

Lev. 19:1-3 (LD 39) “Baby-Steps”

For the Children: Now that you are stuck at home for a few weeks, you have a good opportunity – not just to have a few weeks extra holiday; or a few weeks to catch up on study on which you are behind; or to spend extra time with dad and mum; but a good opportunity to show that you really want to put into practice the 5th commandment. Spending so much extra time with parents gives you plenty of opportunity to honour them. Even the Lord Jesus, as man, had to honour His earthly parents – as well as His heavenly Father. If He had failed to do so, we wouldn't be accepted by God. Knowing that, we should be all the more eager to reverence the Lord by honouring our parents. **Questions:** How does what we learn about honouring parents help us to deal with other people in later life? How is honouring parents related to honouring the Sabbath Day? What does it mean to “honour” parents?

Introduction:

First Point: The Basis for Baby-Steps

- 1) The Fear of the Lord: “Fear of the Lord” is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7). It is a necessary ingredient in faith. The word can also be understood as reverence or awe; worship; or righteous behaviour. In vss. 14, 32 it is used of reverence towards God.
- 2) The Pursuit of Holiness: Fear of the Lord also leads to the pursuit of holiness. If we reverence God for His holiness, we will want to reflect that holiness. V. 2 makes this connection: We should be holy because God is holy. But the repeated phrase in Lev. 19, “I am the Lord” implies it. Holiness means being different than the common or profane.
- 3) The Connection to the 2nd Table: God’s holiness is reflected in us. Moreover, reverence towards Him leads to reverence for what we see of His image in man i.e., in our neighbour. That is why in v. 3 the same word “reverence” (“fear”) is used of how children should treat their parents. In vss. 14 and 32, the same connection is made between fear of God and how we treat our neighbour.

Second Point: Baby-Steps Towards God

- 1) First Steps in the Home: One of the first things a new member of the covenant learns – whether a covenant-child or a new convert – is that we have been given 6 days for work and one to rest from work and concentrate on revering/worshiping God.
- 2) Learned from Parents: Lessons about the Sabbath are taught to the children first by parents – both by instruction and by example. This is why these 2 commandments, the 5th and 4th, have been placed together in the text: because both are elementary steps which the children learn first in the home, from their parents. If a child grows up to reject that instruction from believing parents, they are failing to revere both God and their parents.
- 3) Sanctifying the Sabbath: Because God is holy, the Sabbath is to be sanctified. Because God is to be revered, the Day which is “to Him” – not only for man – is to be honored.

Third Point: Baby-Steps Towards Our Neighbour

- 1) First Steps in Learning How to Treat Our Neighbour: Just as covenant children generally first learn about the Sabbath in the home, so they learn there also about how to treat their neighbour. They learn it from instruction in God’s Word and by parental example. They learn to seek the welfare of others.
- 2) First Steps in Learning about Authority: The children also learn how to deal with lawful authority. They learn that their parents are appointed by God, represent Him to the children, and must be “reverenced” because the God who put them there must be revered. Once this is learned in the home, it can be applied to other authorities throughout life – teachers, bosses, government, Session, a woman’s husband.
- 3) Reverencing Parents: We have seen that “reverence” to God means “reverence” to parents. LD 39 sums up the implications of this language: honour, love, loyalty, obedience and submission, and patience.

Conclusion: