

Exodus pt. 37
The Ten Commandments pt. 5
Honor Your Parents
Exodus 20:12

I. Introduction

- A. Today as we continue our study of the Ten Commandments we come to the first commandment of the Second Tablet. The commandments of the First Tablet (the first four) all deal with our relationship with God. They are vertical in nature. The final six commandments all deal with our relationship with other people. They are horizontal in nature. Before we look at the fifth commandment specifically there are a couple of things to point out:
1. The First Tablet is foundational for the Second. Meaning that our relationship with God is the foundation of our relationship with other people. If you are not loving God well it will be impossible to show godly love to anyone else. Our love for God is what allows us to love others.
 2. Additionally, we can measure the truth and depth of our love for God by the way we love other people. Are you kind, generous, friendly, servant-hearted, and forgiving to the people in your life? Then that flows from a love for God and honors God.
 3. We should pay special attention to this commandment today because, as it is the first commandment on the Second Tablet, it shows us that God values this relationship in a special way.
- B. “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.” (Exodus 20:12)

II. What Does this Commandment Teach us About God?

- A. Before we can understand what this commandment teaches us about God we must understand some key things about the commandment itself.
1. Honor
 - a) The word ‘honor’ here is the Hebrew word “kaved.” It literally means to make something heavy. In that sense it means to give weight to our parents.
 - b) It is the word that is used to describe giving God glory and Pharaoh’s heart being hardened.
 - c) Parents are to be given honor. They are to be given weight or importance.
 2. Your Father and Mother
 - a) Nonbelievers often accuse the Bible and Bible-believers of being anti-woman. However, the truth is that the Bible is radically pro-woman.
 - b) The commandment is not merely that a child should honor his father but his mother as well. This is the clear and consistent teaching of the Bible.
 - (1) Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father...’” (Leviticus 19:1 - 3a)
 - c) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching; indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head and ornaments about your neck. (Proverbs 1:7 - 9)

- d) Both mothers and fathers are to be honored according to the fifth commandment. Additionally, both mothers and fathers have a role in discipline, teaching, and training their children.
3. Prolonged in the Land
- a) This promise is especially poignant for the Hebrews. They have been enslaved for years in Egypt and now have been delivered by God's power and faithfulness. God has promised that He is leading them to their own land where they will be His people, a holy nation unto God.
- b) "The expression 'be long in the land' is a Hebrew phrase for the fullness of God's blessing. It means to have an abundant life." (*Preaching the Word: Exodus*, pg. 565)
- (1) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), **so that it may be well with you**, and that you may live long on the earth. (Ephesians 6:1 - 3)
- (a) There's a practical element to this command. Honoring your father and mother helps to "live long on the earth." My parents would often whisper in my ear when I was misbehaving in public. They would say something like, "I brought you into this world and I can take you out of it." Apparently, they had been studying the fifth commandment.
- c) My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. (Proverbs 3:1 - 2)
- B. God is Our Heavenly Father
1. The most commonly-used metaphor God uses to reveal His love for us is that He is a Father. A Father who is perfect in love, provision, grace, and discipline.
- a) Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. (Psalm 103:13)
- b) Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. (James 1:17)
- c) "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:11)
- (1) "The child asks of the Father whom he knows. Thus, the essence of Christian prayer is not general adoration, but definite, concrete petition. The right way to approach God is to stretch out our hands and ask of One who we know has the heart of a Father." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
2. "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" Says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, 'How have we despised Your name?' You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled You?' In that you say, 'The table of the Lord is to be despised.' But when you present the blind for sacrifices, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly? Says the Lord of hosts.' (Malachi 1:6 - 8)
- C. God is Sovereign

1. God is a God of authority. He has all authority and in His authority He appoints levels of authority in our lives. God has created an ordered universe and He has created order in human relationships.
 - a) Parents and Children
 - b) Husbands and wives
 - c) Rulers and citizens
 - d) Pastors and congregations
 2. Some theologians see in the Ten Commandment umbrella categories that cover more than what is overtly said. In this understanding the fifth commandment extends to any person in authority.
 - a) “This is something the Israelites would have readily understood because they often used the term *father* in relationships outside the home. For example, the Israelites referred to the king, [the prophets and their elders] as their father.” (*Preaching the Word: Exodus*, pg. 566)
- D. “Respect for those who are in authority is respect for God because all authority comes from him. [...] [But] people in authority have a responsibility to exercise it in ways that are pleasing to God. We may not abuse our authority by using it harshly or by overstepping our bounds.” (Ibid)

