

OpenTheo

5th Commandment (Part 1)



Ten Commandments - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg delves into the fifth commandment in Exodus 20:12, which instructs individuals to honor their father and mother. He emphasizes the importance of obeying and respecting one's parents, as it not only leads to a longer life, but also serves as a crucial step in learning submission to God. Gregg emphasizes that even though a child's parents may not always give godly advice, it is still important to honor and obey them. He also provides examples from the Bible where individuals exhibited exceptional obedience and honor towards their parents.

Transcript

Let's turn together to Exodus chapter 20. The first list in the Bible of the Ten Commandments is in Exodus chapter 20. And they're listed again in the book of Deuteronomy where Moses repeated them back to the people later, 40 years later.

And essentially the two lists are the same, with only a very few changes. God bless you. Have a nice drive home.

We have the fifth commandment before us now, which is one that is probably the one which if I had announced the topic before you came, you might not have come. Not because you feel so convicted about this one necessarily, but because it seems like a commandment that just doesn't fit in with the rest. I don't know if it seems that way to you.

It always seemed that way to me. You see, the first four commandments have to do with holy obligations and duties to God. Have no other gods before me, make no graven images to bow down to them, keep the Sabbath, don't profane the name of God, don't take His name in vain.

Those are high and lofty obligations. The last five commandments are also of equal greatness. Don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't bear false witness, don't covet.

Those things seem to be great and eternal principles that have to do with dealings with

our fellow man. And right in the middle of those two groups is honor thy father and thy mother. It's really one of the very few in the list that is a positive command.

Most of the commands are thou shalt not. But in this one, it simply says honor thy father and thy mother. And then it gives a promise to it.

The Apostle Paul, in quoting this verse, says it's the first commandment that has a promise attached. It's in Exodus 20, in verse 12. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

That is, the promise is that if you honor your father and your mother, your life will be long, or at least, speaking to the Jews at least, their life would be long in the promised land that God was giving to them, which would be the land of Israel. For us, if there's a direct application, which Paul implied that there is since he mentioned that this was a promise, and he reminded the church of the promise, it would perhaps speak of long life on this planet. Now, we know that not everyone who honors their parents properly lives long.

After all, Jesus himself didn't live all that long. But we will have eternal life, and that's long life. And that will be in the new heaven and the new earth.

And perhaps that's the land that the Lord's given us that we should strive to have long life in. At any rate, Paul stresses that this is the first commandment with a promise attached, and therefore he's saying that it's a very important commandment. And I don't know why it just seems so different from the rest.

As I said, one of the reasons is it is a positive sort of a command. Another reason may be because it just isn't fashionable. Today.

I mean, even unbelievers see the sense in thou shalt not kill, or thou shalt not commit adultery, or thou shalt not steal. Those are things, or bearing false witness against your neighbor. Those are things that even unbelievers see as lasting values that everyone ought to observe.

But honor your father and your mother, it seems like it should be qualified in some way or another. It seems like it should say, if your parents are honorable. Because so many parents today are not honorable.

So many parents today are so neglectful of their children. So many of them abuse their children. And it just seems like it's not really all that universally applicable, like these other great commandments are.

And besides which, we live in a day of great rebellion. Where children think that their parents don't need to be honored, simply because no one honors parents anymore. All the television programs and movies that portray family life show the kids as being

smarter than their parents.

Parents are always the ones who are blundering around, not in step with the times. The kids are all witty and intelligent. And the whole conditioning of our age has been to remove the honor from parenthood.

And we can't relate at all to commands like those which appear in Exodus chapter 21, verse 15. Which says, he that smiteth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death. Or verse 17 of the same chapter.

He that curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. Now, if you're older than I am, if you're from a previous generation from mine, perhaps these commands ring more true than they do to some of the younger people here. But they are true.

Whether they ring true or not, these are the commands of God. And they are not only from the Old Testament. Jesus repeated it when he was dealing with the Pharisees.

He mentioned that by their traditions they had nullified the word of God. And he quoted this command. And showed how their religious traditions had buried it, so that they didn't have to keep it.

And he called them hypocrites for doing so. Jesus implied this command is still in force. The Apostle Paul quoted it in two of his epistles.

Colossians 3.20, I believe, is one. And Ephesians 6, verses 1 and 2. It finds more than one or two witnesses in the New Testament for it. So, we must assume that it has the same binding force.

That it embodies an eternal principle, just as much as any other command does. No conditions are stated. It doesn't say, if your parents were good parents.

Or if your parents were Christian parents. Or if your parents were this or that kind of parents. It simply says, honor thy father and thy mother.

And I remember when I was a teenager that I used to go round and round with my parents about this. My parents are Christians. And they used to quote this one to me a lot.

And maybe that's why it always stuck out in my mind from the rest. They didn't quote the other ones to me half as often as they quoted this one. Perhaps because I wasn't guilty of the other ones.

But I never quite understood it. Because I was a rebellious son in many respects. Not more so than most.

In fact, less than most. I never went through a period where I left the church. I was a

leader in the church as a young person.

I never brought shame to my family's name. I never did anything that was scandalous. Either secretly or publicly.

I lived a pretty decent life. I lived according to the standards my parents raised me with. But I must say that one thing that I wasn't raised with was honor for my father and my mother.

