

Honouring Parents

(Exodus 20:12)

- I. honour: High respect, esteem, or reverence, accorded to exalted worth or rank; deferential admiration or approbation.
- A. deference: Courteous regard such as is rendered to a superior, or to one to whom respect is **due**; the manifestation of a disposition to yield to the claims or wishes of another.
- B. due: That is owing or payable, as an enforceable obligation or debt.
- C. Children OWE their parents honour and parents have a right under God to demand payment (and err greatly to not demand it).
- D. Children, you should honour your parents:
1. because God said so and they rule you in God's stead.
 2. because they did not abort you.
 3. because your mother sacrificed her conformation to bear you.
 4. because your mother put her life at risk to bear you and deliver you.
 5. because they did not sell you or your organs on the black market.
 6. because they did not molest you.
 7. because they did not prostitute you.
 8. because they did not maim you or irreparably hurt you.
 9. because they did not force you to work in deep mines or factories when small.
 10. because they did not mistreat you or abandon you to where the state stepped in.
 11. because they protect you from danger.
 12. because they would die in a heartbeat to save you.
 13. because they love you and are devoted to your success and well-being.
 14. because they go to great lengths to provide you with good things.
 15. because they spend more than you can imagine on good food for you.
 16. because they spend more than you can imagine to put a roof over your head.
 17. because they pay the utilities that warm you, cool you, give you electric power.
 18. because they are wiser than you and their counsel is invaluable.
 19. because they impose rules and boundaries for your own good.
 20. because there is a blessing in it for you.
 21. because they do NOT owe you: you owe them.
 22. because your reaction to their authority sets the stage for your whole life.
 23. because not doing so makes your show of Christianity a joke.
 24. because not doing so can cost you privileges and benefits.
 25. because not doing so can be physically painful.
 26. because not doing so can land you in the hands of the magistrate.
 27. because not doing so can land you in the hands of the state foster or reform system.
 28. because not doing so can get you cut out of their will.
 29. because ingratitude is a building block of judgmental darkness and idolatry.
 30. because not doing so is a damnable offense worthy of death in God's eyes.

- II. God engraved in stone by His own hand a command for children to honour their parents.

EXO 20:12.

- A. It is the first command of the second table of the Law, which treats of human relations.
- B. It is the first commandment with promise.
- C. It is as much in force today as ever it was. Its scope is universal. **EPH 6:1-3.**
1. The command applies to children in their youth. **PRO 2:17.**
 2. 19-year-olds were lumped in with the little ones in **NUM 14:29-31.**

3. The command applies also to adult children. **MAT 15:4-6.**
- D. Honouring father and mother is part of a larger issue: honouring age and rank in general. **LEV 19:32; JOB 32:6-7.**
 1. The old imperative, "Respect your elders" is quite correct.
 2. It is a sad statement on America when some "non-christian" nations honour their elders more than we do.
- E. There is an element of godly fear involved. **LEV 19:3.**
- F. God Himself in Christ honoured His parents. **LUK 2:51; JOH 19:26-27.**

III. In the law of Moses, disrespect and/or disobedience to parents was strongly discouraged. **DEU 21:18-21; EXO 21:15, 17.**

