

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT – PART 2

Exodus 20:12

By Andy Manning

The title of this sermon is “The Fifth Commandment, Part 2.”

The fifth commandment is found in Exodus 20:12 (CSB). “Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

This is the only commandment that we’re giving two weeks to because it is so important. It is the first of the social commandments, even before murder and adultery, because assuming that parents are teaching their kids to love God, if kids honor their parents then they will follow all the rest of God’s commandments.

Last week we started this study by looking at ten ways to honor your parents. Let’s do a little review: 1) Obey them. 2) Respect them. 3) Strive to please them. 4) Be honest and open with them. 5) Make them a priority in your life. 6) Seek their counsel. 7) Let them enjoy their grandchildren. 8) Care for them in their old age. 9) Be a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ. 10) Treat them the way you would want to be treated.

Today we’re going to answer two questions.

First, why should children honor their parents?

Second, how can parents make it easy for their kids to honor them?

WHY SHOULD CHILDREN HONOR THEIR PARENTS?

1. For your own benefit.

Proverbs 1:8-9 says, “8 Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction, and don’t reject your mother’s teaching, 9 for they will be a garland of favor on your head and pendants around your neck.”

In other words, your parents' teachings, advice, counsel, and wisdom will make you more attractive. They will benefit you. They will help you live a happier, healthier, more successful life.

Your parents are exponentially smarter than you. They have seen more, experienced more, read more, heard more. They know more.

There's a movie about Pistol Pete Maravich in which his dad, who is a college coach, talks to his players. He holds up a basketball and says, "Gentlemen, this basketball represents everything there is to know about the game of basketball." Then he takes a Sharpie and draws a big circle and says, "This circle represents what I know about basketball." Then he takes the Sharpie and makes a dot so small that you can't see it and says, "This dot is what you know." His point was that his players, as talented as they were, needed to listen to their coach.

It's that same with parents. Parents know so much more than you. So listen them and it will benefit you.

Proverbs 6:20-23 says, "20 My son, keep your father's command, and don't reject your mother's teaching. 21 Always bind them to your heart; tie them around your neck. 22 When you walk here and there, they will guide you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; when you wake up, they will talk to you. 23 For a command is a lamp, teaching is a light, and corrective discipline is the way to life."

Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound to the heart of a youth; a rod of discipline will separate it from him."

You aren't born knowing it all.

This is why God's plan is to give every child two godly, attentive, loving parents to teach and counsel and coach the child to maturity. Honor your parents for your own benefit.

2. For God's reward.

The fifth commandment is the first commandment with a promise.

Let's look at it again in **Exodus 20:12**. "Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

What's the promise? A long life.

Now this is not a guarantee that if you honor your parents you won't die young, or that if you don't honor your parents you won't live long.

God already has the length of your life planned before you are born, and in some cases the godly die young for the glory of God.

However, you can cut your life short by making bad choices; you can shorten your life by being sinful and foolish.

The promise here is that if you honor your parents, God will reward you by letting you live out the fullness of your days – all the days that He intended for you to live.

Phil Johnson said, "This is a principle, not a guarantee; a truism, not an absolute promise."

Deuteronomy 5:16 adds something. "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and so that you may prosper in the land the Lord your God is giving you."

This says that you will not only live long, but that you will prosper. God will bless you with prosperity, with success, if you honor your parents.

Philip Ryken said, "... When the Bible speaks of living long in the land, it is not simply talking about how old people are when they die. The expression 'live long in the land' is a Hebrew phrase for the fullness of God's blessing. It means to have an abundant life.... Anyone who wants to live long and prosper should honor his mother and father."

It's funny. There are tons of books out there on the topic of success – how to succeed at life. But I don't think I've ever seen one that points to the connection between success and honoring your parents. But it is there. If you want a full and

satisfying and abundant life, the best life, then honor your parents, and God will honor you.

