

The Commands of Christ

The Fifth Commandment—B

Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16
Part Fourteen

With Study Questions

Pastor Paul Viggiano
Branch of Hope Church
2370 W. Carson Street, #100
Torrance, CA 90501
(310) 212-6999
pastorpaul@integrity.com
www.branchofhope.org
10/25/2009

The Fifth Commandment—B

Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you (Exodus 20:12).

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you (Deuteronomy 5:16).

Review

This is a much neglected commandment wherein we forfeit holiness and direction. It is a summary command regarding all those in authority, not merely fathers and mothers. The means by which we honor those in authority include: acknowledging their God-given position; praying for them; not being anxious to expose their iniquities; showing proper respect; obedience; and making provision (esp. for parents).

III. Dishonor and Destruction

As I spoke about this in my Tuesday morning Bible study (a Bible study at a retirement home consisting, mostly, of women over 70) all the women had quite a strong reaction to the violation of this commandment. They're viewed as antiquated and valueless regarding their opinions.

It may be shocking to some of our parents if we let them know we still need them, trust them and wish to learn from them. **"For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck."** (Proverbs 1:9) If this is what you're pursuing, then you are honoring your father and mother. We must also recognize the consequences of neglecting this commandment. The dishonoring of parents and others in authority has consequences.

Evil Disobedience

Disobedience to parents is named among the most heinous of sins. Take a look at the list Paul puts together of sins that proceed from a debased mind. Disobedience to parents is right in the middle.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them (Romans 1:28-32).

There is no age limit or time limit for children to be obedient to their parents. But there are limits.

Promises and Sanctions

A sanction is the same as a curse; it is God holding back His blessing. Before one nation actually enters into war with another; they may hold 'sanctions' against that nation. This means that they refuse to help that nation with trade and provisions. They cut that nation off from the blessings of their own nation. We see sanctions riddled throughout Scripture regarding many different types of sins. The curses that come upon a society that dishonors their fathers and mothers are numerous.

The eye that mocks a father, and scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it" (Proverbs 30:17).

Degrading Parents

The modern psychological method of blaming and degrading parents is one of the great curses on our land. It is no mystery that many of the problems people have are due to the sins of the parents. This is a biblical fact. But the solution (or the healing) does not lie in dishonoring our parents no matter how guilty we may think that they are.

If our parents did us wrong, it was because they followed their own desires and were under the influence of ungodly wisdom and their own ungodly natures. When we dishonor them, we are following their example of doing what we want to do rather than what God has called us to do.

Not only this, but when our children see us dishonor our parents, they are very likely going to imitate us. In this respect we are pronouncing a curse upon our own heads. In short, if you dishonor your parents, plan on having your children dishonor you.

Destruction of Households

The rebellious neglect of this commandment destroys households, the very fabric of any culture. Ultimately this behavior plunges a society into violence, disease, disorder, misery, and premature death. Paul writes of the promise (with the New Testament alteration from land to earth).

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Perhaps you are part of a long line of children who have been abused, mistreated, or just not brought up well. If you, as a good and godly person, are willing to break the cycle and honor your parents, the promise is a good and long life. The breaking of this curse requires just one Spirit-filled (Ephesians 5:18) Christian to overcome his selfish and ungodly tendencies. Descendants who you will never meet will be most appreciative of their godly ancestor¹.

It has been said that the kinship of children to parents is a critical one.

¹ This promise isn't always individual in nature, but the general blessings that come upon a people who obey this command of God.

It is the relationship determined by God's providence where the faithful and general performance of the duties of children to parents, ensures, as far as any earthly means can, general health, peace, prosperity and welfare in the life of God's people. If we are seeking to be godly and holy, we must seek to honor our fathers and mothers, even if we don't think they're as worthy of our respect as they ought to be.

Absalom's Rebellion

2 Samuel 15 records the story of David's son Absalom. Absalom was guilty of rebelling against his king and father David. Absalom would get up early and place himself by the gate of the city. When people with issues (specifically lawsuits) would come in, Absalom would endear himself to them. He would tell them they have a good case but the king has no deputy to hear you. In other words, the king's administration is inept. In verse six we learn that by doing this, Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Eventually there became a great conspiracy and Absalom sought to seize the king's throne. Many of the Psalms are written by David during this heart wrenching encounter with his rebellious son. The kingdom suffered greatly and Absalom ended up dead.

We should avoid seeking to obtain authority that is not properly ours. Furthermore we must all be cautious of people who seek to steal our hearts by bad mouthing those in authority over us.

Valiant Versus Rebellious

Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote *it* in a book and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.²⁶ And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant *men* went with him, whose hearts God had touched.²⁷ But some rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace (1 Sam 10:25-27).

First the men of Israel despised God's judges. Then they despised the king God had anointed for them. "How can this man save us?" they uttered. Clearly they thought they had a better idea than God. Maybe they had a point. After all, in the final analysis, Saul didn't really work out.

God displaced him. And surely there are proper ways to handle those who misuse authority. But in this account, the valiant men went, whose hearts God had touched, went with Saul. The others were rebels. Of course there are limits to any human authority.

The Limits

Understanding the limits of man's authority is one of the reasons we are studying the Ten Commandments. Peter and the other apostles give us an example of when it is not only okay, but necessary to defy human authority. Religious authorities had given Peter an order.

“Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!” But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:28,29)

In order to imitate Peter's conviction it is necessary to know the law of God. To accurately obey God over man requires specifically knowing what God requires of us in the way of obedience. Knowing God's law is the only way we can ascertain whether or not there is a conflict between man's ways and God's ways. There is only one absolute authority, God. Any lesser authority (in this case parents) who would have you violate God's law must be disobeyed.

Conflicting (God-ordained) authorities, i.e., husbands, civil authorities, pastors, etc. can also take precedent over parents, and each other, given the nature of the situation. If a policeman pulls you over and tells you to get out of the car and your mom says not to, you must listen to the policeman.

IV. The Obedient Son

Yet in all this we must all admit failure. There is only one Son who has always done His Father's bidding: He is the Son of God. He may have been considered a rebel and a revolutionary, as were His followers, but this was only because the world was in rebellion against His Father. His Father loved the world, nonetheless, and therefore prepared a body for Him. Consider the words, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the submission of the Son to the Father and the subsequent blessing to those who respond by grace through faith.

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.⁶ In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You had no pleasure.⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.'⁸ Previously saying, 'Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*' (which are offered according to the law),⁹ then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first that He may establish the second.¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all* (Hebrews 10:5-10).

Our hope lies not so much in our own submission, but in the one who submitted Himself on our behalf, Jesus Christ the righteous. Salvation is found in Him. Praise His name.

Questions for Study and Meditation

1. What are some of the promises and sanctions accompanying this commandment (page 3)?
2. Is it proper to degrade your parents if you think it will help you psychologically (pages 3, 4)?
3. How will the neglect of this commandment affect households (pages 4, 5)?
4. Should we honor leaders who don't seem worthy of honor (pages 5, 6)?
5. Concerning rebellion, can you think of some examples of a modern day Absalom (page 5)?
6. What are the limits of the authority, even godly leaders, have in your life (page 6)?
7. Who was the only obedient Son and what does that mean to us (pages 6, 7)?