And perhaps, and I don't want to blame anyone but myself. But perhaps they are partly to blame because they didn't raise me to honor them either. And that might be the fault of their generation as well.

I don't know whose fault it is, so maybe it's everyone's fault. But I'm saying it's a great tragedy that we have come so far culturally away from the place that God commanded his people to be at. Of honoring parents regardless of whether they're good parents or bad parents.

Christian or non-Christian. Negligent or diligent parents. And there are many principles that I've come to see as I've grown older and studied the word more.

That stand behind this command and they are lasting principles. They are great principles of scripture upon which this command is built. But many of them we don't relate to very well.

And that's one thing that makes this a hard thing to teach. Because as I teach the great principles that stand behind this command. That seem to give the reasons why God made this command.

Some of us will say, well I don't really relate to those principles. But they are biblical principles and if you don't relate to them or if I don't relate to them. Then it's necessary for us to change our frame of reference.

If it seems that these principles are not all that important. Then it is we who need to change our value system and our concept of what is important and what is right. And let me give you some of the principles that are behind this.

What I want to do tonight, there's three parts of this teaching I want to give tonight. And then I'll save the rest for next week. I want to talk about the great biblical principles that are the basis for this command to honor father and mother.

Then I want to talk about how does one honor one's father and one's mother. And then I want to talk about what Jesus said about this command. And everything we learn from him concerning this.

So that's the ground we plan to cover tonight. What we'll cover next week is how this

applies to spiritual father and spiritual mother. Because God is said to be our father.

And there's certainly a sense in which the Bible teaches us how to honor him. And we have a spiritual mother too. And maybe you don't know who that is, but we'll talk about that next week.

The Bible tells us who the mother of us all is. And in getting into this first part of our subject, I'd have to say that the first great principle that stands behind the command to honor father and mother must be the principle of submission to divinely appointed authority. Now, we, ever since the Garden of Eden, have been a race of rebels.

A race of independent people who refuse to submit to anyone except our own will. That is our nature from birth. The Bible says that children have this born into them.

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. But the rod will drive it far from him, the scripture says. It is not natural for a child to be other than rebellious.

Because it is our nature to desire to do our own thing. Now, perhaps some of you will say, well, I wasn't a rebellious child, or my children are not rebellious. My child was just submissive from the womb.

And I know some children seem to be more so than others. But I do believe that if we examine this standard of submissiveness that the Bible lays before us, we'd find that we have simply been measuring our children by other children who are more rebellious than they. But measured by the biblical standard of submission, none of us have this by nature.

Submission means laying down our own will for the will of another. Now, we know, of course, that we're supposed to submit to God. He is said to be our God, our Creator, our Lord, our King, our Father.

All of those are roles that convey the thought of authority. And our response to a God like that must be a response of submission. But that is not in our nature.

Furthermore, we don't see God. We don't hear His voice audibly. We don't relate to Him as easily as we relate to other human beings.

And God has so ordained that each of us has come into the world into some particular hierarchical authority system, some institution where we are required to submit to others. There are three, in fact, institutions that the Bible says are divinely appointed institutions, each of which have a hierarchy of authority. That is a chain of command.

One of them is the state. The Bible teaches in Romans chapter 13 that the authorities that be are ordained of God. And those who resist the authority resist God, resist the ordinance of God, because He ordained them.

God has ordained the state. Now, whether He has ordained one or another kind of government or one particular state or another is not the issue at this point. The fact is that government, secular government, is something that God has ordained to keep peace and to avoid anarchy.

And as such, it represents a divinely ordained institution of authority. And we are told to submit to it. Another institution of authority that each of us is born into is the home.

The home also has its hierarchy. There is a chain of command in the home, according to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. He said, I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God, and the head of the woman is the man.

And obviously, from the commands that we're studying tonight, we could go further and say, and the head of every child is the woman or the parent. So that we have the children, then we have the parents. And among the parents, there's the woman submitted to the husband.

Then we have the husband submitted to Christ, and Christ submitted to the father. That's the chain of command that Paul reveals to us. There is the home as one of the structures that we're born into where we have to learn the principles of submission.

There is also the church. Now, you weren't born into the church the first time you were born. You might have been born into a church going home, but you weren't born into the church until you were born again.

Nonetheless, each of us who have become Christians are part of the church. I don't mean any particular church. I just mean the church, the body of Christ.

And in the body of Christ, as in the state and as in the home, there are authorities that are ordained of God, and there is a type of submission that is required of those who are under those authorities. And these are the three divinely instituted structures of authority that we are all involved with. And these are given to us partly to teach us the principle of submission.

Because it is our nature not to submit. And if we cannot learn submission in very practical daily ways, then we will not be able to learn really submission to God. It's very easy to say, well, I submit to God and no one else.

But then how often have you really heard from God in clear terms that no one could mistake? But if God says submit to your father and your mother, then you can know exactly what God wants you to do. And in a situation where your father and mother say do this, you know exactly what God wants you to do. And then you get to find out if you are submissive to God or not.

When the government says this is the law, you pay this amount of taxes, then it becomes evident whether you are submissive to God or not. Because he has instituted the state and given it authority over us. And if you submit to the divinely appointed authority, then you submit to God.

The same is true of church officials. And so, in every hierarchical structure of authority, God has given us a position of submission to someone or another in authority. There is no one in the body of Christ who is not supposed to learn submission to someone or another.

