

Ten Commandments Study #6 — October 18, 2026

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you." - Exodus 20:12

WSC- Q. 63. Which is the fifth commandment?

- A. *"The fifth commandments is, Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."*

Honor – to assign weight, value, esteem, respect, or reverence to someone or something based on their position, character, or relationship; to obey (submit)

"Father and Mother" – a header (umbrella term) to describe the honoring of all God-given human authority, including parents (1 Peter 2:13-17)

1. Fifth Commandment the Bridge Between 1st and 2nd Tables of the Law

- The First Table of the Law expresses our worship of God through our duties to God.
- The Second Table of the Law expresses our worship of God through our duties to mankind.

Why is honoring human authorities a command in Scripture? Because of our sinful nature, the natural human tendency is not to honor or submit. We are rebellious because we're born fallen. But neglecting either table of the law constitutes a worship problem as well as a rebellion problem, because God has not designed a kingdom of rebels; but one of rank and order (even in the Godhead). God wants us to experience biblical freedom at the highest levels of human existence.

Biblical Freedom – limited liberty to experience the fullness of life, totally submitted to God's sovereign design and boundaries for human living

This is not about restricting human expression. It's about enhancing the human experience.

WSC- Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

- A. *"The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors or equals."*

WSC- Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

- A. *"The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations."*

WSC- Q. 66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

- A. *"The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment."*

2. Types of Honor in the Bible

There are several types of honor in the Scripture:

- *Obedience/Biblical Submission (Hupotasso)* – to voluntarily rank oneself beneath another of the same value (extrinsic) or differing value (extrinsic to intrinsic):
 1. Humanity to God – the law of God (1 Cor. 11:3)
 2. Wives to Husbands (Eph. 5:22-32; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7)
 3. Children to Parents (Prov. 1:8, 23:22; Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20)
 4. Children to Adults (Job 12:12, 32:4; 1 Tim. 5:1-2)
 5. Christians to Church Leadership (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17)
 6. Students to Teachers (Mat. 10:24-25)
 7. Employees to Employers (Mat. 10:24-25; Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-25; Titus 2:9-10)
 8. Christians to the State (Prov. 24:21-22; Mat. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17)
- *Respect* – we are to treat all humans as **Dignified Extrinsic-Valued God Image Bearers**
- *Esteem* (publicly and privately) – affirming and speaking well of (in particular our parents)
- *Seek to be influenced by* – desiring to be influenced by those in authority over us
- *Help* – we honor by helping those who need it

There are also a number of New Testament Grounds for Honoring, especially in light of the fact that no person or institution is always perfect or technically "worthy" of honor all of the time. And we as humans don't always feel like honoring others, despite the fact that we should:

- *To the Image of God* – Honor that is owing to human beings simply because they are created in the image of God (and have extrinsic value) and should be treated differently from the animals. The sheer existence of a human being demands respect and dignity. (ex: human rights, trial by jury, etc.) (James 3:9).
- *To Natural Human Relations that God has appointed* – God has established familial relationships, and they gain their honorableness from God's ordering of things, and the picture they illustrate, not just from the quality of the person. (Ephesians 5:22-6:4)... (ex: The honor that is due to age (Lev. 19:32))
- *To Non-Familial Authority Structures that God has put in place* – There's a God appointed authority in the world, and a God appointed authority in the church. And there's an honor that we should show just by virtue of the roles of authority that God Himself has appointed. (1 Peter 2:13-17; 1 Thess. 5:12)
- *To the Worth of the work that others do* – There is honorable work that we all do in the secular sphere, in all systems of society. And in the church, we are to esteem our leaders because of their work, as it's valuable and worthy of respect. (1 Thess. 5:13)

- *To the relationship of love that we have* – The honor which is drawn out of us by our love for those who serve us, not just from the quality of their work. We honor them directly because we love them. (1 Thess. 5:13)
- *To a Person's Weakness* – There is an honor that should be drawn out towards weakness and vulnerability. In Christ, the response toward weakness is not exploitation, mockery, or abuse; but honor. (James 1:27; 1 Peter 3:7)
- *To display the freedom of the grace of God to His people and all people* – There's a kind of honor and respect that is freely bestowed to all without reference to any quality, position, reputation, virtue, rank, or merit in the person honored. There is a way of honoring which doesn't respond to honorableness but bestows it regardless. It treats a person as though honorable and worthy of our service, even if they're not honorable and don't deserve it. Paul roots this way of honoring people in the very mind of Christ, and in His Incarnation and sacrifice on the cross. Through our treatment of others, we ought to illustrate both God's common grace to all humanity, as well as His special eternal grace to His elect. (Phil. 2:3-5).

Applications

Some concrete ways we can Honor our parents and all others in authority over us:

1. Forgive Them – extend grace and work to overcome bitterness or past wounds.
2. Speak Well of Them – Refuse to mock them, or curse and speak evil of them, modeling respect both publicly and privately.
3. Esteem Them – Give them credit and honor them through kind words and formal tributes.
4. Seek their Wisdom and Influence – Consult parents for major life decisions to show you value their experience.
5. Pray for Them
6. Support and Provide for Them: Offer hands-on loving care, avoid emotional neglect or isolation in old age, and fulfill financial responsibilities when they grow feeble (1 Tim. 5:8). Honor does not end when children grow up or leave home; it continues throughout the entire lives of both children and parents.

The Responsibility of Parents and those in authority (they share a reciprocal duty):

1. Be Worthy of Honor: Parents should live honorably so their children have a natural, joyful reason to respect and take pride in them.
2. Do Not Provoke: Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21 warns fathers and mothers not to exasperate, treat unfairly, or crush the spirit of their children to the point of discouragement.