

Honor Change

A natural, healthy transition needs to take place as children become young adults. Parents should exercise less authority, give advice more when asked, and become more like peers than parents. God intends parents to raise their children to follow God, “to obey Him rather than men” (Acts 5:29) when it comes to that, and to establish their own homes by “leaving their father and mother and being united with their spouse” (Genesis 2:24).

Unfortunately, parents sometimes find it hard to let go. Parents can refuse to accept their adult child as an independent adult. They can be nosy, pushy, and bossy—often unconsciously! Parents sometimes tie their own significance to the respect and service of their children. Without realizing it, they can control their adult children through expressions of disappointment, hurt, and anger. None of this is healthy. All of this deepens tension between parents and their adult children. If your parents treat you this way, what can you do?

Recognize what needs to change about your relationship and what doesn't. It's okay to tell your parents that you're choosing not to spend *every* Christmas Eve with them and expect them to handle it like adults. It pleases the Lord when you consult more with your *spouse* than with your parents in making a decision. It's okay to require your parents to talk to you, your spouse, and your children with respect. The bottom-line here is, you're an adult now and, if you're married, you have a separate and equal home in the eyes of God.

James MacDonald writes in *Seven Words to Change Your Family* that honoring your parents as an adult child does not mean:

- Groveling for their approval
- Making yourself vulnerable to their hurtful behavior
- Ignoring or denying the past

Good words. You're an adult now. Things have changed. Dennis Rainey's book *The Tribute* (revised as *The Tribute and the Promise*) can give you further help in sorting out a difficult relationship with your parents.

How do we raise our kids to respect us and other authority—ultimately God—in their lives? We recommend two resources. If you have younger children (pre-teen), check out *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Tedd Tripp. If you have teens, you'll get a lot out of *Age of Opportunity* by Paul Tripp. (Paul is Tedd's nephew in case you're wondering.) Raising children who honor their parents and honor God takes wise, daily investments—things we parents need to learn more about.

The Case for Honor
the TEN series

A Place of Honor

Children should recognize their parents' place of authority and give them the respect they deserve. There's no room then to shrug off, dismiss, or ignore what a parent says. Pastor Dan

1. Say the first four commandments together. Can you say them from memory? Can you do it with the motions Steve Fletcher showed us on Sunday?
2. Now read the rest of the Commandments beginning with the fifth—Exodus 20:12-17. Why do you think God put the fifth commandment where He did? What part does honoring parents play in a person's relationship with God (C1-4)? With other people (C6-10)?
3. What does it mean to “honor” your parents? What does it look like today? These verses will help you:
 - Ephesians 6:1-3—
 - Proverbs 1:8-9—
 - Proverbs 30:11-14—
 - 1 Timothy 5:3-8—
4. How would you explain the promise connected to the Fifth Commandment to a 10-year-old niece (Exodus 20:12)? Consider these Scriptures:
 - Deuteronomy 5:32-33—
 - Proverbs 3:1-8—
 - Ephesians 6:2-3—
 - Colossians 3:20—
5. How are you doing in honoring *your* parents—including step-parents and in-laws? What stands in your way? What can you do to stop any dishonor and demonstrate your honor for them?
6. If you have children or grandchildren, what can you do to make it easier—even desirable—for them to honor you? What can you say or do that *exasperates* or *embitters* them (Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21)?

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. Exodus 20:12