

Honour your Father and Mother

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[0:00] Lord God, we thank you and praise you for your word. We thank you and praise you that you've called us to be your disciples and have given us a heart to hear your word.

Now as we reflect not just on your word but your direction, may you feed our hearts and our minds and our wills to follow you more dearly and more closely.

We ask this in your son's dear name. Amen. Please be seated. There we go. There we go. Well, good morning all. Those who don't know me, my name is Alex Ivanovich.

I am a member of the NKL Network in Canada. I'm also a chaplain with Canadian Armed Forces. And I'm really happy to be with you this morning.

And particularly to take some time to join you in the midst, from what I understand, is a series that you guys are doing. on the Ten Commandments.

[1:02] And today we're going to look at God's word about family in particular.

And parents even more so. All right. First, I want to start with a story.

Three sons left home and did really, really well in the world by worldly means.

They became wealthy and very prosperous. And in Thanksgiving, they decided they would support their mom by giving her presents.

And is the want between sons. There's always a bit of competition. So, at one point, they got together and they spoke and they shared what each had done for their mom.

[2:03] Well, the first son said, you know, I got mom this huge house. Mansion, in fact. Gorgeous place.

Swim pool and all. Well, the other son said, yeah, that's pretty good. I did get my son. I got mom a Mercedes Benz.

Not only that, I gave her a driver. So, she doesn't have to drive at all. Third son said, listen, I got you all beat. I got mom a parrot.

And not just any parrot. I got mom a parrot who had been trained, took years to do this, trained to recite the Bible.

All mom has to do is tell it chapter and verse and mom, and parrot would give her that passage.

[3:02] Well, it wasn't long that mom sent a note back to all her sons. And thank you notes. The first, she said, you know, Jonathan, thank you so much for the house.

But really, it's huge. It's so huge. I only live in one room. And yet, I have to clean the whole place. Martin, she wrote to the next.

Honestly, I am too old to be traveling anymore. So, I really just spend all my time at home. And that driver you sent, you can be pretty rude. Finally, to the third son, he said, dearest Donald, thank you so much for your gift.

You know what I love most. And you've chosen best. Because I've got to say, that chicken was delicious. Okay.

Anyway, today, we're picking up on the fifth commandment. Honor your father and mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord has given you.

[4:25] Now, there's several unique things, or a few unique things, about this commandment. It's actually only one of two that is stated in the positive sense.

Most of us think of the Ten Commandments like, thou shalt not, right? Well, there's two that speaks in positive terms. Thou shalt. And one is honoring your mother and father.

And the second is a previous one, honor the Sabbath. Remember the Sabbath day. It's also the only commandment that comes along with a promise.

That you will live long in the land that the Lord God gave you. And finally, it stands in an important location in a list.

The fifth commandment is a transitional commandment. The first four. Put God first. No idols. Don't misuse God's name.

[5 : 35] Keep different. The Sabbath day. They all address how human beings are supposed to relate to God.

The last six address how human beings are supposed to relate to each other. Just as a failure to honor God with exclusive allegiance keeps us from obeying well the other commandments, so a failure to honor our parents often affects how we can effectively honor, care for other people. In other words, if you don't show respect and love within your families. In other words, if you don't show respect and love within your families, you're going to struggle to show honor and compassion to your friends, to your neighbors, to strangers.

Now, a commandment is first and foremost about doing stuff.

So I'm proposing that for the next few minutes, we're just going to talk practical. What does it look like? Yeah, we're given commandments. So what?

[6 : 54] How? You know, it's almost a how do you do this? It's easy to say, harder to do. So let's reflect on the doing. And we want to talk to us as parents and then as children.

So firstly, a few minutes on being a parent. We can sum up the application to parents in a single sentence.

Make it easy for your children to obey this commandment. There's a sense in which if you want your children to honor you, you have to show yourself to be honorable.

How do you make it easy for your children to honor you? I'll give you five short points.

One, this may, even as I say it, I'm thinking of exceptions. But firstly, praise your children. When was the last time you said, I am so proud of you?

[8 : 17] When was the last time you bragged about your kids in their presence? I recall, I'm really, I'd like to think that I'm good at talking about my kids and how well they do.

But I've had an instance where one of my kids said, I never hear you say anything about me. So I'm not sure where you stand.

So oftentimes doing it in their presence is significant. You want to be a cheerleader for them.

Vaughn. We make it easier for our children to honor us by listening to our kids.

Many of us parents struggle with this in this area because we're really busy. Our kids talk, but we don't always listen.

