

Sermon Series: The Decalogue

**Sermon title:** "The 5th Commandment"

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 20:1-17

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### **Introduction.**

A famous man once described the young people of his generation this way.

*"Youth today love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, no respect for older people, and talk nonsense when they should work. Young people do not stand up any longer when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, talk too much in company, guzzle their food, lay their legs on the table and tyrannize their elders."*

That's a pretty harsh critique of young people.

Want to guess who said this?

**Socrates. 400 B.C.**

Even earlier than Socrates, in 1400 B.C., God gave a command to the Jews that would be foundational for human relationships and for society as a whole; Honoring your parents and those in authority.

Every society has rules and expectations for how children are to honor parents.

If this simple family structure breaks down, society as a whole comes apart at the seams.

God promises great things to those who honor their parents and promises serious consequences for those who don't.

### **Let's pray.**

The 10 commandments shift now in the 5th commandment.

The first 4 deal with our relationship to God.

The next 6 deal with how we relate to one another.

And the 5th commandment is pivotal:

#### **Exodus 20:12**

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

### **I. The Command**

Honor your father and your mother

The word for 'Honor' here is *kabad*, it is the same word used in the Scripture for glory. It means weighty or heavy.

### **Leviticus 19:1-3**

Every one of you shall revere his mother and father.

Here the word is '*fear*'.

### **Matthew 15:4**

Jesus repeated this command and said it should be kept.

So this command isn't hard to understand.

We are to revere our parents and respect them.

We aren't to take them lightly but seriously.

God commands it.

To not honor them is to dishonor them.

It was a punishable offense in Jewish Mosaic Law.

### **Exodus 21:15**

Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death.

### **Exodus 21:17**

Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.

## **Deuteronomy 21:18-21**

If a man has a stubborn or rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and though they discipline him, will not listen to them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, and they shall say to the elders of his city, *"This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard."* Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear and fear.

You may think, *"Wow, that's a little extreme."*

But let us not scoff at God's strictness in the Mosaic Civil Law, but let us mourn over our rebelliousness.

Think about it, a man and a woman bring a child into the world, nurse him, feed him, care for his every need, teach him to sit, crawl, walk, change his diaper, scratch his back at night, snuggle up close and sing him to sleep, protect and provide for him in every way-- and then this son grows up and says, "Who are you to tell me what to do?"

Absurd and insane, huh?

But that is all of us at some point in our lives to our earthly parents. We are all guilty of breaking the 5th commandment.

So, all of us should think soberly about how we honor our father and our mother, at all points in our life. Honoring our father and mother looks different for us when we are children, teens and adults.

Yet, this commandment means more than just honoring our parents. It begins there but doesn't stay there.

### **The Heidelberg Catechism 104 puts it nicely.**

Question: What is God's will for you in the fifth commandment?

Answer: That I honor, love, and be loyal to my father and mother and all those in authority over me; that I submit myself with proper obedience to all their good teaching and discipline; and also that I be patient with their failings— for through them God chooses to rule us.

The New Testament clearly teaches us to submit not to just our parents but to all of those in authority.

## **Romans 13:7**

Respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

## **1 Peter 2:17**

Honor everyone.

So, the command is simple, “Honor your father and your mother” and it includes all those who might be in authority over us, like a father or like a mother.

But this command comes with the promise of a blessing if we will obey it.

As **Phi Ryken** says, “This is the only law with an entirely positive message and an offer of reward.”

## **II. The Promise**

that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

What does this mean?

I mean, you and I don't live in Israel and could care less about the land or living long in it.

This phrase, *"living long in the land"* is a Hebrews phrase that means the *"fullness of God's blessing"* or *"abundant life"*.

So we could paraphrase this as saying, *"Honor your father and your mother if you want to have an abundant life."*

It doesn't mean that you'll live long if obey this.

**Ephesians 6:1-3** in the New Testament repeats this command.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise) that it may go well with you that you may live long in the land.

Is this really true?

Will we really have an abundant life if we honor our father and mother?

How do we know this?

First, it is common sense. We can keep ourselves out of a lot of trouble by doing what we are told, being where we are supposed to be and doing what we are supposed to be doing.

Our parents and older people in general have a lot of wisdom that can save us a lot of trouble in life.

Just think how much trouble we would've spared ourselves if we would have done everything our parents told us and honored them.

Secondly, we know that this is true by faith. We receive it by faith. Take it by faith....if you honor your father and mother, it will be good for you and your life will be blessed. No, you won't have everything you want but you'll have an abundant life.

Lastly, just think how much your parents will want to bless you and pour out their love to you if you honor and obey them. Make life easy for them! Make life tough for them and dishonor them and they will not want to bless you. It'll be hard to do that.

### **III. The Applications**

There is an application for society at large. Create a culture of dishonoring and disobedience to fathers and mothers and you will destroy society. Society itself will not be blessed.

"If anyone fails to honor his parents, is there anyone he will spare?" **Augustine**



In fact, we see that in the last days...one of the things that makes it evident that the end is near is...." disobedience to parents", among other things.

## **2 Timothy 3:1-2**

People will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents.

The application for us on a personal level is quite clear and simple: are we honoring our father and mother?

If not, how do we need to change?

What can we do to honor them more?

Something for us to think about.

## **IV. The Gospel**

We have already mentioned that we are all guilty of breaking this commandment.

We are have all been rebellious sons and daughters and our parents have loved us anyway.

There has only been one perfect child, only one son who has perfectly honored and obeyed their father and mother– Jesus Christ.

The sin of dishonoring parents requires death.

We are guilty before God for that sin.

But praise be to God that Jesus died for our sins and took the punishment that should have been ours.

But he also obeyed the law in our place. He kept the 5th commandment for us.

So, there is now no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ Jesus.

Now, as Christians, we are still to honor our Father and Mother as best we can and honor all of those who are in authority in our lives.

A question that you might have is this: do I have to obey my father and mother if they ask me to do something that is contrary to God's word?  
What if they command me to sin?

The answer is 'no' you don't have to obey your father or mother if they ask you to sin. In that case, obedience to God is more important.

Jesus said, ["Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."](#)

There will come times in your life where you may need to disobey your parents in order to obey God...all the while honoring your parents the best you can.