In 1 Samuel 15, in verse 23, the prophet Samuel had commanded Saul to wipe out all the Amalekites and Saul had rebelled against that command and had not done so. And Samuel said to Saul that he would be rejected for this disobedience. And he said, for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

Now, rebellion, he said, is as the sin of witchcraft. That's 1 Samuel 15, 23. Now, what had Saul rebelled against? Samuel said, because you have rebelled against the word of the Lord, God has rejected you because you have rejected the word of the Lord.

Well, what Saul had rejected was the word that came from Samuel. But because Samuel was God's prophet at that time, speaking in God's authority, Saul was expected to submit to him. And God may speak through your parents.

In fact, he does. And it may not even be a Christian parent. A person does not have to be a Christian for God to speak to you through them.

They only have to be in authority. Caiaphas, in John chapter 11, was in authority. He was no Christian.

He was the high priest of the Jews. He's one of the men who was most instrumental in the crucifixion of Jesus, in the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. But Caiaphas prophesied of the coming of Jesus.

And the Bible says he didn't even know what he was talking about, but he prophesied because he was the high priest. God gave him a prophetic word. Now, because a person is in authority, God can speak to them.

The Bible says in Proverbs 21.1, the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. As the rivers of water, he turneth it, whithersoever he will. That means that God is sovereign over the decisions that those in authority make.

And if God finds it impossible to control a certain person in authority, he can remove them and replace them. He's made that very clear. And he's declared that to be true in the word in many places.

And so we see that there is a principle that God has ordained authority to teach us submission. John said in 1 John chapter 4, and I forget the verse number 20 or something like that. He that saith, I love God and hateth his brother, is a liar.

For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? The idea here is how can you claim to have a relationship and have quality of relationship with God if you can't have the same kind of relationship with those that God has put into your life? If you cannot submit to those that God gives as authorities over your life, then you cannot submit to God. It's just religious talk. Say, well, I only obey God.

I never listen to anyone else. Well, that's a shame because God sends messengers to you. Jesus said, whosoever receives him that I send receives me.

That's in John 13, 20. Whosoever receives him that I send receives me, said Jesus. Therefore, if he has sent parents to you, then to receive their authority is to receive the authority of Christ.

And this principle of submission to divinely appointed authority is one of the great principles of Scripture which we do not often hear taught in the American church because this whole country, of course, was built on rebellion against kings, which is exactly what the Bible said people shouldn't do against their king. But all the early settlers, practically, of this country rebelled against their monarchy in another country. And, of course, the Bible says that's what people are not supposed to do.

But we've been raised with the idea that there's something virtuous about that, that there's something good about being independent, that there's something godly about being rebellious. And that's just the opposite of what the Bible says. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

It's no surprise that occultism has taken over in our society so much because rebellion has been welcomed as a virtue. And if rebellion is considered a virtue, it's no wonder that witchcraft and other occultic forms have taken over the culture. But, you see, we don't relate to it.

And it's hard to get this across to an American or a Western audience because it was understood in Bible times, and in the Bible times they had a king. A king was someone who told you what to do. If you didn't do it, you'd be put to death.

He could determine what he wanted to do with you. Kings were absolute authority. There were lords.

There were slaves and masters. These institutions we don't have, so we don't understand them like biblical readers would have in those days. We don't understand what it means to have a master to submit to.

We don't understand what it means to have a relationship in the home where if a child curses his father or mother, he'd be put to death. It's totally foreign to us. And yet, the fact that it's foreign only means that we need to change our way of thinking if we're going to think along the same lines that God does.

Because these are biblically instituted things. And I'm not saying that it's better to have a king than a president or a congress or anything like that. The Bible does not say that one form of government is better than another.

All I'm saying is that in the days that the Bible was written, those kinds of government were present. People knew what it was like to have a king. Therefore, it was possible to talk about God in terms of being a king.

And people immediately knew what that meant, submission. But that is one of the great principles. And if you don't have a concept of God sending those to be an authority over your life, then you will not be able to relate to him saying, honor your father and your mother.

Because honor not only means respect, it means obey. That's the way, in fact, that Paul quoted it in Colossians 3.20 and also in Ephesians 6.1. He said, children, obey your parents, not just respect or honor. So submission to them is very important.

Then there's another principle that we don't relate to very well in our culture, but is definitely biblical. And that is reverence, the principle of reverence for superiors. This is definitely somewhere down there at the roots of this command.

The principle of reverence for superiors. Now, most of us would say, well, who says my parents are so superior? My parents aren't half as educated as I am. My parents aren't even Christians.

They don't know anything about God. Who's to say they're superiors? I'd say, who's to say you're the judge of whether they're superiors or not? You're the wrong person to be judging whether they're your superiors or not, because your pride would obviously make you think that you're their superior. Mark Twain said, when he was 12 years old, his parents were so dull and so stupid and seemed to know nothing at all.

By the time he was 20 years old, he was amazed how wise they'd become, how much they'd learn. Because children always think themselves smarter than they are, and they become unqualified. They are unqualified as judges of their parents' virtue or wisdom.

And even ungodly parents do not always give ungodly advice. It's true they may sometimes, and the Bible makes it very clear that no matter who gives you ungodly advice, you can't follow that. If someone counsels you to do something against what the Lord says, you can't obey it, whether it's a king or a husband or a parent or no matter who it is.