- A. Christ recognized the justice of such severe measures. **MAT 15:4-6.**
- B. The N.T. has taken the sword from out of the church's hand in this matter, but the vileness of the sin is still as dark as ever. **ROM 1:29-32.**
- C. Paul warns of *perilous times* which would be partially characterized by a breach of the fifth commandment. **2TI 3:1-2.**
- D. The Bible formula for discouraging such dishonour is early discipline and training undergirded by nurturing kindness. **PRO 22:6; 13:24; EPH 6:4.**
 1. betimes: At an early time, period or season; early in time; early in life.
 2. This gives a child a healthy respect for authority and rank which will save him in later life. **EPH 6:3 ct/w PRO 30:17.**
 3. If you have gotten a late start on training respect into a child, you need to repent of your tardiness and get things moving in the right direction.
- E. Parents who suffer disrespect from the children under their roof are disobeying God and not doing them any favors.
 1. Children are to be trained (manipulated) *in the way they should go*. **PRO 22:6.**
 - a. Make sure that the manipulation is parent of child, not the reverse. Many parenting failures stem from letting little children manipulate the parent by false anxiety, defiance, threat, or whining.
 - b. Childish weaknesses or independent thought are to be expected but defiance is rebellion, and rebellion must not be tolerated any more than witchcraft. **1SAM 15:23.**
 - c. "Thou shalt not whine" would be an appropriate summary of the Biblical prohibition on murmuring. **PHIL 2:14.**
 - d. If a little child is not plainly ill, in pain or genuinely exhausted, then do not suffer whininess. The old parental promise, "Stop that whining or I will give you something to whine about" holds true.
 - e. I issue a challenge to parents of manipulative little children: take two or three weeks to steel yourselves completely against manipulative tactics like clinginess and whininess. Do not permit it. Break that bad habit and see if you don't find more personal freedom to care for other needful things and find peace for yourself as your child is forced to respect boundaries and respect YOU.
 2. The way they *should* go is that of honouring/respecting/reverencing parents AND elders. **LEV 19:32; ISA 3:5.**
 3. God's way is to reward good behavior and punish bad behavior. Disrespect of parents or elders is bad behavior. What are you doing about it?
 - a. Do not ignore it.
 - b. Do not encourage it.

- c. Do not justify it.
 - d. Do not tolerate it.
 - e. Punish it corporally in younger children. **PRO 23:13-14.**
- 4. A parent who is chronically delinquent in this area of child-training is not only creating a monster---the parent may invite God's judgment upon themselves.
 - a. They may reject pastoral reproof and abandon the faith, having quenched the spirit.
 - b. They may out of frustration over embarrassment of their parenting failure leave the church.
- 5. Poor parents can train their children to do evil.
 - a. A parent may *deliberately* train a child to steal, burn property, kill, curse God or any one of a number of sinful behaviors, including disrespecting parents or elders.
 - b. A parent may by *delinquency in punishment* train a child to do the same since such behavior is performed with impunity.
 - c. Both types of parents are training their children to commit sinful or even criminal acts.
 - d. The state may hold parents responsible for the criminal delinquency of juveniles.
- F. The child who holds the government of his parents in contempt may have to be cast out. **PRO 22:10.**
 - 1. Sometimes it is in the best interest of all that a child of age who demands liberation from parental oversight be given the same. **LUK 15:11-12.**
 - 2. Young people who insist on getting out from under parental oversight will not find the world to be as easy and friendly as they assumed it would be. There are real-life dangers and costs that must be taken into account.
 - 3. It was Lucifer who essentially said, "Better to rule in hell than serve in heaven."

IV. Fathers are to be *intreated*. **1TI 5:1.**

- A. intreat: With additional sense of asking, asking *of* somebody or *for* something. To intercede, plead *for* (a person). To sue, plead *for* (a concession or favour). To ask earnestly for (a thing)... To make an earnest prayer or request to; to beseech, implore.
- B. This is a far cry from screaming at a father (or mother) or demanding their compliance.
- C. Children will make much more headway with respectful intreaty than by disrespectful demand.
- D. Our Heavenly Father is approached by intreaty: "Ask, and it shall be given..." (**MAT 7:7**). c/w **PSA 119:58.**

V. The fifth commandment is followed by **EPH 6:4**, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

- A. Parents, especially fathers, have a solemn responsibility to not push a child's buttons as Israel did to Moses. **PSA 106:32-33.**
- B. Tyranny, absenteeism, unfettered anger, anger without cause, dishonour of spouse, disinterest, forgetfulness of one's own youth and inexperience, etc. are some ways of provoking children to wrath.
- C. Do not wall off large areas of conversation by obstinate refusal to listen, which may encourage a child to tell you nothing or only tell you what you want to hear to pacify you.
 - 1. Try to distinguish independent thought from rebellion.
 - a. Rebellion is not when a child is trying to accomplish or express something

- in his own manner.
 - b. Rebellion is when a specific, no-option expectation is defied.
- 2. By overreacting to any deviation from Dad's standards, Dad may teach a child that it is unwise to tell him everything.
- 3. Explosive raging at moral failure can provoke excuses whereas understanding may inspire confession.
 - a. God is forgiving and approachable when we err. **1JO 1:9; 2:1-2.**
 - b. Approachability reduces the number of defense mechanisms.