Matthew Henry wrote, “Those who in conscience toward God keep this, may be sure that it shall be well with them, and that they shall live as long on earth as infinite wisdom sees good for them, and that what they may seem to be cut short of on earth shall be abundantly made up in eternal life, the heavenly Canaan, which God will give them.”

While God promises to reward those who honor their parents, the opposite is also true. There is a warning to those who neglect to honor their parents.

Proverbs 30:17 says, “As for the eye that ridicules a father and despises obedience to a mother, may ravens of the valley pluck it out and young vultures eat it.”

3. To obey God.

A third reason to honor your parents is to obey God.

Just to remind you, this is what it means to be a Christian. Obedience to God. When God says to do something, we obey.

So many people claim to believe in Jesus, but even the demons believe in Jesus; God doesn't just want you to believe that He exists; He wants you to trust Him as your King by letting Him rule your life.

You may be a really nice person; you may give a lot of money to charity; you may know a lot about the Bible; but if you are not obedient to God's commands, then you are not a true Christian.

Jesus said in **John 15:15**, “If you love me, you will keep my commands.”

James 1:22 says, “But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

In **Luke 6:46** Jesus said, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don't do the things I say?”

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 says, “12 And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you except to fear the Lord your God by walking in all his ways, to love him, and to worship the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul? 13 Keep the Lord’s commands and statutes I am giving you today, for your own good.” God demands our obedience.

And God commands us clearly to honor our parents.

Exodus 20:12 says, “Honor your father and your mother....” **Ephesians 6:1-2** says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother....”

You cannot be an obedient, fully-devoted Christian if you don’t honor your parents.

4. To please God.

Not only should we honor our parents to be obedient to God, but we should honor our parents to please God.

If you love God, then you want to do those things that please Him, and avoid those things that grieve Him. And the Bible is very clear what pleases the Lord.

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

How important is it to God that you honor your parents?

If it was important enough for God to include it in the Ten Commandments, and for it to be the first of all the social commandments, and for God to make death the penalty for disobedience, then this command is supremely important to God.

Honoring your parents is really not about your parents. It’s not about whether or not they deserve honor; it’s not about whether or not they are good parents; it’s not about whether or not they are mean and cruel and too strict. Honoring your

parents is about your relationship with God. God commands it; and it pleases God.

You cannot have a good relationship with God unless you honor your parents.

5. To prevent the breakdown of society.

As I mentioned, the fifth commandment is the first of the social commandments.

That shows how important it is.

First, if kids will honor their parents, then they will by default obey all the other commandments, assuming their parents godly.

And second, if kids won't honor their parents, then they won't honor anyone. And when an entire generation of kids refuses to honor their parents, society will break down.

Jl Packer said, "The family is the basic social unit; no nation is stable or virile where family life is weak."

Allister Begg said, "The well-being of a person, of a people, of a nation begins within the home. Virtually all civilizations have regarded the recognition of parental authority as being indispensable to a stable society.... Undisciplined children spell ruin for a society."

Augustine said, "If anyone fails to honor his parents, is there anyone he will spare?"

If you want to live in a great country, a great society, then honor your parents, and teach your kids to honor you.

6. To learn submission.

A sixth reason to honor your parents is to learn submission.

This relates to the previous reason.

Your success in life is correlated to how well you submit to authority. If you want to succeed and be happy, you had better learn submission.

All of life is submission. Everyone has to submit.

The Bible calls children to submit to their parents, wives to submit to their husbands, husbands to submit to God, Christians to submit to pastors, citizens to submit to the government, employees to submit to employers. There isn't a person alive who isn't called to submit to someone else.

And submission is not easy. It is not natural. It is unnatural. As sinners our natural desires is to go our own way, to be in charge, to run the show, to sit in the driver's seat. We like to be in control. We don't even like for God to rule us, much less people.

So where do people learn how to submit to authority?

It's God's plan that people learn how to respect and submit to authority, how to live peacefully under authority, by learning to honor their parents.

By learning to honor your parents, you are learning to honor all authority figures in your life.

Alistair Begg said, "Nobody will ever give honor where honor is due unless kids are taught to honor parents in the home."

