

The Fifth Commandment (for adults)

Introduction:

1. What is the fifth commandment? *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)

The first word of the fifth commandment is “honor”. “The word is *kaved*, which is Hebrew for “heavy” or “weighty.” It is the word the Old Testament uses for the glory of God, for the weightiness of his divine majesty.” (Ryken, p.119) To apply this word to honoring one’s parents means to give full recognition or weight, to their position of authority, demonstrating high value and respect for them.

Today we will be studying the fifth commandment from the perspective of adult children. Next week we will look at the commandment as parents of young children.

Acknowledge my failure to obey and ignorance of this commandment:

It has been in recent years that I have given it more thought – family studied the ten commandments in Starr Meade’s devotional book on the Heidelberg Catechism, *Comforting Hearts: Teaching Minds*. I continue to be convicted of my own failings to obey the fifth commandment in regard to both my own parents as well as my in-laws.

2. Q104. What is God’s will for you in the fifth commandment?
 - A. 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 Heidelberg Catechism*)
3. Recognition that there are those among us in this room that are dealing with pain and hurt from their own, or their spouses, parents’ failings. The Heidelberg Catechism acknowledges that our parents are sinners (just as we are) and may fail us at times. The Catechism encourages us to show honor to them by being *patient* with their failings.

Valerie’s Testimony (10-15 minutes)

4. Time of personal reflection and response to the following:
What might be hindering you from seeking the Lord’s will for you in the fifth commandment? What past failures (your own or another’s) might be interfering? Spend some time acknowledging this before the Lord.

Context:

1. Current Cultural Context: Read Ryken p.117

In light of how our culture views authority and parental authority, God’s commands may seem unnatural to us. Our culture greatly influences the way we think and behave. Let us remember what Paul said in Romans 12:2: *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

2. Biblical Context:

1. Transition in the ten commandments. The first four commandments teach us about loving God and the last six commandments teach us about loving others.

“Love for God must come first. We cannot truly love one another unless we love God. If we do not respect God, we will not respect one another. So we can hardly begin to keep the last six commandments until we learn how to keep the first four.” (Ryken, p.118)

2. The fact that this commandment is the first of six that teach us how to love others is significant.
 - “In telling us how to treat one another, God starts with our families. Loving our neighbor starts at home.” (Ryken, p.118)
 - Tim Keller says, “it’s respect for parents that is the basis for every other kind of respect and every other kind of authority.”
3. This commandment comes with a promise: (to encourage)

Deuteronomy 5:16

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

““The expression “live long in the land” is a Hebrew phrase for the fullness of God’s blessing. It means to have an abundant life.” (Ryken, p. 123)

Context for the Israelites:

“In that day living long and living in the Promised Land were the ultimate proofs of divine blessing. These were signs that people were in God’s favor, that they were experiencing the promised good life that comes with faithfulness to their covenant obligations. On the other hand, a shortened life or a life lived in exile were the ultimate proofs of divine disfavor, that they were experiencing the curses that come with breaking their covenant obligations. We need to understand, as did the Israelites, that these promises were not guarantees.” (Tim Challies)

Ephesians 6:1-3

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 and that you may live long in the land.”

“Paul freely assured the children of Ephesus that God would bless them as they honored their parents. They would acknowledge, as we do, that the promise of land is no longer valid. (Did you notice how in Ephesians 6 Paul quotes the Old Testament but leaves out the part about the land *the Lord your God is giving you?*) But the general rule remains: If we live in God’s ways we receive God’s favor; if we defy God’s ways we forfeit God’s favor. We owe our parents the duty of honor and it works like this: Honor God by honoring your parents and expect it will go well with you; dishonor God by dishonoring your parents and expect it will not. It’s the way God has structured his world.” (Tim Challies)

It’s important to remember that this promise is not a guarantee and to clarify that that this does not mean living a life of comfort of ease. God is most concerned with making us more holy, more like Christ.

4. Reminder that every commandment has both a positive requirement and negative prohibitions. Today we will focus on the requirements and we will look at the prohibitions next week.

Bible Study:

1. Who establishes authority? (whole group)

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. (Romans 13:1-2)

God is sovereign and rules over every person and everything in creation. God has put *all* authority in place and calls us to honor them. We honor God when we honor those he has put in authority over us.

2. To whom else are we to show honor? (small group)

1 Peter 2:13-14, 17 (All authority, gov't, work, everyone)

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Hebrews 13:17 (church leaders)

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Leviticus 19:32(elderly)

You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

3. How do we show honor to our parents, in-laws and others?

- Proverbs 23:22: *Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.*
 - seek their counsel
- Leviticus 19:3: *Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.*
 - speak to them and about them with respect, refuse to speak evil of them
 - esteem them publicly and privately
 - Thank them for good gifts, values they have instilled in you (i.e. a love of reading)
 - Written letter acknowledging thankfulness for them (i.e. Christmas journal)
- 1 Timothy 5:8: *But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*
 - care for them in times of need (i.e., serious illness, aging parents, end of life, financial support)
 - Just as they cared for us, we will need to care for them. We should expect this and find joy in being able to do so. (i.e. Dad & brothers caring for Grandma)
- Colossians 3:12-14: *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*
 - be patient, humble, forgiving
 - "We serve a forgiving Savior: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Standing at the foot of the cross and considering such a Savior, who are we to

withhold forgiveness from our parents? We honor our parents by extending grace and forgiveness to them.” (Tim Challies)

- Matthew 7:12: *So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*
 - The Golden Rule

Honoring the Dishonorable:

(Tim Challies Article: <http://www.challies.com/articles/the-commandment-we-forgot-honor-when-honor-is-hard>)

Distinguish between honor and obedience.

Distinguish between the person and the position.

Distinguish between honor and relationship.

Distinguish between honor and agreement.

Distinguish between honor and enabling.

Difference btw obedience & honor: (From Tim Challies)

- the language of obedience tends to come in passages speaking to young children who are still dependent upon their parents. When we come to passages speaking to adult children, we find a subtle switch to language of respect and provision. Thus obedience is a particular form of honor—a form of honor for young children.
- *The sin of obedience.* There may also be occasions when obedience is sinful, such as when parents command their children to sin or when they command their children to disobey God or government. When this happens a child must disobey mom and dad in order to obey a higher authority. Another occasion for acceptable disobedience is when parents demand obedience of their adult children or when their demands for obedience become overbearing or abusive. In such cases the child is under no God-given obligation to obey.
- God’s basic command to humanity is not “obey your father and mother” because obedience ends and at times can even be sinful. Instead, God’s command is “honor your father and mother” because honor never ends and is never wrong.

Requires boundaries: do not have to approve of or agree with parents to honor them, do not enable their sin or sinful patterns, in extreme cases honoring parents may be refusing to dishonor them

Conclusion:

1. Personal reflection and response to the following:
How have you seen the Lord at work helping you to honor and obey those in authority over you?
How have you failed to honor and obey those in authority over you?
What might you ask the Lord to help you change?
2. Good News:
When we do sin, and break God’s commandments, we can look to Jesus who kept God’s rules perfectly because He knew we would not be able to do so ourselves. When we confess our sins and place our faith and trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, our sins are forgiven and his perfect rule keeping record is counted as ours.

“God does not accept us on the basis of what we have done, but on the basis of what Jesus has done. “ (Ryken, p. 132)
3. Prayer:
Thankfulness for Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and life of perfect obedience counted as ours, confession of sin, prayer for repentance and assurance.