

## The Ten Commandments

### **Commandment #5:** “Honor your father and mother..”

Today’s commandment turns the page into the so-called “second table” of commandments. The first four are dedicated to man’s “vertical” relationship with the Lord while the next 6 are focused on our “horizontal” relationships with one another. To be clear, these two groups bleed into one another. The connection is very simple, we obey God and honor His heart by living in loving harmony with those around us! Today’s commandment reminds us that there are very real blessings that flow from our obedience.

#### 1. A definition

- a. The term “honor” means to estimate highly, show respect, or defer to
- b. In this instance, the command requires that we submit to our parents’ instructions and elevate their position in our minds and hearts
- c. To be clear, this idea has implications for all of life but those implications change over time
  - i. A toddler or young child honors his parents by submitting to their household rules and following their clear commands
  - ii. An adult honors her parents by cherishing and seeking their wisdom, taking care of them in their old age and seeking to walk in a manner that bestows honor on the family name
- d. Practically speaking, our parents are to be consulted and submitted to, whenever possible

#### 2. An important exception

- a. Now, this command is easier for some believers than others!
- b. Writing from a place of personal experience, my family knows what its like to have parents involved who are not always “honorable”
  - i. By this I don’t simply mean that they struggle with sin (if that were the criteria, no one would qualify!), instead I mean that they are actively counseling and operating outside of the revelation of God and His clear instruction
- c. In this case, it is imperative to remember a few things:
  - i. First, it is required that we submit to God rather than men (if our parents are commanding something that is patently unbiblical, our job is to honor the higher authority, which is God’s will as revealed in His Word)
  - ii. Second, we can still honor our parents through loving admonition to submit to God
  - iii. Third, we must be sure that our issue with our parents is actually biblical and not merely emotional or an issue of preference

1. If we don't desire to honor our parents because they are hard to deal with or imperfect, this is an unbiblical excuse!
  2. Part of Christian love and character is cherishing and esteeming those whom God has placed over us all the while showing the grace of Christ in areas where they lack
3. A practical reason
- a. This command has very obvious motivations!
  - b. Why should we honor our parents?
    - i. First, because they are necessary for life!
    - ii. Second, because they have, by definition, lived longer and, therefore, often see things we do not
    - iii. Third, because they are authorities that God has bestowed upon us and, therefore, they are to be obeyed "in the Lord"
4. A very important promise
- a. Notice here that this commandment is given with a promise
  - b. Those who honor their parents will "live long in the land"
  - c. The point is that honoring our parents coincides with the general trajectory of a blessed life
    - i. Now, this does not mean that every person is guaranteed more than 80 years if they honor their parents
    - ii. Instead, this is a promise made to a people (corporate) and the point is that the daily discipline of honoring parents leads to the flourishing and sustainability of a society
  - d. When parents are honored, wisdom is passed down, foolishness is suppressed and building blocks are laid for future gains
  - e. Conversely, we see in our culture today what happens when parents are dishonored
    - i. Sinfulness becomes glorified
    - ii. Foolishness (think exorbitant debt, religious laxity, idiotic worldviews) becomes typical
    - iii. Finally, elderly people become expendable
      1. So much of what plagues our society is rooted in this odd idea that those who are young know more and are more desirable than those who are older and wiser
  - f. When a culture honors the parents within the population, wisdom is esteemed, security expands and society reflects the heart of a God who calls us to honor those who are placed over us