

How does our culture's tendency to mock authority and family structures affect our ability to recognize what is sacred, and what can we do to counter this trend?

In what ways does obedience as a child shape our understanding of honor and respect for authority throughout our entire lives?

What does it mean that honor carries the idea of weight and value, and how might this understanding change the way we interact with our parents today?

How can adult children honor their parents when they no longer live under their authority, and what does this look like practically in different life circumstances?

What excuses or justifications might we use today that are similar to the Pharisees' use of Corban to avoid honoring and caring for our parents?

How can someone honor a parent who caused deep pain or wounds without pretending the sin never happened or enabling destructive behavior?

What does it mean that you are not responsible for who your parents were, but you are responsible for who you become, and how does the gospel empower this transformation?

How did Jesus model honoring parents even in His final moments on the cross, and what does this teach us about prioritizing care for our parents?

In what ways might good things like career, ministry, or personal growth become subtle covers for neglecting our God-given responsibility to honor our parents?

How does surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ enable us to break cycles of bitterness, resentment, and dishonor in our family relationships?

Small Group Guide: Honoring Our Parents

Based on Ephesians 6:1-4, 1 Timothy 5:3-8, Mark 7:9-13

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by thanking God for the gift of family and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your conversation about honoring parents.

Icebreaker Questions

- What's one thing you remember your mom or dad always saying when you were growing up?
 - Share a moment when you realized your parents were right about something you initially disagreed with.
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Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. The Command to Honor is Clear and Never Expires

- Honor means recognizing weight and value in someone's role
- While the form of obedience changes as we age, the command to honor remains
- Honor is one of the first ways we learn to respect authority

2. Honor Involves Providing and Caring for Parents

- As parents cared for us when young, we're called to care for them when they're older
- Caring for aging parents is "putting your religion into practice" (1 Timothy 5:4)
- Jesus modeled this even from the cross

3. Jesus Rebukes Dishonor

- We can't use good things (career, ministry, busyness) as excuses to neglect our parents
- The Pharisees used religious devotion as a loophole to avoid caring for parents
- Subtle dishonor happens when good priorities become excuses for avoiding God's commands

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read Ephesians 6:1-3.** Why do you think this is "the first commandment with a promise"? What does the promise reveal about God's heart for family relationships?
2. **Read 1 Timothy 5:8.** Why does Paul use such strong language ("worse than an unbeliever") when talking about not providing for family? What does this tell us about how seriously God takes this command?
3. **Read Mark 7:9-13.** How were the Pharisees using "Corban" to avoid their responsibility? What are modern equivalents of this in our culture today?

Personal Reflection

4. How has your understanding of honoring your parents changed as you've gotten older? What does honor look like in your current season of life?
5. The sermon said, "Honor doesn't feel a certain way; it acts a certain way." What are some practical ways honor shows up in actions rather than just emotions?
6. What are some "good things" in your life (work, ministry, hobbies, etc.) that might unintentionally become excuses for not honoring your parents?

Difficult Conversations

7. For those with broken or painful parental relationships: How do you wrestle with the command to honor parents who may have caused harm? What's the difference between honor and enabling?
8. The sermon stated, "You may not have had godly parents, but by the grace of God, you can become a godly son or daughter." How does the gospel empower us to respond with honor even when we've been dishonored?
9. How can we honor a parent's memory after they've passed away? What does grief and gratitude look like together?

Application to Daily Life

10. If you're caring for aging parents right now, what encouragement did you receive from this message? What specific support do you need from this group?
 11. For those with young children: How does understanding this command shape the way you're raising your kids? How can you model honor for the next generation?
 12. What's one specific action step you need to take this week to better honor your parents (whether living or deceased)?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice:

For Those with Living Parents:

- Call or visit your parent(s) this week—not out of obligation, but to genuinely connect
- Ask your parents about their story—something you've never asked before
- Thank them for a specific sacrifice they made for you
- If there's been distance or conflict, take one step toward reconciliation (even if small)
- Evaluate your schedule and budget—are you making room to care for aging parents?

For Those with Difficult Parental Relationships:

- Pray for your parent(s) by name this week
- Speak to a trusted counselor or pastor about steps toward healing
- Practice speaking respectfully about your parents, even in their absence
- Ask God to help you release bitterness and choose Christ-like character in response

For Those Whose Parents Have Passed:

- Write down 3-5 things you're grateful for about your parent(s)
- Share a positive memory of your parent with your children or someone younger
- Consider how you can honor their legacy through your own life choices

For Parents:

- Talk with your children (age-appropriately) about what honor looks like
- Model honoring your own parents in front of your kids
- Examine your own parenting—are you making it easy or difficult for your children to honor you?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 6:2-3 - "Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Prayer Focus

Pray for:

- Those in your group caring for aging parents—for strength, wisdom, and patience
 - Healing in broken family relationships
 - Those grieving the loss of a parent
 - Grace to honor parents even when it's difficult
 - The next generation—that they would learn honor from watching us
 - Anyone who needs to take a step of faith in surrendering their life to Christ
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Additional Resources for Further Study

