

“The Ten Commandments (Part 6 – Honor Parents)”

The LORD gives us the Fifth Commandment in Exodus 20:12: “***Honor your father and your mother***, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” To *honor* is to assign the greatest possible weight to a person in terms of respect by holding them in high regard. On the other hand, to *dishonor* means to treat someone as if they were light or insignificant. So, to *honor* is to treat with distinction, to *dishonor* is to treat someone like dirt. We’re to show honor in both our attitudes and in our actions. We honor our parents because of their *position*, not necessarily because of their *performance*. Interestingly, according to the first five books of the Bible, the only entities we are to honor are the Lord and our parents. To honor is to treat people as special, to do more than what’s expected, and to have a good attitude.

Honor is so honorable, God Himself underscores this Fifth Commandment with a promise. When we obey this command to *honor our father and our mother*: our life will generally be longer, we’ll experience blessing, we’ll be doing the right thing, we’ll learn respect for authority, we’ll be protected and covered, we’ll bring peace and joy to our parents, we’ll grow in wisdom and insight, we’ll please God, and our hearts will be turned toward home. Let’s avoid the dangers associated with dishonoring our parents by steering clear of disobeying our parents. **Honoring our parents is always proper!** When children are very young, parents are like their *commander*. Then, as they get older, parents function as their *coach*. When they become teenagers, parents do a lot of *counseling*. Then, when our children become adults, parents become more like *consultants*.

For New Testament Christians wanting to put this Fifth Commandment into practice, Jesus provides the best model of how to obey this command. Jesus honored His parents by being submissive to them (see Luke 2:51). Jesus honored His earthly mother by providing care for her (see John 19:26-27). And Jesus honored His Heavenly Father by becoming a sacrificial Servant (see Philippians 2:7-8). The Command to ***obey*** our parents ends when we become adults, but the Command to ***honor*** our parents never expires. Here are ten practical pointers to help us honor our parents: 1) Take the initiative to improve the relationship in whatever increments you can; 2) Recognize your parents have done some things right and some things wrong; 3) Forgive your parents even as God in Christ has forgiven you; 4) Thank your parents for the sacrifices they have made for you; 5) See your parents as Christ sees them; 6) Treat parents with kindness; 7) Support and care for your parents; 8) Always speak well of parents, whether they are alive or not; 9) Esteem your parents publicly and privately; 10) Don’t forsake your parents.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. How are you doing showing honor to others?
2. In what specific ways are you honoring or dishonoring your parents?
3. Parents, in what ways are you showing honor to your kids?
4. Adults, how are you honoring your aging parents today?
5. In what ways are you showing honor to God?