

The Fifth Commandment

The Fifth Commandment is the first dealing strictly with our relationship with one another and targets the first primary relationship we all experience, our relationship with our parents. Observe it below.

Honor your father and your mother,
that your days may be prolonged in the land
which the LORD your God gives you.

Exodus 20:12

- Circle what you are to do to your father and mother.
- Underline why God commanded them to do this.

What does 'honor' mean? _____

How do we honor our parents? _____

How would honoring their parents cause the Israelites' days to be prolonged in the land?

Did you notice that there are no qualifications to this command, such as 'honor your parents if they're worthy of it'? This commandment is to be obeyed no matter how 'good' or 'bad' our parents are or have been. Why? Because in God's sovereign wisdom, He has established the family as the foundation for human society and the parents as His delegated authority in that institution. To dishonor our parents, then, is to dishonor God, defy His authority and reject His sovereign plan.

But what does it mean to 'honor' our parents?

Honoring Our Parents Means Respecting Them

It has become fashionable in some places to 'dis', or disrespect, others including parents, resulting in a breakdown of the family. But this commandment prohibits this growing trend. Study [Leviticus 19:3, 32](#) below.



Glorify Your Parents

The Hebrew word for honor can also be translated 'glorify', and is used to describe how men are to bring glory to God. We can honor our parents by living in such a way as to glorify, not disgrace, them.

- 3 'Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father,
and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the LORD your God.
32 'You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged,
and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:3, 32

- Underline what everyone shall do.
- Circle what you shall do to 'your God'.

The word '**reverence**' means to '**fear or respect**'. To honor our parents is to have great respect, and even fear for their God given place of authority in the family. This point is made even more evident when you know that the Hebrew word for 'reverence' in verse 3, referring to our attitude toward our parents, and 'revere' in verse 32, referring to our attitude toward God, are **the same**.

Why is reverence for our parents so important to God? Because without it, you will be unable to fulfill the next step outlined below.

Honoring Our Parents Means Obeying Them

Respecting our parents is only the first part of the intended result ~ **obedience**. For God it is an imperative for children to obey their parents. Study the passage below.

Hear, my son, your father's instruction
And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

Proverbs 1:8

- Circle what sons are to hear.
- Circle what they are not to forsake.

Why is it important for us to follow our parents' instructions? _____

There was a television show many years ago entitled '**Father Knows Best**' which actually showed the humorous side of the father we would all have liked to have had, played by the very likable actor, Robert Young. Though the show has slipped into nostalgia, its title is still remembered, evoking a sense of a time long past. But it expresses a belief that has a lot of truth in it, especially when '**mother**' is included in the formula.

Why do parents know best? Because **they've already made the mistakes** they are trying to protect their children from! That's what experience is. Not that older people always know what is the right way, but by trial and lots of errors, they have at least learned what **not** to do. And that can save a lot of heartache, and even serious tragedies, for the less experienced. It is a wise child who knows this and who is willing to learn and apply what his parents and elders, who have completed more years in the 'school of life', teach him.

Jesus Honored His Parents

The example was set by Jesus who, at the age of twelve, spent an extended Passover in Jerusalem discussing the Scriptures with the teachers in the Temple, and then returned with His father and His mother to Nazareth until the start of His ministry when He was about thirty years of age. Study the passage of this account below.

- 51 And (Jesus) went down with them and came to Nazareth,
and He continued in subjection to them;
and His mother treasured all *these* things in her heart.
- 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature,
and in favor with God and men.

Luke 2:51-52

- Circle how Jesus 'continued' with His parents.
- Circle how He kept increasing during those years with His parents.

If Jesus, who was God incarnate, lived in subjection to His earthly parents, how much more should we!

Dishonoring Of Parents was a Capital Offense

The Old Testament law revealed the severity of disobeying this commandment. The punishment was no mere probation, nor even limited time in a juvenile detention center, but **execution**. Yes, **death**! Study the punishment, below.

- 15 "He who strikes his father or his mother
shall surely be put to death.
- 17 "He who curses his father or his mother
shall surely be put to death.

Exodus 21:15, 17

- Circle the punishment for anyone who strikes their parents.
- Circle the punishment for anyone who curses their parents.

What is the significance of the severity of the punishment for this offense? _____

Less anyone think that this punishment reflected a sterner and more severe God of the Old Testament, it must be remembered that Jesus Himself confirmed this exact commandment and punishment in **Matthew 15:4**. That parents were to instill a **deep respect for authority** both inside and outside the home was evident. Children who disobeyed their parents did so under the threat of execution by a justice system established by God. He does not tolerate the rebellious child, and neither should we, for **ultimately, the purpose of the Fifth Commandment is security and life ...** for all children, for their families and for their communities.

How would instituting this punishment change your society today? _____

Dishonoring of Parents Will Increase in the Last Days

- 1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.
- 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, **disobedient to parents**, ungrateful, unholy,
2 Timothy 3:1-2

- Circle what kind of times will come in the last days.
- Contemplate each quality describing what men will be like.

From this passage, what kind of world can we look forward to as the day of Jesus'

return approaches? _____

The last days will see, among other things, the breakdown of the family and the rise in wayward children. When you read the entire list (2 Timothy 3:1-5), it is as though mankind will abandon God's commandments entirely and become a law unto themselves. Evil will be rampant and life for the godly will become almost unbearable. Society will condone all manner of sin and denounce the righteousness of God.

In a reciprocal fulfillment of the Fifth Commandment's promise, the lives of these law breakers will be cut short when Jesus returns as Judge and King to bring eternal punishment upon those who treat His Commands with contempt.

**'Let your father and your mother be glad,
And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.'**

Proverbs 23:25