

The Commands of Christ

Sermon # 22

Honor Your Parents!

Matthew 15:4

When you are out in public or even when you are in the church, do your ears perk up when you hear someone say “yes mama” or “yes sir”. What about the young person who calls someone “Mr. or Mrs. So and So”? It seems like we have lost a bit of formality in our society doesn't it?

As time goes by, it seems like each generation has less respect and appreciation for those who have gone before them and blazed the trail for them. In our society we do not value wisdom and age like in days past.

Why is this happening? I am appalled by how kids talk back to adults today. I cannot fathom treating teachers the way kids do today. There is no respect of authority. Why? Television has something to do with it. Parents are usually hapless buffoons who can only be saved by their kids. Today we are going to look at the 5th Commandment. Maybe part of the problem with our society springs from us violating this command?

The next command we want to examine is found in Matthew 15 lets begin reading in verse four, here Jesus says *“For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ (5) “But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God” — (6) ‘then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.”*

The command is actually found in verse four, where we are told that we are to “honor” (*timao* – imperative present active), our parents. It is of course, a direct reference to the fifth of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20:12.

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HONOR YOUR PARENTS?

There seems to be three phases of life that every one goes through in honoring their parents.

1. In our youth we are called to Honor through Obedience.

The command to honor parents is not only established in the Ten Commandment and affirmed here by the command of Jesus, but It is also reinforced by the teaching of Paul in this letters. In

his letter to the Colossians (3:20) *"Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord."* Paul expands this command in Ephesians 6 (1-3) where we read, *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: (3) "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."*

Practical application for children at home.

John Maxwell tells a story about 2 boys on their way to school...and –talking about their families. One boy said—“I’ve figured out a SYSTEM for getting along with my MOM.... It’s very simple--- She tells me what to do....AND I DO IT!!!” Kids, I have just given you the secret to a happy hildhood. OBEY! Paul says in Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

In the original text the word which is translated “obey” comes from two words, under and to listen. A rigidly literal translation could be to listen under. What is in view here is a conscious and deliberate listening, listening so as to really hear. God’s word of wisdom to children is simple: Children, obey your parents in the Lord. It is a simple and straightforward word. How it is needed! I know this might be a shock to you, but children don’t always obey their parents! I heard of a mother who was asked by her three children what she would like for her birthday. She answered, “Three well-behaved children.” One of the children thought about her words for a moment and said, “Great! Then there will be six of us.”

- PROVERBS 6:20 My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;
- PROVERBS 23:22 Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

Many of you think you know more than and are smarter than your parents. How many of you think you are? Listen to this; Get over it, YOU are NOT! You honor them by your obedience and respect for what they tell you. The only time we are justified in not obeying is if our parents tell us to do something that God has forbidden.

2. In young adulthood we are called to Honor our parent through recognizing their wisdom.

The Hebrew word translated "honor" here means to "make heavy" or "weighty". The word picture is weighing down someone with esteem and respect. The opposite of "honor" is to take someone "lightly," by withholding honor and respect. Honor also denotes a “deserved deference”.

The command to honor parents is supplemented by another biblical verse that states we must revere (some Bibles translate this as “fear”) our parents (Leviticus 19:3). Jewish tradition interpreted reverence as meaning that we should not “stand or sit in our parents’ reserved place, nor should we contradict their words.” Honor was demonstrated through acts

of kindness and caring, while reverence meant to refrain from actions that diminished their role as parent or embarrassed them in public. These distinctions are just as relevant today

This command is not just written to children.

This command covers adult children also. In the Jewish society, the family was a close knit group. As children would grow up and get married, they would stay with or very near to family. The children would eventually take care of the parents. If the children did not do it, it would not happen.

We have to make sure we do not reduce this command to children doing what they are told to do although this is part of the command. Paul in Ephesians 6:1-3 restates this command as one to be followed and he added that children are to obey their parents.

As we age, our roles with our parents change. I do not have to call my parents and ask them if I can stay out late anymore, I do not have to ask their permission to go places anymore, but I still must honor them. We are going to talk about how children can honor their parents and how adult children can honor their parents in a moment.

This command covers anyone who has parents. It also includes all parents. The command also covers ALL parents. There is no disclaimer or qualifier that says we are only to honor our parents IF they were deserving. My parents were great so I have no problem honoring them, but many people are not that fortunate.

This is a tough pill to swallow for those who have had terrible or abusive parents. To honor an abusive parent does not mean we allow the abuse to happen or place the grandchildren in a position in which they can suffer the same. Dr. Laura in her book on the 10 Commandments, she suggests that when a parent is violent, sexually aggressive or emotionally destructive, children are justified to put some distance between themselves and their parents.

It takes great courage to honor someone we deem not worthy. If we cannot do this because of abuse, we allow the abuse to continue throughout our lives. It will affect our relationships and our children as we seethe in hatred. It is possible to maintain cordial contact, assist a bad parent with basic needs when they need it. We can avoid spending a lot of time basking in negativity in front of them or behind their backs. It is not a good situation but for your own health, you must learn to deal with it.