Your relationship with your parents is your first relationship. It is the foundation of all your future relationships. If you don't learn to get along with your parents, then you will struggle to get along with people for the rest of your life.

This is how breaking the fifth commandment on a mass scale leads to the crumbling of society.

Little girls who don't honor their parents won't submit to their husbands.

Little boys who don't honor their parents won't submit to God by loving their wives and discipling their kids.

Kids who don't honor their parents won't respect their neighbors, or obey the police, or get along with their bosses at work.

But if you will learn to honor and get along with your parents, then you will be prepared to succeed in all of your future relationships.

All great people in the Bible learned submission before God exalted them.

Jacob was submissive to his wicked uncle Laban.

Joseph was submissive to Potiphar, and then to the prison warden, and then to Pharaoh.

Moses was submissive to Pharaoh.

Joshua was submissive to Moses.

Samuel was submissive to Eli.

David was submissive to Saul.

Elisha was submissive to Elijah.

Daniel was submissive to the Babylonian kings, and then to the Persian kings.

Esther was submissive to her uncle Mordecai.

Nehemiah was submissive to King Artaxerxes.

One of the most important skills and character traits you need to develop for success in life is submission to authority.

James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."

And the place to learn is by honoring your parents.

7. To show gratitude.

Thankfulness is an essential Christian virtue. We are called to give thanks to God and to those people in life who bless us.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “Give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

And certainly your parents qualify for this.

You parents gave you life; they put a roof over your head; they put food in your belly; clothes on your back; they sent you to school; they protected you from harm; they changed your diaper; they took you to the doctor and the dentist; they brought you to church; to taught you right from wrong.

Nobody’s parents are perfect, but most of us, if we are honest, would have to admit that our parents did a lot for us.

It is only right that we show them proper gratitude by honoring them in return – by obeying them when we are children; by making them a priority and doing life with them as we get older; and by taking care of them when they get older.

8. To teach your kids to honor you.

The next reason to honor your parents is very practical.

You need to honor your parents so that you can teach your kids how to honor you.

This is especially relevant for adult children like me.

If I want my kids to honor me when they grow up, then I need to teach them how to do that by honoring my parents.

By visiting my parents often, I'm teaching my kids to visit me often.

By spending holidays and special occasions with my parents I'm teaching my kids to do that with me.

By speaking respectfully to and about my parents, I'm teaching my kids to do the same.

By taking care of my parents when they need help, I'm teaching my kids to do the same.

More and more people today are abandoning the responsibility of caring for their aging parents.

As I said last week, many people leave home after high school and never look back.

Albert Mohler said that we are living in a generation of voluntary orphans.

Many people are blessed with the gift of parents but are choosing relinquish that gift because they are so selfish.

But they don't realize that by dishonoring their parents they are teaching their own kids to forsake them when they get older.

Matthew 7:12 says, "Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

This is called the Golden Rule, and there is a hidden principle in this verse.

This verse teaches us how to treat others, but it also contains a proverb – the way you treat others will generally determine the way you are treated.
If you dishonor your parents, you will likely be dishonored by your own kids.

There was a TV commercial years ago that was about caring for the elderly. It featured a grandpa, a father, and a son. The grandpa had shaky hands, and one

day he dropped a precious piece of china, breaking it. The father (his son) became angry. He took his father, banished him in a room, gave him a wooden bowl and said, "Here. You can drop that!" A couple days later the father saw his little boy carving something. "What are you doing, son?" the father asked. The boy held up an almost finished bowl and said, "Dad, I'm making this for you."

Matthew 6:38 says, "Give, and it will be given to you; a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over—will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."

How well do you want your kids to honor you when you get old? That's how well you need to honor your parents. Because in so doing you will be training your own kids. They are watching everything you do.

9. To be like Jesus.

The final reason to honor your parents is to be like Jesus.

This is what we are called to do. **Ephesians 5:1** says, "Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children." **1 John 2:6** says, "The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked." **Philippians 2:13** says, "Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus." To be a Christians is to be an imitator of Christ.