- **Book of Proverbs** - Multiple passages on honoring parents and wisdom in family relationships
 - **Exodus 20:12** - The original commandment in the Ten Commandments
 - **Colossians 3:20** - Children obeying parents as pleasing to the Lord
 - **Luke 2:51** - Jesus' example of submitting to his parents
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Leader Notes

- **Be sensitive:** This topic can bring up painful memories for some. Create a safe space where people can be honest without judgment.
 - **Don't force sharing:** Some may not be ready to discuss difficult family situations. Let the Spirit lead.
 - **Offer hope:** Keep pointing back to the gospel and how Jesus transforms hearts and enables us to honor even when it's hard.
 - **Provide resources:** Be prepared to connect people with pastoral care or counseling if deep wounds surface.
 - **Celebrate faithfulness:** Acknowledge and encourage those who are faithfully caring for aging parents.
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Closing Prayer

Close by praying specifically for the needs shared during your discussion, asking God to help each person take their next step in honoring their parents according to His will.

5-Day Devotional: Honoring Those God Has Placed in Our Lives

Day 1: The Weight of Honor

Reading: Ephesians 6:1-3

Devotional: Honor is not merely politeness—it carries weight and significance. When God commands us to honor our parents, He's calling us to recognize the sacred value of the role they've played in our lives. This commandment comes with a promise: that it may go well with us. Honor shapes our character, teaching us how to value authority, respect relationships, and ultimately worship God. Today, reflect on what honor truly means. Are you treating your parents lightly, or are you recognizing the weight of their sacrifice and position in your life? Honor doesn't require perfection from them—it requires obedience from us. Ask God to reveal areas where you've been casual about what He calls sacred, and commit to dignifying those relationships with the respect they deserve.

Day 2: Honor That Never Expires

Reading: Exodus 20:12; 1 Timothy 5:3-8

Devotional: Children never outgrow the command to honor their parents. While obedience changes form as we mature—from following household rules to providing care in their old age—the call to honor remains constant. Scripture makes clear that caring for aging parents is not just duty; it's putting our faith into practice. When we provide for our parents, we're loving our neighbor as ourselves, and this pleases God. Perhaps you're in a season of caregiving that feels overwhelming. Know that your sacrifice is seen and valued by God. Or maybe distance or busyness has caused neglect. Today, consider: How does honor look in your current season? Make a practical plan—a phone call, a visit, assistance with needs—to demonstrate that your parents still hold sacred weight in your life.

Day 3: Jesus, Our Model of Honor

Reading: John 19:25-27; Matthew 22:37-39

Devotional: Even in His final moments of excruciating pain, Jesus was mindful of honoring His mother. From the cross, He ensured Mary would be cared for, entrusting her to John's protection. This powerful example shows us that honor transcends convenience and comfort. Jesus connected honoring parents with the greatest commandments: loving God and loving our neighbor. When we honor our parents, we're following Christ's example and fulfilling His teaching. Today, consider how Jesus prioritized His mother even in His darkest hour. What excuses have you made—career demands, financial pressures, busy schedules—that have kept

you from honoring your parents? Jesus shows us that true honor finds a way, even when circumstances are difficult. Ask Him for strength to follow His example today.

Day 4: When Honor Feels Impossible

Reading: Romans 12:17-21; Matthew 5:43-48

Devotional: Not everyone had godly parents. Some carry wounds from abandonment, abuse, or deep disappointment. If this is your story, hear this truth: Biblical honor does not mean pretending sin never happened or enabling destructive behavior. Honor does not always mean closeness. But it does mean refusing to let pain become hatred. You're not responsible for who your parents were, but you are responsible for who you become. By God's grace, the cycle of bitterness can end with you. Honor might look like forgiveness from a distance, speaking respectfully even when they don't deserve it, or simply choosing Christ-like character in response to un-Christ-like treatment. Today, bring your pain to Jesus. Ask Him to heal your wounds and transform resentment into grace. You may not be able to change your past or your parents, but God can change your heart.

Day 5: Exposing Dishonor, Embracing Grace

Reading: Mark 7:9-13; James 1:22-25

Devotional: Jesus confronted the Pharisees who used religious excuses to avoid caring for their parents. They declared their resources "devoted to God" while neglecting their God-given responsibility. Today, we can do the same—using good things like career, ministry, or even spiritual growth as covers for disobedience. Jesus exposes the subtle ways dishonor creeps into our lives. The issue isn't ambition or service; it's when these become excuses for avoiding God's clear commands. As you reflect today, ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Has busyness become your "Corban"? Have legitimate responsibilities become reasons for consistent neglect? The gospel meets you right where you are. Surrender any area of dishonor to Christ. Let Him transform your heart, turning obligation into opportunity, and duty into devotion. Honor matters to God—and by His grace, you can become the son or daughter He's calling you to be.