

Honor in the Home

Rev. Brian Bill

Exodus 20:12

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This week I asked parents a question on the Edgewood Facebook page: *“What’s the #1 thing you want from your children?”*

I was struck by the depth of answers along with the longing in the hearts of parents for their children to love and serve the Lord.

- *To know God and make Him known.*
- *To have the ability to see God’s presence in all circumstances.*
- *Respect and obedience to God.*
- *I want them to love God deeply in their heart leading to serving and glorifying Him with their lives.*
- *To be sold out to Jesus.*
- *For them to taste and see that the Lord is good, thus causing them to love the Lord with all that they are.*
- *Love and respect.*
- *To love and obey Jesus for themselves.*

After all these thoughtful responses, one person answered the question, *“What’s the #1 thing you want from your children?”* this way...

- *To be quiet.*

I should protect his identity but since he posted it publicly, I won’t. That was Micah Kuriscak offering his parental priorities. One person responded to him this way, *“He didn’t ask what wives want from their husbands!”* Another one quickly commented, *“Micah, you know Pastor is going to use that!”* To which I replied, *“Count on it.”*

I contacted Micah and asked if I could share his insight. He redeemed himself when he texted, *“Being quiet isn’t obviously the #1 thing but I think it’s something as you get older you see the value in being quiet. Be quiet when God is telling you something. Be quiet when someone with more experience is talking.”* Right on.

Behind each of these posts from parents is a longing for their children to honor them, and to honor God. In the fifth commandment, recorded in Exodus 20:12, we

discover the #1 thing God wants from His children: ***“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.”***

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 tells us these commands are to be *inscribed* on our hearts so we can *impress* them upon our children. As a way to get these commandments into our heads and hearts, we’re encouraging everyone to take a bookmark and work at memorizing these short phrases.

1. One God
2. No idols
3. Revere His Name
4. Remember to Rest
5. Honor Parents
6. No murder
7. No adultery
8. No stealing
9. No lying
- 10.No coveting

I love hearing how parents are intentionally disciplining their children by using these bookmarks. After the service last Saturday night, nine-year-old Aidra May, daughter of Randy and Nichole, and granddaughter of Randy and Lisa Matya, came up and asked if I wanted her to quote the 10 Commandments.

I told her I would love to hear her recite the commandments. She looked at me with a big smile on her face and quoted them perfectly. When I asked how she learned them so well, she said her parents go over them with her every night. I reached out to Nichole to get permission to share this and learned the backstory: *“After the week you challenged us to memorize them, Aidra said in the car she was going to do it. So, we started doing it with all the kids when we read the Bible at night.”*

Listen again to the command from 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.”*** Our main idea is this: *Honoring your parents is always proper.*

After making some observations, we’ll contemplate the *precept*. Then, we’ll consider the *promise* and conclude with how to *practice* this commandment.

Observations

1. **This is a hinge commandment.** The first four commands deal with our relationship with God. The final six relate to our relationships with others. The fifth commandment establishes that loving our neighbor starts at home. When we're out of step at home we'll be out of whack with God and others. Philip Ryken writes: *"The relationship between parent and child is the first and primary relationship, the beginning of all human society."*
2. **This is the first commandment dealing with the family.** The fifth commandment focuses on the parent-child relationship while the seventh commandment calls us to marital fidelity. Family life is the bedrock of a culture. As the family goes, so goes the nation, and the church.
3. **This is given to children of all ages.** The atmosphere of the home is in large part related to the response of the children, not just to the loving leadership of the parents.
4. **This command is a present imperative, which means we are to be in the habit of honoring continually.** This is not a suggestion but rather an uncompromising command.
5. **This command is directed to each of us.** The word *"your"* is used four times and *"you"* is used once.

The Precept

This precept is relatively simple to understand and yet fierce in its force: ***"Honor your father and mother..."*** *"Kavod"* (כבוד) is the Hebrew word for honor and respect. The word ***"honor"*** literally means a *"heavy weight."*

Some time ago, one of our daughters gave me a Father's Day Card in which she wrote these words: *"You're heavy to me."* At first, I thought she was making a "fat joke," but realized she was actually honoring me.

To ***"honor"*** is to assign the greatest possible weight to a person in terms of respect by holding them in *"high regard."* We say of someone we really respect: *"She's worth her weight in gold"* or, *"he's a heavyweight."* On the other hand, to ***"dishonor"*** means to treat someone as if they were *"light or insignificant."* To honor is to treat with distinction; to dishonor is to treat someone like dirt.

