

Lesson 11

Feb. 15, 2026

Responsibility of Children to Parents: **God's Word instructs children to honor and obey their parents.**

THE LESSON OVERVIEW

Biblical principles should shape the relationship between parents and children. Scripturally, children are instructed to honor and obey their parents, with the promise of blessings attached to this commitment. While parents nurture their children in the ways of the Lord, children are responsible for responding with obedience and honor. This mutual respect aligns with God's design for families. Additionally, as parents age, children should show them honor through supportive care, love, and gratitude for their parents' guidance. Honoring parents is not only a command but a means to a blessed life and strong family ties.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Bible is a towering resource of strength and hope for the family. Its pages contain principles and patterns for family health. The Bible does not gloss over the challenges of family life. In addition to strong, healthy families, it includes examples of dysfunctional and troubled families. From negative examples, we can learn the pitfalls that need to be avoided, and the positive ones serve as examples to emulate. The values attributed to the child-parent relationship underscore the profound significance of this relationship.

THE LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. CHILDREN MUST HONOR THEIR PARENTS: Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:3; Matthew 15:1-6.**
 - A. Command and Promise to Children (Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:3)
 - B. Reproved for Dishonoring Parents (Matt. 15:1-6)
- 2. CHILDREN MUST OBEY THEIR PARENTS: Proverbs 23:22, 24-26; Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20.**
 - A. Obedience Leads to Parental Joy (Prov. 23:22, 24-26)
 - B. Obedience Pleases the Lord (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20)
- 3. BENEFITS OF HONORING PARENTS: Proverbs 1:8-9; 2:1-6; Ephesians 6:2-3.**
 - A. Wisdom and Understanding (Prov. 1:8-9; 2:1-6)
 - B. Quality of Life (Eph. 6:2-3)

DISCUSSING THE LESSON

1. CHILDREN MUST HONOR THEIR PARENTS: Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:3; Matthew 15:1-6.

A. Command and Promise to Children, Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:3

Exodus 20:12 is the fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments given by God to Israel. The first four commandments deal with one's relationship with God. Therefore, the fifth commandment is the one that governs relationships with others. The parent-child relationship is the first relationship in life, setting the tone for how one will eventually relate to others. The "honor" is derived from the Hebrew term *Kabad*, which comes from a root word meaning "to be heavy or weighty." In a good sense of the word, it is the idea of holding another in high esteem. Leviticus 19:3 states everyone should "fear" (KJV) or "revere" (NKJV) their parents. The Hebrew term here is *yare*, which carries the idea of reverence. The command reveals the importance of children showing proper respect to their parents and realizing their parents' God-given authority.

Exodus 20:12 also includes a promise attached to the command to honor one's father and mother. The promise is that those who do so will "live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you" (NIV). God promised to give them the land of Canaan, but the parent-child relationship was vital if Israel was to retain their distinction as God's chosen people. His truth must be passed from generation to generation through strong families. This is why Moses, in Deuteronomy 6, addresses the parents rather than the priests or tribal leaders.

B. Reproved for Dishonoring Parents, Matthew 15:1-6.

A delegation of Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to confront Jesus. They were looking for anything they could use to bring an accusation against Him. They were highly devoted to their traditions and religious rules. Their traditions, which were added to God's commandments, covered practically every aspect of daily life. Their man-made traditions were based on their interpretations and applications of the Mosaic Law. They had layered the traditions of the elders over the Law, thereby prioritizing the commandments of men rather than respecting God's commandments. On this occasion, they confronted Jesus about a perceived violation regarding ritualistic washing. They viewed Jesus as being responsible for the behavior of His disciples since He was their rabbi. The "tradition of the elders" (v. 2) represented the rules of respected rabbis of the past, which were handed down from one generation to the next. These traditions included multitudes of detailed rules and regulations of detailed rules and regulations that had effectively surpassed the commandments of God in the practices of religious leaders.

They asked Jesus why His disciples were eating with unwashed hands. Jesus did not answer the Pharisees' question directly. His answer went deeper than the external act of washing hands. Jesus turned the tables and asked them why they rejected God's commandment in favor of their traditions. In verse 4, Jesus quoted from Exodus 20:12 and 21:17 to make His point. He said they were casting aside the commandment of God for their traditions. God commands children to honor their parents as long as they are alive. The seriousness of this command is understood by the legal consequences of failing to honor one's parents. It was a capital crime resulting in death!