VI. Children, youth, burgeoning adults, :

- A. Your parents weren't endowed with perfect understanding and experience. They have been trying to raise you properly while struggling with their own pressures and insecurities, bad experiences of their past and the fact that cultural shifts and trends have forced them to make tough decisions.
- B. Your parents in many ways have had to "ad-lib" their way through their parenting of you, figuring out how to do things "on the fly." Cut them some slack.
- C. With all the good things that your parents have done to you and for you, plus your knowledge of their mistakes and of your "better ways of doing things," you should be able to be flawless, successful parents one day who will never have to worry about suffering disrespect from your own children. I truly wish you the best.

VII. The fifth commandment raises some worthy questions:

- A. Does "honour thy father and thy mother" mean unqualified, blind submission to their every whim?
- B. Does "honour thy father and thy mother" mean that you are sinning if you resist their ungodly expectation of you?
- C. Does "honour thy father and thy mother" mean that you are sinning if you reprove them for sin?
- D. Does "honour thy father and thy mother" mean that if they are financially able to support themselves in their old age or infirmities that you are still responsible to pick up all costs?
- E. Does "honour thy father and thy mother" mean that it would always be wrong for you to entrust the care of a parent to someone outside of the family?
- F. Is it possible that resisting parents' ungodly actions or expectations is actually a form of honouring them?
- G. In other words, are there limitations/qualifications to "honour thy father and thy mother"?

VIII. Parents are not the only ones that are to be honoured.

- A. We are also told to "...Honour the king" (**1PE 2:17**).
 - 1. Yet there are times when kings must be reproved. **1KI 18:17-18; 2KI 3:13-14.**
 - 2. Were these prophets violating "Honour the king"?
- B. The ministry is to be accorded honour. **1TH 5:12-13.**
 - 1. Yet there are times when ministers must be reproved. **NEH 13:29; GAL 2:14.**
 - 2. Was it wrong for these men to reprove God's ministers under such circumstances?
- C. There are actually times when SUPPORTIVELY "honouring" people who are in a position of honour would be the wrong thing to do. **PRO 26:1, 8; 28:4.**

IX. Similarly, "honour thy father and thy mother" may mean resisting them or reproving them when they act or demand *contrary to the law of God*.

- A. Jonathan went against his father Saul's wishes in helping David. **1SAM 20:5-6, 28-29.**

- B. Gideon “dissed” his father's idolatry. **JDG 6:25-26.**
- C. Asa deposed his own (grand)mother for her idolatry. **1KI 15:13.**
- D. Levi was exalted in Israel because they did NOT render unqualified honour unto their parents in gross sin. **DEU 33:8-9.**
- E. The Lord Jesus Christ even resisted His mother's wishes in deference to higher spiritual priorities. **JOH 2:3-4; MAT 12:46-50.**
- F. There is only one Person worthy of continual unqualified honour: God! **REV 4:11.**
 - 1. All those whom God expects to be shown honour in this world are themselves subject to correction by those under them.
 - 2. God is the only Honoured One who is never wrong!
- G. Children do have the right to question or disagree with erring parents, but they have also the responsibility to do so with healthy fear. **LEV 19:3.**
 - 1. This information is no license for flippant, backhanded disrespect of parents because they crimp a child's style.
 - 2. Children are beholden to their parents for the necessities of life and children do well to absorb a little bad with the good.
 - 3. Children need to be cautious about getting too righteous in their resistance of parents over *perceived* errors.
 - a. It may not be an error at all.
 - b. Dad and Mom deserve the benefit of the doubt in discretionary matters.
 - c. Don't be a fool who charges parents with tyranny simply because they are exercising their God-given executive power in training and ruling you.
 - 4. Until a child is on his own, he is subject to his parents' government of THEIR household.
- X. What about “honouring parents” relative to their old age or distress?
 - A. Obviously, if parents are adequately endowed for the “twilight years,” they are responsible to first bear their own burden. **GAL 6:5 c/w 2CO 12:14.**
 - B. It is a different story for a desperate widow. **1TI 5:3-4, 8.**
 - C. It is not necessarily a sin to entrust the care of an aging parent to someone who is not a member of the family. **JOH 19:26-27.**