The opposite of honor is ***“in vain,”*** which means *“empty, useless, and of no value.”* To honor our parents is to give them their due weight. We’re to honor our parents because of their position, not necessarily because of their performance. Scripture tells us eight times to ***“honor your father and mother.”*** It’s repeated so much because it doesn’t come naturally to us.

The word ***“honor”*** is the same word translated ***“glory”*** in reference to the Lord. To glorify the Lord is to assign Him the highest and heaviest place because He deserves it. Interestingly, the only entities we’re to honor, according to the first five books of the Bible, are the Lord and our parents.

The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery offers a helpful definition: *“To show honor entails an affective side (a feeling of respect or reverence) and a set of outward manifestations, such as gestures (bowing before or being attentive) or actions (conferring titles or privileges). All these ways of showing honor elevate the person that is honored.”*

The emphasis here is on the attitude, not merely the act. We’re to show honor in both our *attitudes* and in our *actions*. To honor is to *elevate* and to *esteem* and to live it out in *experience*.

Let’s consider how this word is used in two other passages.

- Honoring the elderly is linked to honoring the Almighty. Leviticus 19:32: ***“Stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.”*** I wonder if this verse will be in my Father’s Day card this year!
- We prioritize honor according to what we prize highly. Speaking of wisdom, Proverbs 4:8 says: ***“Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.”***

I came across a simplified definition of honor you could use with your kids or grandkids. It’s from the book, *Say Goodbye to Whining, Complaining, and Bad Attitudes in You and Your Kids* by Turansky and Miller.

- *Treating people as special.*
- *Doing more than what’s expected.*
- *Having a good attitude.*

Before moving on, let's consider how countercultural this command is today.

1. You and I are to honor both ***“father and mother.”*** While some reject the Bible for being patriarchal, we're called to honor both mom and dad.
2. No matter how the family may be redefined by culture, the phrase ***“father and mother”*** is not compatible with same-sex parenting.
3. By definition, a father is a man, and a mother is a woman even though there's a movement to get rid of the term *“mother”* and replace it with *“birthing parent.”* Staff at Australian National University have been asked to avoid saying *“mother”* and to instead use the phrase, *“gestational parent.”* In January, the United States House of Representatives proposed to eliminate *“father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister”* and all other language deemed insufficiently “gender-inclusive” from House rules.

Fellow Christ-followers, we must hold to the clear teaching of the Commandments and not cave to culture.

The Promise

We see a promise connected to this command in the second half of verse 12: ***“...that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”*** When the Apostle Paul quoted this command in Ephesians 6:2 he added, ***“this is the first commandment with a promise.”*** Actually, this is the *only* commandment which spells out the benefits of keeping it. Honor is so honorable God Himself underscored it with a promise.

God is a promise-making and promise-keeping God. It's been estimated there are over 30,000 promises in the Bible, which 2 Peter 1:4 calls, ***“...His precious and very great promises...”***

These promises help us see *honoring your parents is always proper*. Here's a list of positive promises from the Bible associated with this command.

1. **Your life will generally be longer.** This ultimately refers to the duration of the nation of Israel in the land but also has personal application for believers as we see in Ephesians 6:3: ***“That it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”*** The phrase, ***“live long in the land”*** was identified with the fulfillment of God's blessings, not a blanket promise for a long life.

2. **You will experience blessing.** 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 word “well” is an adverb meaning “fine, well, good, or beneficial.”
3. **It is the right thing to do.** It’s always right to honor our parents. Ephesians 6:1: *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for **this is right**.”* The Puritans taught that a child should be the parent’s echo. When the parent speaks, the child should echo back with honorable obedience.
4. **It teaches respect for authority.** When honor is taught in the home, it will spread to other areas of a child’s life. Jen Wilken writes: *“This life is the lab in which God’s children learn to submit to heavenly authority by submitting to earthly authority.”* Romans 13:1-2: *“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.”* Billy Graham said, *“A child that is allowed to be disrespectful to his parents will not have respect for anyone else.”*
5. **God provides protection for those who honor their parents.** Proverbs 6:20-23: *“My son, keep your father’s commandment, and forsake not your mother’s teaching. Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, **they will watch over you**; and when you awake, they will talk with you.”*
6. **You will bring peace and joy to your parents.** Proverbs 15:20: *“A wise son **makes a glad father**, but a foolish man despises his mother.”*
7. **You will grow in wisdom and insight.** Proverbs 4:1-4: *“Hear, O sons, a father’s instruction, and be attentive, **that you may gain insight**, for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching. When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, ‘Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live.’”*
8. **God is pleased when you honor your parents.** Colossians 3:20: *“Children, obey your parents in everything, for **this pleases the Lord**.”*