Jesus said their traditions permitted children to dishonor their parents. When individuals wanted to avoid providing for their parents' needs, they would make a vow and tell their parents, "It is a gift" (v. 5) that was designated for the temple or priests. This was considered a sacred vow and could not be reversed. In Mark 7:11, the technical term for this gift was *corban*. Jesus was pointing out that while they were accusing His disciples of violating their traditions, they themselves were making "the commandment of God of none effect" (Matthew 15:6). In the Scriptures, children are instructed to provide and care for their children early in life. A child's care for their parents was a way of showing

them honor. However, religious leaders were conveniently setting aside the authority of God's commandment for their benefit, to purchase things they could use in the temple while not caring for their parents' needs.

In our spiritual journey, it is crucial to recognize that human traditions should never override or conflict with the Word of God. While traditions can be valuable and meaningful, they should not replace or challenge God's commandments. Jesus illustrated this when He criticized the religious leaders of His time for prioritizing their traditions over God's Word. As they had no justification for their actions, their practices indeed dismissed God's commands. We must ensure that our traditions support, rather than contradict, God's teachings. Personal convictions are acceptable but should align with Scripture and not be imposed on others. Let's prioritize God's Word as the ultimate authority guiding our life and faith.

2. CHILDREN MUST OBEY THEIR PARENTS: Proverbs 23:22, 24-26; Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20.

A. Obedience Leads to Parental Joy, Prov. 23:22, 24-26.

In verse 22, two instructions are given to the child regarding the parents. The first is directed to the father: "hearken" (KJV). The Hebrew word is *shama*, which means "to listen up, give attention to." The term is related to what is known as the Jewish Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4, which begins, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God in one Lord." The emphasis was on Israel's covenant relationship with God, whom they were to love with all their heart and soul. Similarly, in Proverbs 23:22, children are to give their earthly father respect and regard. They are called to pay attention to the instruction, advice, and wisdom of their father, for this will produce a fruitful and peaceful life. The second command pertains to the mother. Children are told not to "despise" their mother. The term despise implies showing disrespect and contempt, especially when referring to someone older. The key for children is to recognize that they have been given to their parents as a gift from God, and their parents represent the Lord's authority in their lives.

In verses 24 through 26, the "wise child" – meaning intelligent, skillful, cunning, or wise-hearted – is the one who observes, listens to, and obeys the instruction and wisdom of their parents. "Righteous" parents will "greatly rejoice" and "be glad" for such wise children, which speaks well of the parents' influence. Such children are a testimony to the parents' example in the home. In verse 26, children are instructed to give their hearts to the wisdom of their parents. As followers of God are to love the Lord with all their heart, children are likewise to love their parents with all their heart. The child is also directed to "observe" or accept the "ways" of their parents. Parents should be a positive example to their children in every way, and their children should follow their parents' righteous example.

B. Obedience Pleases the Lord, Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20.

Two responsibilities of the child are to obey and honor their parents. In Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20, Paul references the fifth of the Ten Commandments, as found in Exodus 20:12, along with the promise attached to this commandment. Paul notes that children are commanded to obey their parents "in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1). Some have misinterpreted this to mean obedience is only required of children whose parents are followers of the Lord. However, children who obey their parents are, in effect, obeying the Lord. The word "obey" is made up of two Greek terms: the preposition *hypo*, which means "under," and *akouo*, which means "to listen or hear." Obedience is the idea of listening in submission. In both the Old and New Testament,

disobedience and disrespect to parents were considered serious matters with severe consequences.

Paul gives the reasons why children must obey and honor their parents. First, obeying one's parents is the "right" thing to do. The word right is related to being righteous and holy. Second, children are to obey their parents because God commands it, which is reason enough. Third, obeying one's parents is equivalent to obeying God, as the parent represents godly authority in life at this time. Fourth, in Colossians 3:20, Paul states children should obey their parents in all things at all times, "for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."

In our pursuit of godly parenting, our aim is to nurture character and conduct in our children that reflect reverence for God and respect for others. We carry the crucial duty of preparing them to face life's challenges by turning their hearts towards God's teaching. By His Word, we gain guidance, and through His Spirit, we are empowered to guide with consistency, firmness, and love. Let us strive to resemble God, the ultimate parent, seeking His wisdom to raise children who embody His love and truth.

3. BENEFITS OF HONORING PARENTS: Proverbs 1:8-9, 2:1-6; Ephesians 6:2-3.

A. Wisdom and Understanding, Prov. 1:8-9, 2:1-6.

In Proverbs 1:8-9, the speaker assumes a fatherly role by offering fatherly advice. He appeals to the younger generation to heed their parents. Ultimately, how children respond to their parents' instructions and discipline will affect their relationship with God. Why? The parent is an instrument of God to shape their children's lives. Therefore, obedience to God begins with obedience to parents. In verse 9, the speaker compares the results of heeding one's parents' instructions to wearing a finely crafted crown and a necklace around the neck. These were ornaments that displayed sophisticated beauty. These were ornaments of honor. People will take note of those who show respect for their parents. It will not only benefit them personally; it will bring honor to both them and their parents.