You must obey God rather than man, but that is not always the case. Some people just say, well, my parents aren't Christians, so I don't have to submit to them. But not everything they say is ungodly.

Not everything they say would conflict with what the Bible says. And their authority is established by the Word of God. You can be sure that at Mount Sinai, when God gave this command, not all the parents in the crowd were godly.

In fact, among the Jews, there were hardly any who were godly. But the very moment God was giving the Ten Commandments, most of them were down worshiping a golden calf and having an orgy. It's obvious that it wasn't on the spiritual qualifications of the adults that God made this command.

There was something more to it. Part of it was that adults, by reason of their years, have more insight in general to life than their children do. Because of their experience, because of their years they've spent.

The Bible says that the hoary head, which means gray hair, is a crown of righteousness, or a crown of glory, if it's found in the way of righteousness. And it says that old age is a commendable thing. Honor for the aged is something we don't have here in this society.

The more a person becomes weak and aged, the more they're likely to get shipped off to some convalescent home somewhere and forgotten. They're not revered, they're not honored for their wisdom. And partly it's because every new generation thinks themselves smarter than the previous one.

But if our generation's so smart, why is the world in the condition it is, and it wasn't, when our grandparents or our great-grandparents were running things? We only think ourselves smart. But the objective reality is the world was in a lot better shape when our great-grandparents were running the show. And it's gotten progressively worse with every generation.

The Bible indicates that respect should be shown to elders. It says in 1 Timothy chapter 5, rebuke not an elder, meaning an older man, but entreat him as a father. If you think he's in the wrong, you entreat him.

That is, you beseech him, you treat him courteously and try to make your suggestions, but you don't rebuke him. Because you must show reverence to those who are your superiors, and people are your superiors. Your parents are, in some respects, your superiors.

Maybe not in every respect. There's another thing, another principle behind this honoring father and mother, and that is the principle of debt and gratitude. The Bible indicates that we owe a great deal to our parents.

Jesus said in John chapter 16, a woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow. But after the child is born, she forgets all the sorrow for the joy that man has borne into the world. That's John 16, 21.

Obviously, he was talking about something else other than parenthood, but he pointed out a well-known fact, and that is that when women are having babies, it hurts. It costs them. It not only costs them at the time of delivery, it costs them for months beforehand.

It inconveniences their lives for years afterwards. Parents very frequently impoverish themselves to enrich their children. And while it's true that some parents are not very good parents, yet every one of you have parents that had you because they preferred to.

Now, you might say, you don't know my parents, they didn't want me at all. Well, they must have wanted you more than they wanted to kill you. They could have aborted you.

And the fact that they didn't means that they went through a lot of things that they didn't have to go through in order to bring you into this world. Now, some people are not very happy they were brought into this world, and they don't feel very grateful to their parents for bringing them into the world. Job felt that way at one time.

Job cursed the day he was born. He said, curse it be the day that I was born. Why didn't that day close my mother's womb? Why didn't I perish in the womb? He said.

And there are some people for whom it would be better if they weren't born, I suppose. Jesus said that was true of Judas Iscariot. I'm sure he wishes now he'd never been born since he's burning in hell.

But everyone who's born has the opportunity to know God and to reign with Christ and to come into the greatest destiny that any living thing can have, higher than the destiny of angels. And the fact that you were brought alive into this world by parents, even if they didn't know God, and maybe they died not knowing God, yet they were the instruments of God through whom you were brought into the world to know him. And you know him now.

Maybe your parents didn't lead you to Christ, but they led you into existence. And Jesus used maybe other instruments to lead you to himself. But you owe something to your parents because they were the instruments of God.

It cost them for you to be born. It pained them. It cost them money.

It inconvenienced their lives. They had to reorganize their entire life to have you. And because of that, there is a debt of gratitude that is owed to parents.

And that gratitude is one of the principles that is behind honoring father and mother. Those of you who don't have any children yet, many of you are young and single, you'll,

after you've had children, you'll wonder, you know, how your parents ever put up with your insolence and your rebellion. Because you'll know how many great sacrifices you have to make to keep a child alive.

How many great cares come upon you whenever there's the slightest sickness that they experience. How many times a parent endangers their own life to protect their own child, their helpless child who can do nothing for himself or herself. And so we owe a great deal to parents.

Even the worst of parents were the agents through whom God brought us into the world so that we might know him. And many of you don't have the worst parents, and so how much more? How many sacrifices your parents have made, you have no idea, and probably never will. There's another principle behind this, another reason we ought to honor our father and mother, and that's the principle of survival.

In the Bible times, if you didn't honor your parents, you'd be put to death. And it's not only survival of the individual, it's survival of society. You see, when the children begin to be arrogant against parents in any society, that society is on the way down the tubes.

When there is no authority, when there is no respect, when there is no control of young lives. You know, someone said, a lot of people have said, youth is wasted on the young, which I assume means that youthfulness is something that's full of energy and strength and opportunity, but only young people have it, and they don't have the wisdom to know what to do with it. And that by the time they're old enough to know what to do with their youth, they don't have it anymore.

They're too weak and tired to do anything, and they wish they had their youth again. Well, the fact is, young people generally are stronger than old people. And if those young people are not under control, they can definitely dominate the old people.

