

Rules for Free People #5: Honor Your Father and Mother - *Exodus 20:12*

I. The Shift in the Commandments

- The first 4 commandments focus on **loving God**. The next 6 show us how to **love others**.
- Jesus summarizes the entire Law in **Matthew 22:37–40**: Love God and love others.

II. God Designs the Family

- God's design: **Father, Mother, and Children** (Genesis 1–2 pattern).
- Not everyone grows up in this design, but we still affirm it as God's best.
- **Design ≠ condemnation** of single-parent or broken homes—God's grace covers all.

III. God Orders the Family

- **Parents are in charge**—not the culture, not the kids.
- Children are called to **honor and submit** to their parents.
- **Brain still developing**—God protects young people through parental wisdom.
- **Abuse caveat**: Honoring does not mean submitting to sin. God does not call us to stay silent in abuse.

IV. Why God Cares So Much

- Strong families lead to a **flourishing society**.
- When the home reflects God's design and order, it produces blessing, peace, and stability.
- The home is where **discipleship begins**.

V. Honoring Through Life

- This command **never expires**, but how we honor changes with age.
- **Example 1: Good parents** - Honor through care, respect, service, gratitude.
- **Example 2: Abusive or unwell parents** - Sometimes honor means **silence and distance**.
 - Don't slander them. Work at forgive from afar if needed.

VI. Tips for Parents of Adult Children

1. **Acknowledge and repent** if past sins come up.
2. **Don't compete with their spouse**—Genesis 2:24: They are one flesh now.
3. **Be a blessing, not a burden**—love and encourage without demanding.

Reflection Question: In light of your current season, what does it look like for you to honor your father and mother *today*?

Devotion 1: The Family God Designed

Scripture: Genesis 1:27–28 “So God created mankind in his own image... male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number...’”

Reflection: From the very beginning, God designed the family to be built on the union of one man and one woman, forming a foundation for human flourishing. While sin has complicated and fractured many families, the original blueprint still reflects God’s good intention for stability, love, and growth. Affirming God’s design isn’t about condemning brokenness—it’s about naming what brings life.

Challenge: Today, thank God for the family you came from, no matter how complex – your life is still a gift. If you’re raising a family, recommit to walking in God’s design with grace and intentionality.

Devotion 2: The Order God Established

Scripture: Ephesians 6:1–3 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise...”

Reflection: God didn’t just create families—He ordered them. Children are called to honor and obey their parents not because parents are perfect, but because God uses that order to teach, protect, and bless. The call to submit while young shapes us to trust God’s authority and wisdom as we grow. Obedience may not always feel natural, but it brings life.

Challenge: If you’re a young person, ask God to help you trust your parents’ guidance. If you’re a parent, ask the Spirit to help you lead with both truth and grace.

Devotion 3: A Lifetime of Honor

Scripture: Exodus 20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

Reflection: Honor doesn’t end when we move out or start families of our own. As we age, honor may look like phone calls, support, forgiveness—or in hard cases, distance and prayer. God sees the complexity and still calls us to pursue a posture of honor where possible. It’s not always easy, but it is always right.

Challenge: Ask God: “What does honor look like for me today?” Whether it’s showing up for aging parents or choosing forgiveness over bitterness, take one step in obedience.