[9 : 33] We're often busy. Busy on our phones. Busy at work. Busy with doing household tasks. Usually we expend so much energy on these other things.

We sometimes don't have enough energy to just listen. When I was still in school, I recall several instances of our youngest daughter would come into the room with, who wanted, and she wanted to read a book to me.

And, of course, it would always coincide with a paper coming due the next day. And I'm, in my head, all anxious and all. And I recall being, hearing God say, listen, if I want you to pass this course, you're going to pass this course.

Honor your kid. Listen. Listen. You know. And so I kind of lift that up to God. My task up to God. And let God.

And let my child. And let Sophie read me a bit of her book and show off how well she could read at the time.

[10 : 53] I also offered up that experience that, you know, God, if you really want me back on, you'll keep Sophie short. Either way, God's there.

Three, by setting limits. By saying no. Our kids need to know that there's a safe place for them. And that comes with the word no, oftentimes.

That's not always easy. For those of us who have been parents and grown, raised kids, we know it's not always easy.

Enforcing limits can be awfully tiring, upsetting, inconvenient. And you need to believe, though, that your kids are worth the time, are worth the stress, the strain, and the inconvenience.

And a word, if you are partnered, make sure that your husband, your wife, your spouse are on the same page with you.

[12 : 15] With the no. And if you have an issue with the no or the yes, that you do that on the side, not in front of your kids. Again, I'm still thinking very practically.

Okay? Four. By spending time with them. That's sort of associated with listening to them. Nothing else can take the place that you have.

Nothing else can take the place of you spending time with your kids. No gift that you can give is as crucial as the gift of yourself. Your kids will forget the things you're going to give them.

They're going to remember the time you spend with them. And finally, by modeling a right kind of life.

An awful reality is our kids watch, our kids hear, and our kids imitate. We are their first role models.

[13 : 22] When kids get into teenage years, a parent will often wonder whether they have any influence on their kids. Because that's often the time when kids push back.

Right? That's normal. But studies have also suggested very strongly that you remain the strongest influence on your children.

Over friends. Over the media. Over anything in their lives. You are number one. So be honorable. Because kids are watching. So all these suggestions are true. No matter how old you are. No matter how old your kids are.

Now, not all of us are parents. All of us are kids. So now let's move on to thinking of ourselves as kids.

[14 : 28] And how we honor our parents. How we follow this fifth commandment. You know, too often we relegate this commandment to young children.

And I have to confess. I do the same. My first time honor your mother and father. I go right to little kids. But we don't stop being kids to our parents.

And in fact, I don't think God ever intended this commandment to be aimed primarily for little kids. But rather, It is an adult commandment. Along with all the rest. How many young children were present in Mount Sinai? We wonder.

Most of the people who received those ten commandments were adults. So this commandment is primarily for grown-up kids.

[15 : 32] You and I. It's God's way of telling us how to treat our parents. How do we honor our parents?

Again, I'm going to give you a short list. One is obey. That's a big word.

Obey your parents. You grown-ups. I know as soon as I saw this commandment, A lot of people would think, I started thinking, This can't be right.

Totally. Because for a lot of us, The whole point of moving away from home is, You don't have to obey anymore. Most of us have heard it said, That while you don't have to obey your parents, You always have to honor them.

Well, that's true enough. But, I would suggest that, If you, Simply stay at that, You don't fully grasp, The biblical implication of this fifth commandment.

[16 : 51] Our modern attitude of moving away, So that we don't have to obey, Would have shocked Moses. Would have shocked St. Paul. In their eyes, Children were always to obey their parents.

The only possible exception, Being when parents ask the kids, To do something that violates God's law. Therefore, It kind of goes back, To being the kind of parent, That makes it easy for your kids, To obey this commandment.

In the mindset, The older your parents get, The more wisdom they attain, And the greater your responsibility, To obey their instructions.

Does that mean, Kids are to obey their elderly parents? Yeah. You know, Even as I say it, It's, I think of exceptions, Because as our kids, Our parents get older, And those of us, Who are in this in between, Generation, Or at least while my, Mom is still alive, I became a caregiver.

But the implication, Or the invocation, Remains the same, About obedience.

[18 : 15] Even when it means, Setting limits for your parents, That can be hard. Because it, You don't want it to violate, Other commandments. Obey your, Your parents.

Two, By speaking well, Of your parents. You know, No family is perfect, And for most of us, Is, This commandment of, Speaking well of them, Can be easier, Than for other of us.