III. How Does this Commandment Point us to Christ?

- A. Jesus Perfectly Honored the Father
 1. “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:38)
 - a) Jesus came to do the Father’s mission - to seek and to save that which is lost. Jesus lived His life in perfect submission to the Father. He obeyed the commandments perfectly. He lived a life pleasing to the Father. He sought to do the Father’s will not His own.
 2. “He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.” (John 12:48 - 50)
- B. Jesus Perfectly Helps the Fallen
 1. Jesus died for the sins of the world. Every sin that we are guilty of is redeemable by God’s grace through Jesus. This, of course, includes the sin of dishonoring our parents, which we are guilty of at some point in our lives.
 2. Secondly, it is worth pointing out that Jesus can help children who grew up with ungodly parents. The focus on our sermon today is the importance of honoring our parents but that also makes us think of the responsibility that parents have to love and lead their children. Sadly, we live in a world where parents being abusive or neglectful is common. If that’s your story, if you did not have the blessing of godly parents, Jesus loves you and His love will make up for it. Forgive those who have failed you and run to Jesus for His grace and mercy to wash over you.

IV. How Does this Commandment Point us to the Gospel?

- A. At the heart of the gospel is a call for rebellious sinners to be transformed by grace to become children of God.
1. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26)
 2. "And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me." (2 Corinthians 6:18)
 3. See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:1 - 3)
 4. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:14 - 18)
 - a) Notice that being a Christian is an active lifestyle. It is those "who are being led by the Spirit" who "sons of God." Not those who were led by the Spirit at some point.
 - b) God seals all who trust in Christ with the Holy Spirit, "the spirit of adoption" as Paul refers to Him here. The Holy Spirit causes us to "cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" This is the Greek equivalent to "Daddy!" It is a term of intimacy and love.
 - c) How can we know if we are children of God? "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God." It is the Holy Spirit's job, not a preacher's or any other person's, to confirm where you stand in relationship to God through Christ.
 - d) Paul says that those in Christ are not only children of God but "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." What belongs to God, what Christ has inherited, is given to all of God's adopted children through faith.
 - e) This inheritance comes with a price though. It requires suffering. Specifically, "suffering with Jesus" so that we can also be "glorified with Him." The Christian life is difficult. In fact, Christians often encounter times and types of suffering that unbelievers do not. It is difficult to walk with God in a sinful world, with a sinful flesh, and an army of demons set against us. But notice Paul's conclusion:
 - f) "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

V. How Does this Commandment Apply to Christians?

- A. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. (Colossians 3:20)
1. As we saw earlier, the fifth commandment is quoted word for word in Ephesians 6. So the fifth commandment is reiterated in the New Covenant. There is no question that we should obey this law as Christians. Here in Colossians, Paul expands the fifth commandment. He says that children should be obedient to their parents in all things and that it pleases the Lord to do so.

- a) Notice that this commandment is written to “children.” There is a time when in adulthood we have to make our own decisions. Adults are not commanded to obey their parents. However, even adults are commanded to “honor their father and mother.”
 - b) Like any delegated authority, the authority of parents to their children is subservient to God’s own authority. If parents tell their children to do things which God has forbidden, children should submit to God as their highest authority.
- B. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8)
- C. A Sign of the Times
- 1. But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power. Avoid such men as these. (2 Timothy 3:1 - 5)

VI. Conclusion and Application

- A. Are you a child of God or a child of the world? Have you placed your faith in Jesus and been made into a new creation and sealed by the spirit of adoption or are you still in your sins?
- B. How does your life honor God as your Father?
- C. Parents, how are you leading your family to Christ? How are you stewarding God’s call on your life to serve in His authority?
- D. How are you honoring your parents today?
- E. When’s the last time you called your mom and dad and just told them you loved them, that you appreciate them, and maybe that you forgive them?