How did Jesus treat His parents? **Luke 2:51** describes Jesus as a child. "Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart."

If you think your parents don't understand you, imagine how Jesus felt.

If you think your parents have flaws and faults, imagine how Jesus felt.

Jesus was infinitely smarter and wiser and holier than His parents, yet He obeyed them.

We also find Jesus honoring his mother even as he was hanging on the cross.

John 19:26-27 says, "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' 27 Then he said

to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home."

When Jesus was being tortured on the cross, dying for the sins of the world, he didn't forget His responsibility to care for His aging mother. He made sure that she would be taken care of in His absence.

Now before we move on to the next commandment, I want to answer one more question. **How can parents make it easy for their kids to honor them?**

This commandment really has two parts.

It commands children to honor their parents, and it commands parents to be honorable.

It is a sin for kids to dishonor their parents, and it is a sin for parents to make it difficult for their kids to honor them.

So what can parents do to be honorable and respectable – to make it as easy as possible on their kids? Remember, it's not easy to submit to authority. How can we make it easy on our kids?

HOW CAN PARENTS MAKE IT EASY FOR THEIR KIDS TO HONOR THEM?

Let's look at a couple of verses.

Ephesians 6:4 says, "Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

The first thing is that we must not give our children reasons to be justifiably angry with us.

There are times when our kids may get angry with us, but that's a problem with them, such as when your little boy gets mad at you for making him clean his room before he goes to play outside. In that case the child is wrong for getting angry.

But it's possible for parents to act in such a way that their kids are justifiably angry because the parents acted sinfully. We need to think about how we can avoid making our kids angry.

Turn to **Colossians 3:21**. "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won't become discouraged."

To **exasperate** means to make your kids angry; to infuriate them.

But notice the second part of the verse, "so that they won't become discouraged."

In other words, when we give our kids a good reason to be angry with us, they lose their motivation for honoring us. They lose all desire to honor us. In fact, they develop the desire to rebel against us solely to hurt us.

So again, parents need to think carefully about how to avoid giving their kids a just reason to be angry with them. Let me give you some ideas.

1. Don't speak disrespectfully to them.

You should never speak disrespectfully to anyone, but it is tempting to do it to your kids because you can get away with it.

But in reality, you can't get away with it, because your kids are getting angrier and angrier with you, and eventually they will refuse to honor you.

It is your job to correct and rebuke your kids – to tell them, "Stop acting like that; don't do that; that's a bad choice; that's inappropriate."

Proverbs 15:5 says, "A fool despises his father's discipline, but a person who accepts correction is sensible."

It's your job to fuss at them.

But you must do so respectfully – without being insulting, and demeaning, and degrading.

Never speak harshly to your kids by raising your voice or yelling at them.

Don't insult them by calling them degrading names like "stupid, idiot, dummy," etc.

Don't say mean things like "I wish I could run away," or "I wish you were never born," or "I hate having kids."

Thomas Watson wrote, "In all your counsels and commands let them read love."

2. Be sure the punishment fits the crime.

It is your job to discipline your kids.

Proverbs 13:24 says, "The one who will not use the rod hates his son, but the one who loves him disciplines him diligently."

Proverbs 23:13-14 says, "13 Don't withhold discipline from a youth; if you punish him with a rod, he will not die. 14 Punish him with a rod, and you will rescue his life from Sheol."

Your job is to discipline your kids, and that means verbal correction, and when necessary, spanking.

But be sure that the punishment fits the crime.

Don't be overly harsh. And of course don't be physically abusive with your kids.

There's a big difference between spanking and physical abuse.

This causes your children resent you.

3. Give them what they need.

A parent's job is to provide for your children.

2 Corinthians 12:14 (NLT) says, “Children don’t provide for their parents. Rather, parents provide for their children.”

Ephesians 5:29 says, “For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church.”

1 Timothy 5:8 says, “But if anyone does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

You must give your children what they need to be healthy and to flourish in life, and when you don’t, they will resent you.