And that kind of raises the question, How do you, Speak well of people, Who've hurt you, Deeply. Who are not perfect. Well here, I think we're left, With some advice, That we all learned as children. Right? If you can't, Say something nice. What is it? Don't say anything at all. You know, Honestly, There's a true sense, In which we honor our parents, By refusing to speak evil of them.

Again, We're talking about, We're talking about behavior, We're talking about, We're talking about actions you take, Not, Not the way you feel, Not, Um, Uh, necessarily doing everything you want to do or feel like doing.

[19 : 47] Sometimes just being quiet is your way of honoring your parents. That being said, we follow the commandments of honoring our parents by forgiving them.

Here we come to the heart of the problem for a lot of people. How do you honor parents who've hurt or abused you? How do you honor the alcoholic father?

How do you honor the mother who left you? How do you honor the parents who neglected you?

How do you honor the mother? How do you honor the mother? I realize that there are some of you here who may have your stomach in a knot when you think about it.

Unfortunately, that's the reality that whenever you speak about parents, there's always somebody in a group or more who were abused.

Abused physically or emotionally or sexually while they were growing up. Some of you may have grown up in homes of alcoholics or workaholics.

[21 : 16] Perhaps you had parents who were distant or cold or uncaring. And you want to cry out, how can I honor people who are unhonorable?

What's God asking me to do this morning about that? Is God asking me to put on a mask and pretend it never happened?

No, he's not. God loves you more than you can imagine.

And he knows what you've lived. But he's here this morning to ask you to take a step toward honoring your parents.

And maybe it's a step of forgiveness. To give up your right in terms of justice.

[22 : 27] Your right to hold bitterness or even revenge. And then ask God to begin using, healing your heart.

And then maybe even using you by the actions you take. To become a source of God's love for them.

God is the source of love. And you can't love of your own accord.

Ask him simply to pour his love into them as from your heart. And over time, this isn't a snap thing.

Over time and maybe years. As you continue to make the choice to forgive, to honor, to be quiet. To not speak ill.

[23 : 28] That you'll sense an attitude change in your heart. David said in Psalm 27.

When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me. It comes down to God there.

God's the center of all these commandments. It's not just a do and don't list. Even though I'm talking in behaviors right now.

It's about your attitude to God. And where God's place is in your heart. And in your life. And as you ask God into your heart.

And into that situate your relationship. You'll make a major advance in your spiritual life. When you conclude that your parents.

[24 : 37] Your kids. Are sinners just like you. Are they unlovely? Love them anyway. Are they selfish?

Love them anyway. Are they too possessive? Love them anyway. Are they too contrary? Too weak?

Too mean? Too hard? They're your parents. Love them anyway. And the final point.

Don't forsake them. At this point, we have Jesus.

As a model. For this. While he hung on the cross. Dying. He took time to remember his mom.

[25 : 32] His age. His mom. To his mother. He said. Woman. This is your son. And to his. Beloved disciple. To John.

He says. Son. This is your mother. Think of that. While he was dying. While he was. Kind of.

Preoccupied. He took time.

To remember the fifth commandment. So don't forsake. Your parents. Practical terms. Call them. Text them.

These days. Care for them. Support them. Financially. Speak well. Of them. And remember them.

After. They're gone. Let me just wrap this. The principle. At the heart. Of the fifth commandment.

[26 : 29] Is this. Make family. A priority. It's a rather. Somber. Fact. Of life. That neither. Children. Or parents. Are around.

For a long. And the older I get. The more I realize that. Faster time goes. The shorter. The time ahead. And. And. And honestly. I've buried enough. Young people.

To. To know. That that's actually the case. No matter how old you are. Someday. Those children. Won't be in your home. Someday. Those parents.

Will be gone as well. Life is short. Value your family. And make them a priority. With that.

I'm going to. Stop. Does that kind of make. Some of that sense. I don't know. I don't know. Anyway. Do keep. I'm. I'm.

[27 : 24] I'm honored. And. And. And. I think it's really cool. You guys are doing. The. The ten commandments. And bring that practice. Into.

Into life. And into God's. Word. Word. So. Let's. Let me just close in prayer. Dear Jesus.

Thank you for your word. Thank you God. Thank you Holy Spirit. The word. That God. You didn't just. Create us.

You didn't. Simply give us a way. To redeem us. In the end. But you've walked with us. In the midst of this life. And you have given us. Guidance.

Holy Spirit. Dwell into our hearts. That we may put that guidance. Into. Practice. And we ask this. In Jesus. Strong name. Amen.