and she has PHD in theology and teaches in university.

Application:

Jesus is the perfect example of obedience to parents. **“Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all**

these things in her heart” (Luke 2:51). Not only to his earthly parents, but his heavenly Father as well.

-Jesus honored his parents. In one incident we find when he was in the Temple and his parents were looking for him. But until the end, he took care of his mother, and at the cross he asked John to take care of his mother.

His obedience to God the Father gave us new life. Because of His obedience to the law, Jesus paid the price of sin.

Jesus knows that we cannot keep the Fifth Commandment or any commandment perfectly. He did for us.

Yet he taught us how to be obedient to our parents, to our authorities, to our God the Father.

Thank you, Jesus for teaching me to be obedient to your WORD.

Please examine yourself today as a kid, or as a parent.

Five practical things to do:

1. “Yes mom, Yes dad..” Do not embarrass them. Make them proud.
2. Thank you dad, mom, appreciate what they have done for you.
3. I am sorry dad, mom...broken relationships can be healed...
4. Tell them about your life. Share to each other’s stories. I wish I asked more questions to my parents about their lives. Listen to their stories, tell your stories.
5. Please call them today... Be involved in their lives.

1. Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*, P 79

2. John Calvin, *Institute of the Christian Religion*. Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in the Stone*, p 118

3. J.I. Packer, *Keeping the 10 Commandments*, p 72

4. Jen Wilkin, *Ten Words to Live By*, P 76

5. Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*, P 81

6. Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in the Stone*, p 117

7. Jen Wilkin, *Ten Words to Live By*, p 76

8. Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in the Stone* p 119

9. Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*, P 88