And while wisdom rests mainly in the older people, though young people fairly doubt it, but while wisdom, as a rule, rests in the older generation more than the younger generation, it's absolutely necessary to have a society where the young people are under control. Under control by this principle of honoring parents, not by the principle of force. Because you can control your children when they're little, by force, but once they get to be about 16 or 17, they may be bigger than you are.

And in a society where there is no social discipline upon children who are rebellious, those children who are bigger than their parents and stronger than their parents can dominate. And if that becomes the rule rather than the exception in a society, then the society is doomed to be governed by its foolish young people. Rehoboam was the son of Solomon.

Solomon was a very wise man, but even though he was wise, he had many counselors

that Solomon the king used. Old men that Solomon consulted. When Rehoboam became king, he was faced with a hard decision, so he consulted the old men, the counselors.

And they gave him what we can recognize reading it as wise counsel. But he didn't like their counsel, so he went to his own companions, his own peers, the young counselors. And they gave him the most idiotic counsel that anyone could give.

But because he liked it, because it satisfies his fleshly desires, he took their counsel, the Bible says. And it ended up in dividing the kingdom for never to be restored, really. The kingdom of Israel was divided into two.

One of the most disastrous decisions a king ever made was made by Rehoboam because he consulted the young counselors instead of the old ones. And a society where children are permitted to rise up against their parents with impunity and never be punished is a society that will be doomed to be governed by the foolish young. You know, and it seems rather severe when the Bible says that anyone who curses or who strikes his father or mother be put to death.

That's a heavy, heavy thing. Yet, how else could a society guarantee that children would not overpower their parents? In our society, there are children who beat their parents. We hear a lot about child abuse.

There is such a thing in this society as parent abuse. Teenage sons who beat up their mothers. In biblical times, they obviously would have been stoned to death.

A mother can't defend herself against a son who's bigger than she is, but society is bigger than he is. The neighborhood is stronger than he is. And in biblical times, the whole neighborhood would have ganged up on him and stoned him to death.

That would serve as a deterrent, I would think, to most children. Even though they'd be bigger than their parents, it would deter them from showing such abuse to their parents. And the whole principle of the survival of a society and the wisdom in controlling the young, in the old controlling the young, is a good principle.

And it's behind this. You know, a real example of a son who honored his father, though he could have overpowered his father in a very hard situation, was Isaac. When his father took him up to Mount Moriah.

We sometimes picture Abraham taking his little son up by the hand up to the top of the mountain to sacrifice him. If the facts were generally known, you'd have a very different mental picture of that situation. Abraham was between 130 and 140 years old.

Isaac was 100 years younger, between 30 and 40 years old. Isaac was in his prime. Abraham was over the hill.

There's no question as to whether Isaac could have overpowered his father physically. And how strange and unjust it must have seemed to Isaac when Abraham said, Okay, now I've got to tie you up. Put your hands behind you.

And Isaac did so as his father tied his hands back there. And then his father laid him on the altar and says, Now, I know you don't understand this, but I'm going to have to kill you. The Bible indicates that Isaac just went right along with it.

Now, I don't know very many sons who would do that. Most would say, Man, the old man's gone crazy. Wouldn't you think that? If your father said, Now, listen, God told me to kill you.

You'd say, He's gone crazy. But, you know, Isaac must have thought that. That must have crossed his mind.

But what must have dominated his thinking was, Well, even if the old man has gone crazy, he's my father. He brought me into the world. If by his decision he's going to take me out of the world, that must be his right.

You know, children are the rightful possessions of their parents. That is probably one of the most unpopular things a person could say to our generation. But it is a biblical truth.

Children are the possessions of their parents. When I tell people that my son's going to grow up to be a Bible teacher, they say, You can't decide what he's going to be. Oh, yeah? Watch.

They say, Well, your son may be a football player. He's a lot bigger than you are. I say, He's not going to play football.

Well, how do you know? You can't make him not play football. He'll have no taste for football, I guarantee you. He's a gift from God to me.

He is mine. He's not his own. When he's an adult, if I have failed to work in him the right values, then that's my loss.

Because, of course, I can't control him after that. But God has given him to me to train and to mold and to direct into a course of life that I see wise, not what he sees as wise. And that's a very outdated concept.

But in the old days, and it wasn't all that long ago, no child would marry, no respectable child would marry anyone without the parents' approval. No child would choose an occupation without desiring the blessing of his father. But these days, we're so independent.

Who cares if your parents approve of any of your decisions and these kinds of things? But the fact that it seems archaic, and the fact that it seems bizarre to us to do that,

does not mean that it's not still a principle that God enforces. You know, we don't stone children to death for disobeying their parents today or for cursing their parents or for smiting their parents. We don't stone them.

And because of it, we may get the impression that it's not as serious a crime anymore. But the God who commanded them to be stoned in the Old Testament, though he does not command us to stone them today, fortunately, he does not change. His requirements may change in the sense that he doesn't mete out the same punishments at all times, but the same opinion he always has about moral issues.

And as he once saw rebellion against parents as an offense punishable by death, so does he still see it. It's only now he doesn't punish immediately. He stores it up.

But we will have to give an account for every idle word we speak on the Judgment Day. And it may seem that our disobedience to our parents or our rebellion is a light thing, because our society sees it as a light thing. But God doesn't see it as a light thing.