In Proverbs 2:1-6, the writer discusses the value and importance of seeking wisdom. In general, wisdom comes from God's Word and our relationship with Him. Ultimately, true wisdom is found in the fear (reverential awe) of God. In verse 2, the writer appeals to the son to give attention to wisdom. The word translated as "wisdom" here means "good sense" or being skillful in a practical sense. "Understanding" refers to discretion or reason; it comes from a Hebrew word meaning "to separate or distinguish, to have good discernment." The overall picture here is that the son (child) will grow up to have good sense and a solid foundation in God's truth. The word "fear" is the idea of a continual reverential awe of God. This is the key to true wisdom and understanding.

B. Quality of Life, Ephesians 6:2-3.

Children are commanded to "honor" their parents, which includes respect and reverence. This honor is carried on throughout life. It includes demonstrating gratitude and appreciation through caring for one's parents in old age. It is a matter of returning the favor. Children who honor their parents will never take them for granted. Honoring parents continues even after leaving home. Obedience may be required while living at home, but honor never ends. The child is promised a

long life by obeying and honoring their parents. Here, the meaning is not as much the length of life as it is the quality of life.

We often emphasize the crucial role of family and parental influence in imparting values to children. These values, inspired by God's Word, are essential for guiding life's choices and behavior. Parents can profoundly impact their children's spirituality, not only through living examples of active faith. While planning for a child's education and future is important, spiritual development must not be overlooked. God entrusts parents with nurturing both the physical and spiritual aspects of their children, encouraging them to grow with a resilient faith. Let's fill our lives with these values, leaving a legacy of faith and love.

CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

By honoring our parents, we are honoring God. While our parents are alive, it is our duty to honor and care for them. This is commanded by God in both the Old and New Testaments.

MINISTRY IN ACTION

Ask the class to pray together for their parents and share any special needs that their parents may have.

WORKSHEET

God-Ordained Institutions of Human Society

The Word Society Comes From the Latin Word Societas, which means ‘companion.’ Thus, human society is the association (companionship or fellowship) of humans.

One Person Alone Is Not a Society. After God created Adam (the first human) and placed him in an ideal environment, where he had fellowship with God and the company of all the other earthly creatures of God, the man was alone. He was not part of a human society. “the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’” (Genesis 2:18 NKJV).

The First God-Ordained Institution of Human Society Is Marriage. God created the first woman to be the wife of the first man (2:21-25). Both the man and the woman, by virtue of their relationship as husband and wife, became the first unit of human society. Neither the man nor the woman was alone.

The First and Foundational Institution of Human Society Is the Marriage, and good marriages are essential for the well-being of human society. Without good marriages, as instituted by God in the beginning (2:18; 21-25), and affirmed by Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:4-6), all of human society will fail.

The Second and Foundational Institution of Human Society Is the Family. All things (plants, fish, birds, animals) in the natural order of God’s creation reproduce their own kind as commanded by God (Genesis 1:11-12, 21-22, 24-25). And God commands humans to make families (Genesis 1:27-28).

Christians Should Not Fear To Marry and Make Families. Good marriages and good families are God’s will, and are absolutely essential for the continuance and health of the Church, and also for the well-being of human society.

Those Who Seek To Do Away With Marriage and Family are not doing the work of God and do not seek what is essential for healthy human society.

Ten Responsibilities

In his book *Precious in His Sight*, Roy B. Zuck says the Bible assigns ten responsibilities to children. Several of them are highlighted in today's lesson. Look up the Scripture verses (NKJV) and fill in the blanks.

1. H_____ their parents. – Exodus 20:2
2. O_____ their parents. – Ephesians 6:1
3. Treat their parents with r_____. – Hebrews 12:9
4. Accept c_____ from their parents. – Proverbs 15:5
5. Learn from their parents' i_____. – Proverbs 4:1
6. P_____ God along with their parents. – Psalm 148:12-13
7. A_____ their parents about important matters. – Joshua 4:20-22
8. Be i_____ of godly parents. – Ephesians 5:1
9. C_____ for their parent in need. – 1 Timothy 5:4 (NIV)
10. Working with your parents, like R_____ did. – Genesis 29:6