9. **God will turn your heart back home.** We see this promise in Malachi 4:6, the last verse of the Old Testament, when God will **“turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”**

The Dangers of Dishonoring

Disobedience to parents is listed along with other heinous sins in Romans 1:30-32: **“Slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”**

One of the signs of the end times will be the increasing disobedience of children according to 2 Timothy 3:1-2: **“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents.”**

Today, families are under attack, with parental authority being questioned and disregarded. Years ago, the Duke of Windsor observed, *“The thing that impresses me about America is the way parents obey their children.”* The Bible says it’s dangerous for children to disobey.

While there are beautiful blessings for obedience, there are also some negative promises associated with breaking this command. God has a deep revulsion toward anyone who revolts against their parents.

1. **A shortened life.** Cursing a parent was a capital offense and punishable by death. Exodus 21:15, 17: **“Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death. Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.”** Proverbs 20:20 adds, **“If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.”**
2. **An uncomfortable life.** Parents, you might want to quote Proverbs 30:17 the next time your teenager rolls their eyes at you: **“The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.”**
3. **A cursed life.** The word “diss” means to disrespect. If you diss or dishonor your parents, Deuteronomy 27:16 says God will bring punishment: **“Cursed be anyone who dishonors his father or his mother...”**

4. **An exiled life.** Are you aware one of the reasons the Jews were sent into Babylonian exile was a failure to honor their parents? Ezekiel 22:7, 15: ***“Father and mother are treated with contempt...I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the countries...”***

Honoring your parents is always proper.

Many years ago, Beth and I read an article from Focus on the Family and still reference it today. The basic idea is our parenting roles change as our children grow. I don't have time to explain it fully but here are the four phases:

- Commander
- Coach
- Counselor
- Consultant

If you want to learn more, we've posted a link to an article called, *“The Four Phases of Parenthood”* on Sermon Extras on our mobile app and website.

Putting it into Practice

As always, Jesus provides the best model of how to obey this command.

1. **Jesus honored His parents by being submissive to them.** We read this about Jesus as a preteen in Luke 2:51: ***“And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.”***
2. **Jesus honored His earthly mother by providing care for her.** It's incredible that while He was on the cross, about to pay the price for all of our sins, He took the time to keep the fifth commandment by making sure His mom would be cared for when He was gone. John 19:26-27: ***“When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.”***
3. **Jesus honored His Heavenly Father by becoming a sacrificial servant.** Philippians 2:7-8: ***“But emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant,***

being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

The fifth commandment applies to everyone, no matter your age or stage in life. We’re called to honor our parents, whether they’re alive or not. As a way to help us to put this commandment into practice, let’s focus on five questions.

Questions to Ponder

1. How are you doing showing honor to others? According to Romans 12:10 we’re to *“outdo one another in showing honor.”* Romans 13:7 says, *“Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.”* On this Memorial Day weekend, let’s honor those who gave their lives for our freedom.

2. In what specific ways are you honoring or dishonoring your parents? Have you been treating them as distinguished or like dirt? Do you consider their advice and their role in your life as weighty or worthless? Proverbs 1:8 challenges us to hear and heed what our parents tell us: *“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching.”* Proverbs 23:22: *“Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.”*

You may be asking a couple questions at this point. Do I still need to obey my parents now that I’m an adult? How do I honor my parents even if I disagree with them on some things? Here’s my short answer: *The command to obey your parents ends when you become an adult but the command to honor your parents never expires. Honoring your parents is always proper.*

I’m reminded of a quote attributed to Mark Twain: *“When I was fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished by how much he’d learned in seven years.”*

Let’s determine not to be like the household described in Micah 7:6: *“For the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own household.”*

Here are 10 practical pointers to help us honor our parents:

- Take the initiative to improve the relationship in whatever increments you can.
- Recognize your parents have done some things right and some things wrong.
- Forgive them, even as God in Christ has forgiven you.
- Thank your parents for the sacrifices they have made for you.
- See your parents as Christ sees them.
- Treat them with kindness.
- Support and care for them.
- Always speak well of them, whether they are alive or not.
- Esteem them publicly and privately.
- Don't forsake them.

