

# Loving His Commandments

## The Fifth Commandment-B

*Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16*  
Part Twelve

*With Study Questions*

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## The Fifth Commandment-B

*Exodus 20:12*

Part Twelve

**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).**

### Review

In review, we discussed that the Fifth Commandment 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 and obedience.

### 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 and neglected, in terms of care.

A question did come up in our question and answer time regarding whether or not honor our parents includes caring for them as they grow older. The answer to this question is an unequivocal 'yes'.

**Honor widows who are really widows. 4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God (1 Timothy 5:3, 4).**

Though Paul highlight widows, there is a responsibility children

have to “**repay their parents**” *amoibas*. The simple idea conveyed here is that when the children could not take care of themselves, the parents did. When the parents can no longer take care of themselves, the children provide the necessary aid and comfort. This is not to suggest that children cannot make use of nursing homes or other resources to facilitate this care.

Depending upon the level of need, it can be almost impossible for an adult child to hold a job and watch after a parent who may be suffering from an illness which causes them to stray or treat an illness which needs some higher level of expertise. At the same time, the use of outside resources should not be an excuse to abandon the elderly.

## **Blessings and Afflictions**

The Apostle Paul notes that the Fifth Commandment is the “**first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.**” (Ephesians 6:2, 3). With this verse in mind, it was do us well to take a brief look at the Westminster Confession of Faith 19:6 to examine how our obedience to the law of God, in terms of blessings and afflictions, is best understood.

**6. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin, together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin: and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof:**

**although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works. So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law; and, not under grace.**

**7. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.**

There is more here that we can thoroughly examine now. Suffice it to say that the great blessing of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone should never be understood as if there are no consequences for sin “in this life”. 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 they may be.

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 we dishonor our parents, we are tilling the ground in the hearts of our children which may lead to them

dishonoring us.

## **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).

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 ancestor<sup>1</sup>.

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

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<sup>1</sup> This promise isn't always individual or immediate. But the general blessings that come upon a people who obey this commands of God.

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.

## **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 and 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 policemen.

## **The Authority of Christ**

Since we've been speaking of authority, I would like to conclude with the most authoritative statement ever made. It was made by Jesus Christ:

**“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth”  
(Matthew 28:18).**

At first glance the Bible appears to be contradictory in terms of who we should view as the god of this earth or age. Some passages seem to indicate Satan as the **“god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4)** and that **“the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19)**. Yet here Jesus claims **“all authority”** and John conveys that Jesus is **“ruler over the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:6)** and **“King of kings” (1 Timothy 6:16; Revelation 19:16)**.

The answer to this apparent dilemma is actually fairly simple. When a person speaks of their higher power, it is fair to say their higher power is their god? But it would not necessarily be accurate to conclude that their higher power is, in fact, God? That the whole world is under the influence of a false god merely means that the world is engaging in mass idolatry and in no way detracts from who the true God is and what His rightful place happens to be in His creation.

So in this sense it is only accurate to refer to Satan as a god because of his influence over a sinful world. It would be a fatal error to assign actual deity to Satan. He is a created being. He is not God. And even his power to hold the world under His influence was dealt a crushing blow at the cross, or to put it the Apostle Paul’s way, He **“disarmed principalities and power, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it (the cross)”** (Colossians 2:15 – parenthesis mine)

And since Jesus does have this authority, those who trust in Him can be assured with all confidence that wherever we are led by Christ in obedience to Him and whatever we face in life and our inevitable, all enemies are defeated. Jesus has all authority.

We must herald this glorious news. We are not left at the mercy of subordinate powers and authorities. The glorious news is that there is a God who reigns who is all good, all powerful and ever gracious to those who call upon His Name. His arm is not too short to deliver from any calamity. His kingdom is a kingdom which shall not be destroyed.

Heaven and earth belong to Christ. Before He issues His call in our lives, He proclaims His power and authority over all things. What a blessing to know that unlike all earthy power, Jesus uses His power and

authority to bring us safely into His own glorious and eternal kingdom.

### Questions for Study and Meditation

1. What are some of the blessings and afflictions accompanying this commandment?
2. Is it proper to degrade your parents if you think it will help you psychologically?
3. How will the neglect of this commandment affect households?
4. Should we honor leaders who don't seem worthy of honor?
5. Concerning rebellion, can you think of some examples of a modern day Absalom?
6. What are the limits of the authority, even godly leaders, have in your life?
7. Why is the authority of Christ such a blessing to us?