You can tell that easy enough just by reading the book of Exodus. And if we don't see it by reading the book of Exodus, we'll see it very clearly on the Judgment Day, because that's when we'll see everything very clearly. And it is our privilege to have the Bible today to help direct us in ways that won't be too shocking to us on the Judgment Day, because he's let us know in advance what he requires.

He requires honor of parents, obedience to parents. Now, up to what age? I don't know up to what age. It would seem that when a man leaves his father and mother is when he cleaves unto his wife, according to Scripture.

In Genesis 2, verse 24, it says, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. So it would appear from that that the proper time for a man to come out of his father's, out from under his father's dominion is when he takes a wife. He becomes the head of his own household now.

And he no longer has to obey everything his father says, I would assume. Though I'm not sure about that. But it would seem that that would be the clearest.

If there's a point at which a child no longer has to obey everything his parents say, it must be at that point. That's the only major change that a person has in their life that would affect the relationships, the authoritative relationships in their life. In the case of a woman, of course, in the Bible times, women were subject to their fathers up until the time they were married.

It's clear enough. The Bible says in the book of Exodus that if a woman who was not married, not betrothed, slept with a man who was not married and not betrothed, that she would have to marry him. But if her father wouldn't let her marry him, then the man had to pay a certain amount to the father and so forth.

Which makes it very evident that the girl wouldn't be the one who has the choice. It would be the father who has the choice. That's a very hard word for us to hear because of our conditioning.

But you know, I've never been to the Bill Gothard seminars. Has anyone been to those? I know that he's pretty strong on this from what I've heard secondhand. And I think he still lives with his parents.

I don't know how old he is. He's probably in his forties, I would guess. But he still lives with his parents.

And he's very strong on this. And he gives all kinds of testimonies of how Christian people who had non-Christian parents determined that they were going to submit to their parents on major decisions like whom they were to marry. And that's a real risk, it would seem, to take that position.

That my parents, who are not Christians, I'm going to submit to them. And I guess Bill Gothard has a number of testimonies about how people had made that determination. How God intervened in the situation and gave the parents a heart to do the Lord's will in the matter.

And that's what the Bible says, the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. He turns it withersoever he will. But it's a hard thing for a child to put themselves at the mercy of their parents, especially if they don't respect their parents' spiritual insight or their parents' wisdom.

And yet, that is a principle of Scripture. Now, how does one honor parents? First of all, they honor by speaking and acting respectfully toward their parents. It says in Proverbs chapter 31 and verse 28, concerning a virtuous woman, it says her children will rise up and call her blessed.

A woman has the right to have her children speak well of her, even if she wasn't the greatest mother in the world. To honor your parents requires that you speak well of them and speak well to them. That you don't involve yourself in debates with them or get involved in slander against them.

That if you hear any evil report against them, that you stand loyal to them. That you relate to them in a respectful manner, always courteously and always with reverence. Biblically speaking, that's one of the ways that we show respect to our parents.

Proverbs chapter 19, actually Proverbs has a lot to do with parent-child relationships, but in Proverbs chapter 19 and verse 26, it says, He that wasteth his father or chasteth away his mother is a son that causes shame and bringeth reproach. That is, a person who does not treat his parents in a respectful manner is going to bring reproach. He doesn't bring honor to his parents, he doesn't honor them, he reproaches them by his behavior.

So to speak and act respectfully, we find that Jacob, when he was an old man, was at his son Joseph's mercy. Joseph was the most powerful man in the world, next to Pharaoh. Jacob was just an ordinary, starving Bedouin.

But when Joseph invited Jacob to come and live with him in Egypt, Joseph went out and he bowed to the ground to his aged father, showing a gesture of honor and respect to him. Though Joseph now technically was his superior, but he showed respect in the way he acted and spoke to his father very evidently. Another way to honor parents is by living wisely and righteously so as not to bring reproach on their name.

It's a credit to parents, the Bible indicates, when their children are wise and good. Many of us have brought shame to our parents by the way we've lived. And this is to dishonor our parents.

You don't understand until you're a parent how much your children's behavior affects your reputation and affects the way you are esteemed by others. And so by wrong behavior, it's possible for us to bring dishonor to our parents. And honoring our parents requires that there be godly behavior and wise behavior on our part.

It's a credit to our parents if we are found to be wise and godly. In Proverbs, again, we have scriptures along these lines. Proverbs 15, 20 says, A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother.

That is, if you live foolishly, it's an act of hatred to your parents. It's not an act of honoring them. In Proverbs 23, verses 24 and 25, it says, The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice, and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

A father, or thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that beareth thee shall rejoice. That is, if you're wise and if you live according to righteous ways and wisdom, then your mother and your father will rejoice and be glad in it. It will bring honor to them publicly.

It says in Proverbs 29, 15, The rod and rebuke, the rod and reproof, are good for children. But it says, A son who is left to himself will bring his mother to shame. That means, of course, if you leave your childhood to themselves, and they follow in the folly of their own hearts, then it brings shame to the mother.

So, to honor parents involves living in such a way as that does not dishonor them. That you live in a way that will bring credit to them. And people say, well, I wonder what their parents did right.

Their children sure turned out good. Of course, an obvious other way that we're required to honor parents is obedience to them. And again, I don't know exactly at what point in life we're not required to obey them implicitly, but we do know that even after you're married, even after you're old and your parents are older, there is a need to honor them.

And, of course, whether we're under their authority in the exact same respect at that time or not, we don't know. But Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, who were certainly adults themselves, no doubt married. I think you had to be married to be on the Sanhedrin.