"Three sons left home, went out on their own and prospered. Getting back together, they discussed the gifts they were able to give their elderly mother. The first said, "I built a big house for our mother." The second said, "I sent her a Mercedes with a driver." The third smiled and said, "I've got you both beat. You remember how mom enjoyed reading the Bible? And you know she can't see very well. So I sent her a remarkable parrot that recites the entire Bible. It took elders in the church 12 years to teach him. He's one of a kind. Mama just has to name the

chapter and verse, and the parrot recites it." Soon thereafter, mom sent out her letters of thanks: "Milton," she wrote one son, "The house you built is so huge. I live in only one room, but I have to clean the whole house." "Gerald," she wrote to another, "I am too old to travel. I stay most of the time at home, so I rarely use the Mercedes. And the driver is so rude!" "Dearest Donald," she wrote to her third son, "You have the good sense to know what your mother likes. The chicken was delicious."

Adults, it is not so easy with us. When we form our own household we are not under the authority of our parents as we once were. As we get older and our parents get older, our roles change.

What can adult children do to honor their parents?

1. Appreciate them for what they have done. When we are younger we do not always appreciate the sacrifices our parents made for us so we could do things or wear certain clothes. We do not appreciate the time sacrifices and sometimes the career sacrifices that were made just for us. Thank them for the sacrifice and love they showed to you.
2. We can honor our parents for not resenting what they were not and what they did not do for you. Do you know how many people harp on what they did not get as a child? It is time to get over it and go on with life. This is not easy, but it MUST be done. Learn from your bad times and vow not to incorporate them into your parenting. Most of us can find fault with something in our childhood. I was born too short. That is in the past; do not spend your life throwing your bad childhood in your parents face. Let go of the bitterness. Do not let the past ruin your life.
3. Honor your parents by making them a part of your families' life now. Honor your parents by letting them be a grandparent. You and your kids will be the better for it!

3. In our parents elderly years we are to honor or parents by helping with their support.

Make sure they are cared for when they can no longer do it for themselves. This is a time both children and parents hope never happens, but many times it does. Some of you are in the midst of this now. Remember they took care of you when it was not convenient. They loved you when it was hard to love you at times also. It may take sacrifice. Pastor John Hagee said what he told his children, he said, *"I am going to move in[with you] when I cannot take care of myself! I am going to use the phone all day, turn up the TV real loud, invite all my old friends over to eat you out of house and home and I am NEVER going to clean my room! John says his children pray for his good health."* I bet yours will to!

In Dr. Laura's book the Ten Commandments, she states: "In the Jewish tradition to "honor" meant to "serve food and drink, provide clothing and shelter and lead them "in and out" as long as the parent is alive.

How many times have you seen children yell at their parents or mouth off to them in public or argue with them in public? This is not pleasing to God. Honoring our parents

means we will give them the proper attention and respect they deserve because of the fact they are our parents. To honor means to “to place a value on”. It is not enough to just do what they say out of fear of punishment, but we are to value them and respect their position.

Let’s look at some practical ways we can honor our parents. We will first address those who still live under their parents’ roof, then those who are out on their own.

III. WHY THE COMMAND IS SO IMPORTANT

Why is honoring our parents so important? Parental honor lays the foundation for our attitude toward all authority figures. If we don’t learn the fifth commandment, then we’re going to have no foundation for the rest of the authority relationships in our lives. From the fifth commandment we learn how to relate to our boss, to our teachers, to our government, and so forth. We often think an authority figure has to earn the right to be honored, and if we find an authority figure who’s imperfect or makes mistakes, we think we’re off the hook. But according to the Bible that’s not true; we’re still bound to honor authority in our lives even when that authority is imperfect.

This is the only command with a promise. God says in our passage today that if we obey this command, our days will be prolonged in the land which God gives you. God could be speaking of a long physical life or the quality of life. Think about how sad your life is if you cannot bring yourself to honor your parents? Bitterness and envy destroy you from within. On the physical side we have at least a couple of places in the Old Testament where a disobedient child or a child who strikes their parent is to be put to death! (Exodus 21:15-17; Deuteronomy 21:18-21). On the practical side if a parent tells a child not to drink or do drugs and the kid ignores the parent, they could die from it. Parents are God’s representative! They teach us all we need to make it in life. Jesus had parents. Parents, I hope you realize the responsibility you have to them and I hope you take it seriously! Your job is not to make your kids happy, but to prepare them to be God-fearing responsible adults.

CONCLUSION

- READ VERSE AGAIN
- This command is going to be easy for some of us and hard for others, but regardless; we are not exempt from it. Parents, you can make this command easy to follow by raising your children the way God expects you to do it. You can also make it easy by loving your children with love God has for them. There are a lot of bitter children in our society because these two things are not being done. Parents, maybe you did not get off to what you wanted to do in life because you had children much earlier than you planned. Get over it! Do not compound your problem by blaming your kids, it was not their FAULT! No matter what your family life has been or is like today, Jesus offers you the chance to be apart of a new family, His family.