

10/25/20 # 5 Honor Father and Mother

(Exo 20:12 NIV) "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

The fifth commandment – honor thy father and mother is the only commandment with a promise attached. It is a promise of love – so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

Why should we honor them? So that we might live, that we might not be weighed down with anger and bitterness, so that we might not come to destruction, but so that we might live and enjoy God's good gifts to us all our days.

The flip side of this is that if we fail to honor our parents, it will affect the whole fabric of our life.

Many of you will immediately jump in and say "how do I do that?". What does it mean to honor my parents? Others will have to get past a grittier question first, "why should I, what have they done for me?". You don't know what I've been through, they were never there for me, and the list goes on.

It is unfortunate but true that many people have less than a perfect happy childhood. Some have fathers who weren't there, some had abusive mothers or fathers. Some had parents who were alcoholics or drug addicts. The list could go on.

Or perhaps you had one parent that took great care of you and you loved and love with all your heart. Perhaps you think I can honor him or her but what about the one who deserted us? What about the one who was never there or who hurt me?

The rest of the truth is that I can guarantee that none of us had perfect parents. That is just not possible. We live in a fallen world. We are all sinners. But does that change the commandment to honor your father and mother? Do you see any conditions listed in that command – like honor them if they were good to you, or if they were perfect or rich or if they honored and respected you?

I don't see any. This might make some of us uncomfortable. How do we honor someone who has hurt us and perhaps affected our life in a negative way?

If you think that you don't have to, you are wrong!!!! This commandment applies to all those who have good, godly, loving parents **and** to those who don't. The Lord didn't make any exceptions. This command was even repeated in the New Testament in Eph 6:2-3

It applies to all of us. No matter what has happened in the past, God is interested in our RIGHT NOW. He wants to change our hearts now, not tomorrow.

He wants to walk with us and fellowship with us now, not later after we get things straightened out. He wants to teach us and bless us now – not later when we have our act together.

He wants to protect us from destructive thoughts and attitudes right now and if I settle this matter of honoring my father and mother now, I can be a different person.

A son or daughter who forgives from the heart can be a different kind of parent to his or her own children. An honorable parent. A parent free from bitterness. A parent, and a child that God can bless and use in ways we can't imagine.

What about me you might be asking? Doesn't God care what they did to me or didn't do for me?

Certainly he does. God doesn't close his eyes to the pain and suffering of his children. He places great value on the home and holds parents accountable for their parenting. Matthew 18:6 is a stern warning **(Mat 18:6 NIV) But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.**

The Lord understands the hurt and the pain many children endure and it does not escape his notice. He knows that when a person is abused or neglected at home, it affects him or her greatly down to the very core. Yet even knowing and understanding these things more deeply than you or I ever could, His word still teaches us  
HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

So how do we do this?

By loving them. Someone once said love is spelled T I M E. You show love to someone when you spend a lot of time with them. You may respond – I don't really care to spend time with my parents – they just love to make my life miserable. That may be. Honoring them may be difficult. The question then becomes which is more important, to do what we want and what we are comfortable doing or to obey the Lord's command. That's where the rubber meets the road. Jesus **said (John 15:10 NIV) If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.**

This is the best reason for obeying the Ten commandments. I want to abide in His love. I don't want to live or abide in any other place for any other reason. For me, obedience is consummate worship. If I want to live surrounded by his love – swept away by the current of his grace, If I want to live a lifestyle of worship in both my ministry and my personal life, that means I need to obey even when that is difficult.

Maybe you **would** like to spend more time with your parents, but they live far away. It's not always easy to break away from work or responsibilities to spend a day or two or three – yet it has been said that you only really love someone when you sacrifice for them. The Lord proved his love by laying down his life. One of the best ways to show our love for our parents is to endure some of that inconvenience and sacrifice for their sakes. If you have taken the time and trouble to set aside other obligations and commitments to be in their presence that shows honor and God is well pleased.

But there are other ways of showing love and affection when travel is impossible. It may be as simple as a note or card, even when it isn't a birthday or holiday. It may just be picking up the phone in the middle of the day and saying I'm thinking about you and I want you to know that I love you.

The truth is though, you can't say you love someone without being willing to give up something for them. Time and energy are our two most precious commodities.

There is one additional way to keep the fifth commandment in relationship with your parents. Forgive them!

One of the things we realize as we grow older is that for the most part, our parents did what they thought was right in raising us. At the time we may have thought – you don't like me – you're being too hard on me etc. .

Usually we discover later though that they knew something that we didn't know.

When you who are parents have told your children no, it was because you loved them. You may have made some mistakes, but you still made your decisions for their best interests. Your parents were the same with you. As a parent you have tough decisions to make. You do the best you can. And, if you're fortunate you make many good ones. However, no matter what you do as a parent, you make some bad ones as well. And there may come a time that you need to be willing to admit your mistakes too. That's part of being responsible. But basically parents do the best they can for the good of the child.,

There may also have been instances in your life when your parents didn't seem to have your best interests in mind. You may have been hurt or abused or neglected because of their selfishness. How do you honor a parent like that? How do you walk in obedience to the fifth commandment? By forgiving him or her. Forgiving means to let go or send away. Maybe you're saying but you don't know what I've been through. No I don't but Jesus does. Listen to what he went through.

(Isa 53:3 NIV) He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

(Isa 53:4 NIV) Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

(Isa 53:5 NIV) But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

(Isa 53:6 NIV) We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

(Isa 53:7 NIV) He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

(Isa 53:8 NIV) By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

(Isa 53:9 NIV) He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Jesus knew what it meant to be ill-treated, abused and falsely accused. He knew what it meant to have loving words thrown right back in his face. He knew how it felt to be betrayed and abandoned close to him. He knew what it was like to be so misunderstood by his own family that at one point they tried to have him committed. Yet he forgave. He loved and he laid down his life.

When it comes to forgiveness, remember, the innocent party almost always pays. The one who forgives, the one who has been offended is usually the one who must pay the price. But it is a price worth paying. It is a light out of darkness, it is life out of death.

Remember – the majority of any ground Satan holds in ones life is a simple unwillingness to forgive. Eph 4: 26-27 tells us that the enemy's first foothold in our soul begins with harboring anger for one single night. Unforgiveness has the power to lock you up in the past so that God cannot use you.

In the end, though the price may be steep, the one who forgives will know and experience the blessings of God. How do you calculate the value of that?

Maybe it just comes down to this; how much do you want the Lord to use your life? How available do you want to be when the Holy Spirit looks for someone to use for His purposes? I want to be used. I want to be a blessing to others. If I really want this in my life, then I must obey even when it hurts. –

I recently read the hurt will pass but the smile of God is forever.