And he said that they should honor their parents. He said it in Matthew chapter 15. He implied that honoring the parents was still something they were expected to do, even though they were adults themselves.

And obedience to parents' commands is commanded to us in Ephesians 6.1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord. I'd like to just read you a little section out of Jeremiah chapter 35, because it shows God honoring children's obedience to the parents. Jeremiah chapter 35.

It's about a group of a family who were called Rechabites, because they were all descended from a man named Rechab. And it says, The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, saying, Go unto the house of the Rechabites and speak unto them and bring them into the house of the Lord into one of the chambers and give them wine to drink. Then I took Jehazaniah, the son of Jeremiah, the son of Hebezaniah and his brethren, and all his sons and the whole house of the Rechabites.

And I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of somebody, a man of God, the names are not the important parts, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Manasseh, can't see these very well, the son of some other people. Let's forget the names for now. In verse five, And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.

But they said, We will not drink wine. For Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons, for ever. Neither shall ye build a house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any.

But all your days ye shall dwell in tents, that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers. So, they're saying that our father commanded us not to drink wine, so we won't drink wine, even when the prophet of God says to do so, in this case. Now, this they were doing for 200 years, because their father, Jonadab, had lived 200 years before this time.

He's mentioned in the book of 2 Kings as one of the people who stood against Baal worship. And 200 years later, his offspring were still refraining from drinking wine or doing anything that their father, their ancestor, had said not to do. And what God says about them, at the end of chapter 35, in verse 18, it says, And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done

according unto all that he hath commanded you, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before me forever.

In other words, there was a blessing pronounced on this house, because these people had obeyed their father. Not only their father, but their great-great-grandfather, from two centuries back, showing that, even though these were adult people, they still considered themselves needing to honor their father's request or his commands. And it was a distinctiveness of their family that they didn't drink wine because their ancestor, Jonadab, had commanded them not to do it.

And they never did it after that. And God says he's going to bless that family for that reason. Finally, a way that we're told to honor our parents is to meet their needs when they have needs.

Again, when Joseph was the ruler in Egypt, and his father Jacob was hungry, the Bible teaches that Joseph called for Jacob to come to him in Genesis 47, 12, and he nourished his father, that is, he fed him. He supported him, because Joseph had means and his father didn't have any. And so he supported his father.

That's a way of honoring parents. Jesus, from the cross, in the 19th chapter of John, verses 26 and 27, made provision for his mother, who was at that time apparently widowed. And he said to John, you take her home with you.

She'll be your mother from now on. And so in John 19, 26 and 27, Jesus made provision for his mother, because he wouldn't be able to do anything for her, at least not as an earthly son any longer. He made sure she was taken care of.

In the New Testament, in 1 Timothy, chapter 5, we're told that widows, who were widows indeed, should be supported by the church. But a widow indeed was someone who really didn't have any children or any relatives to help support her. But it says that if they have children, that their children should support them.

And in that connection it says, in 1 Timothy 5, 8, But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. That is talking about people who will not provide for their own widowed mothers and their own parents when they're in need. They have denied the faith, and they're worse than an infidel.

The very issue about which Jesus brought up honor to parents had to do with providing for them. Jesus said, Moses commanded, honor your father and mother, and he that curses father and mother, let him die the death. But he said, your law says, or your traditions say, that he that has something by which his parents might be profited, and says, it's a gift to God, I can't give it to them.

He says, that way the guy's free, and he doesn't have to honor his father and mother. The example Jesus gives is of a child who could relieve the needs of his parents, but doesn't want to for some reason, and therefore takes his goods and dedicates them to God so that he doesn't have to give them to his parents. Jesus said, that's hypocrisy, that's a violation.

He said, by your traditions you've nullified the word of God. Okay, so those are the ways in which parents are to be honored. They are to be treated with respect.

They are to be given honor by the way we live, so that our lives are a credit to them. They are to be obeyed, and they are to be provided for, when we are old enough to do so, and they are so old that they can't provide for themselves. It's a reproach to this nation, that so many old people live their last years and die in convalescent homes.

You probably also had some opportunity to go to convalescent homes. I've been in them many times, and I've gotten to know some of the people who are in them, and it's amazing how many people have been put there to rot by their children, and their children never bother to visit them anymore. Of course, you know, in old times, before there were these institutions, people generally would just have their old parents in their home, and care for them until they died.

Of course, that's a big burden, but it's a just debt to repay. When you were helpless, they took care of you. And when they're helpless, you take care of them.

But I don't believe any Christian should ever put their parent away in a convalescent home, unless, of course, they have such medical problems that they need constant medical care, such as you're not able to provide. But in such a case, you should visit them all the time, and seek to make them feel at home. But ordinarily, I think most aging parents would rather die quickly in their children's home, than die slowly under medical care, isolated from their families.

And I know that I, you know, if anything ever happened to my parents, that they couldn't take care of themselves, I wouldn't even think of putting them away anywhere. I'd have to have them in my home, if they'd come there. They're used to a standard of living a little higher than I have, but I think they'd probably break down under such circumstances.

But to take care of your parents when they need it, is part of honoring your father and mother. These are all things the Bible says that children are obligated to do to their parents. And Jesus' teaching was basically to confirm it.