This includes not only meeting their material needs, but their emotional needs and spiritual needs.

There are two ways that parents fail in this area.

On the one hand they fail to give their kids what they need,

and second, they give their kids too much – more than is good for them. They spoil their kids.

It’s not your job to give your children everything they want. That would make you a bad parent. It’s your job to give your children everything they need.

And realize that your children don’t know what they need. All they know is what they want.

They want a smart phone; they need to not have one.

They want to watch TV; they need to go outside to play.

They want to eat junk; they need to eat healthy food.

Children should not be given everything they want, nor should they be able to decide what they need. That’s why God made parents.

It's your job to give your children what they need because they don't know; it's your job to make them do what is right, because they don't have the knowledge or willpower to do what is right on their own.

4. Avoid favoritism.

Let Joseph's story be a warning to us all. Jacob had twelve sons, but he was overtly and obviously more kind to Joseph than all the others. Jacob didn't even try to hide his favoritism. And of course this led to all sorts of problems.

And remember that favoritism doesn't just cause your kids to be angry with you, it causes your kids to be angry to the favorite child.

And that's what happened to Joseph. His brothers hated him so much for being the favorite that they first decided to kill him, and then changed their minds and just decided to sell him into slavery.

Lydia's mother was so good at this.

She was so careful to avoid favoritism that when I got married, she was careful to not only avoid favoritism between Lydia and her brother, but between Lydia and her brother and me.

Should would make sure to spend the exact same amount of money on me for birthdays and Christmas as she did on Lydia and Jimbo.

I didn't expect that or think I deserved that, but that's how careful she was to avoid favoritism.

5. Don't act immorally and embarrass your kids.

When you do something shameful that embarrasses your kids, they will resent you.

If you get a divorce, or commit adultery, or get a DWI, or get arrested, or get sent to prison, or get caught stealing at work, these are things that are very embarrassing for your kids, and they will get angry with you.

They expect you to be above that kind of behavior, and rightly so.

Along those same lines, being a hypocrite will anger your kids.

When you don't practice what you preach, or walk your talk, then your kids will resent you.

Thomas Watson said, "If you would have honor from your children, set them a good example. It makes children despise parents, when the parents live in contradiction to their own precepts; when they bid their children be sober, and yet they themselves get drunk; or bid their children fear God, and are themselves loose in their lives."

The bottom line is that if you want your kids to honor and respect you, then you need to live worthy of honor and respect.

If you are not respectable and honorable, then your kids will have a very difficult time honoring you.

6. Teach them to honor you.

Finally, to make it easy for your kids to honor you, teach them to honor you.

You must teach your kids that to be obedient to God they have to honor their parents.

And then teach them how. Teach them to be obedient, to speak respectfully, and on and on.

And when they fail to honor you, you must apply discipline.

Discipline them when they gripe and complain, when they talk back to you, when they are slow to obey, when they disobey, when they raise their voice at you.

If you don't teach and demand that your kids honor you, they will not, and it will be your fault more than theirs.

When I was in the fourth grade my family was at church and I went up to my mother as she was speaking with her friends, and I was very rude to her in the way I spoke to her. And right there in public she slapped me in the face. She'd never slapped me before and never since then, but in that moment I was acting so dishonorably that she slapped me, and in public. My mother would not recommend that you slap your kids in the face, but from my point of view, message received. I left my mother alone and was much more respectful to her from that day on. Teach your kids to honor you.

CONCLUSION

So last week I ended with some reflection questions for children. This week I want to end with some reflection questions for parents.

1. Are you living in a way that is worthy of honor?
2. Are you practicing what you preach?
3. Are you adequately meeting your kids physical, emotional, and spiritual needs?
4. Are you spoiling your kids?
5. Are you teaching them to honor you?
6. Are you verbally or physically abusing your kids?

If you are not the parent that you should be, welcome to the club.

But don't give up. Use this sermon as an opportunity to start over and to try to improve as a parent.