I recognize some of you are dealing with a mom or dad who has not acted in honorable ways toward you. Perhaps your parent is an alcoholic, has been absent, or abandoned you, or abused you. You may not be able to respect the *person* in such cases, but you can still honor their *position* as parent.

I read about a Jewish Rabbi who was known for the way he highly honored his mother. When she wished to get up on her bed, he would stoop down and bend over so she could use his back as a “stool.” On another occasion, his mother’s sandal broke, so she had to walk in the country barefoot. The son responded by putting his hands under her feet as she took each step so she wouldn’t hurt herself on the rough stones.

3. Parents, in what ways are you showing honor to your kids? Colossians 3:21 says, ***“Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”*** Let’s make sure we’re being good examples and not exasperating our children. Do what you can to make it easier for them to honor you. Ray Fowler writes: *“You can’t change your ancestors, but you can do something about your descendants!”*

One of the saddest things I can think of is a parent telling their children they are brats or worse yet, when I hear of a child being abused in some way. Another tragedy is when kids are left to dive into technology without any supervision. One pastor says, *“We should treasure our children as we would a precious gift from a wealthy friend – because that is what they are.”* If you want to make a difference in this regard, consider serving with Safe Families for Children.

4. Adults, how are you honoring your aging parents today? Are you looking for ways to demonstrate care and concern? My four sisters do a better job at this than I do, but I’m working at it. 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.”

I’m reminded of the Grimm’s Fairy Tale about a family with two children and an elderly grandfather. The grandfather could no longer eat neatly at the table. At first the parents rebuked him; then they made him sit in the corner; eventually they took away his knife, fork and spoon and placed food in a trough where he would eat with his fingers. One day the dad saw his children playing outside with some wood, a hammer, and a saw. *“What are you building?”* he asked. They replied: *“A trough for you when you get old!”* Are you taking care of your elderly parents? What are you teaching your children right now about honoring the elderly?

5. In what ways are you showing honor to God? Is God weighty to you or do you regard Him as worthless? Psalm 29:2: *“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness.”*

I don’t have the best memory, but I still remember a verse I was taught during my Old Testament survey class at Moody my freshman year. I’ll never forget it because my prof continually emphasized 1 Samuel 2:30 throughout the semester: *“Those that honor me I will honor and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”*

Honoring the Son

You will never honor God, or your parents, until you first honor the Son by repenting of your sins and receiving salvation. Check out John 5:23: *“That all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”*

In the next verse, Jesus lifts up the importance of not just hearing, but of believing and receiving the free gift He offers to each one of us: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but passes from death to life.”*

Are you ready to cross over from death to life? Confess you are a sinner and repent, which means to turn from the way you have been living. Believe Jesus died in your place on the cross, as your substitute, and He rose again on the third day. Then honor Him by receiving Him as your Savior and Lord, as your forgiver and leader. Once He changes your heart, then you’ll be able to honor Him and others.

Please pray with me. *“Jesus, thank You for fully keeping the commands because I haven’t and can’t keep them. I have not been honoring You or others. I confess I am a rebellious sinner and I’m ready to repent of my sins. I believe You paid the price for my sins by dying on the cross and You showed Your power by rising from the dead on the third day. I now receive You as my Savior, my Mediator, and my Lord. Come into my life and give a submissive spirit so I can obey You and honor others. Lead me to follow You faithfully as Your disciple from now on. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*

Emma Janacek Commissioning

We started with a question to parents, *“What’s the #1 thing you want from your children?”* Trish Janacek answered it this way: *“To live for God.”*

I want to invite Mike and Trish’s daughter, Emma Janacek up now. Both sets of Emma’s grandparents are also Edgewood members: Al and Cindy Trivette and Paul and Janet Janacek. Because of all of their intentional parenting and grandparenting, Emma is definitely living for the Lord as she gets ready to serve cross culturally in Mexico this summer.

Emma will be serving with Phil and Pattie Eager in LaPaz. Pattie (Taylor) grew up in Pastor Ed’s Youth Group, along with her sister Kim (Taylor) Contreras, who is also an Edgewood Go Team partner. Her and her husband Manuel serve in Fresno, California. Patti and Kim were also influenced by their parents, Gene and Carol Taylor.

I love how Edgewood is continuing to grow missionaries!

1. Can you describe where you will be serving and what you will doing this summer?
2. What are you hoping to learn from God through this experience?
3. How can we pray for you?