Jesus confirmed the duty. In fact, He showed it in His own life when He was a child. The Bible says in Luke 2.52, that when Jesus was twelve years old, He went home and was subject to His parents.

He to whom the angels were subject, was subject to His parents. The angels obeyed Him, and He obeyed Mary and Joseph. Isn't that an amazing thing? And they were dull, spiritually speaking.

They didn't even understand when He said, Did you not know I must be about my father's business? It says in Luke 2, they didn't understand what He meant. He was miles ahead of them in spiritual wisdom and insight. But because of the propriety of it, He said, or the Bible says, that He was subject to His parents.

It wasn't a matter of whether they were as smart as He was. It was a matter of what God requires of a child. And that is to submit and to honor parents.

However, Jesus did teach that there are new relationships that we have in the Spirit, and that parents should never, or other relatives, should never be put above our duty to God. Jesus said, He that loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And while we are expected to show proper care and proper duty and honor to parents, it's also true that we are not to let them usurp the position of absolute authority in our lives, which belongs to God only.

And duty to parents can never justify us avoiding duty to God. And so there was a time in Luke chapter 9, when Jesus said, Come and follow Me to a man. And He said, Well, let Me first go bury My father.

And Jesus said, Let the dead bury the dead. You come and follow Me. And He said to another man, Come and follow Me.

And the man said, Well, let Me first go and say goodbye to those of My household. And Jesus said, No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is worthy for the kingdom of God. Now, in cases like that, where Jesus was specifically calling a man to leave everything at that moment and follow Him, it would be wrong to go back and ask His parents if that was okay.

Because God Himself was calling Him. But let us never mistake some religious notion we have for the call of God. I've shared with you before, some of you who have been around a while, that when I was a teenager, I had long hair, real long hair.

And my parents didn't like my long hair. But I was quite sure that it was for the Lord's sake that I had it. I was ministering to street people.

And I wasn't one of them, but I looked like one of them. And I felt that my image was an important part of my ministry. And therefore, to have long hair was something for the Lord.

And my parents and I went around and around and around about it, because that's when they used to quote, Honor Your Father and Mother a lot. And I just had to say, Well, you

know, it's the Lord's. It's Corbin.

You know, I've got long hair for the Lord. The Lord who loves Father and Mother more than me is not worthy of me, Jesus said. Sorry.

But the Lord really showed me that it wasn't that I was putting the Lord first in that situation. I was putting my own religious ideas of what the Lord wanted me to do ahead of honoring my parents. And how the Lord showed me that was by bringing my attention to the Scripture where Jesus pointed out that those who have something by which they could profit their parents, but don't want to, and they say, Well, it's dedicated to God.

He said, That's hypocrisy. And that was essentially what I was doing. So we need to have, we need to understand that if God really does call you to do something, and your parents say, No way, you're not going to do that.

You've got to go where God says. You can't submit to your parents in a case where they are resisting what God is telling you to do. But don't get under some religious notions of what God wants you to do.

Many times God's will will be made manifest through your parents. And you might say, Well, I'm called to the mission field. Well, maybe you are.

And if you are, you should go. But it may be that you're not. And I know a lot of Bible teachers, and they may be right, who would say you should never even go unless your parents release you.

I'm not sure whether that's right or not. After all those two guys that were called in Luke chapter 9, Jesus didn't say, Go see if your parents will release you. In fact, that's exactly the opposite of what he said to them.

But the fact is, a lot of times young people get some kind of an idea that God's telling them to do something, which is so far out that even unsaved parents could see clearly that it's not a wise move. And it's not necessarily the Lord. And so we need to give parents honor.

We need to go back to our parents sometimes, even after we're adults, and tell them that we repent of the way that we've treated them in the past. That's a hard thing to do, too, if we've always had airs of arrogance and superiority around our parents. It's kind of hard to go back and say, Hey, I was wrong.

That was sin. God wants me to honor you and to submit to your authority. It seems like a dangerous thing to do, but I believe that's what is necessary.

This is a command of God. It's not only one of the Ten Commandments that was uttered from the lips of Jesus as well, and repeated in the epistles, and it's something that can't

be ignored. Now, there's other implications of this command, which have to do with our relationship with God, having to do with spiritual father, spiritual parents, how to honor spiritual father and mother.

Not that God is our mother. There is a mother, though, the Bible speaks of us all having. And you can research that during the week if you want to find out what that mother is.

But we all have a father in heaven, and we all have a mother spiritually, but the Bible tells us we're to honor them also. God says in Malachi chapter one, and I won't get into this part of the study, but just to give you a hint of what direction it may go. In Malachi chapter one, which is the last book of the Old Testament, and verse six, God says, A son honoreth his father and a servant his master.

If I be a father, then where is my honor? And if I be a master, where is my fear? Saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that this be as my name. There's one other description of the Old Testament that I'll just leave with you, which has to do with honoring God as a father. And I believe that when God said, Honor your father and your mother, this applied not only to your earthly parents, but of course also to honoring God the father.

But in Isaiah chapter one and verse two, God says, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. For the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. So God has children who have rebelled against him.

He says, You honor your father. If I'm a father, why don't you honor me? And what I want to get into in next week's portion of this study is specifically, how are we to honor God as our father? The New Testament has a lot of teaching about that. What does it mean to honor our father, God? And we'll go further than that and talk about some other issues that I don't have time to introduce by name at this time.