

HONORING MY PARENTS
Ten Values That Build Strong Families - Part 5
Exodus 20:12
Rick Warren

It's no secret that families are fragmenting at an alarming rate. The average marriage in America lasts 7 1/2 years. Sixty percent of all second marriages fail. Every thirty seconds there is a divorce in America. Now, kids can divorce their parents.

We're looking at the Ten Commandments. We're going to look briefly at the fifth commandment.

Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land."

There is no time limit or age limit on this. It just says honor your father and mother. It doesn't say anything about children.

You may be 80 years old and your parent is 100, you are supposed to honor your father and mother.

I. WHY DID GOD GIVE THIS COMMANDMENT?

1. There are no perfect parents.

All of us have weaknesses and faults and inconsistencies, mistakes. Only God is the perfect parent. Even the best parents have made mistakes and sinned. The Bible says, "We've all sinned." As a result we're all warped. I saw a book the other day, I'm Dysfunctional, You're Dysfunctional. That about sums it up! None of us have perfect parents and you're not a perfect parent either.

There are many parents who are unworthy of honor. They were abusive, manipulative, neglectful. What is God telling me to do?

Am I supposed to ignore the pain, put on a happy face and pretend everything is great? No, you're not. But God is saying I want you to honor the position of parenthood.

There are three sources of authority in life: the home, the church, and the government. Each of them have roles. They are the basis for an orderly society. God wants you to honor the position of parenthood regardless of the personality behind it.

2. Respect for authority begins at home.

This is a critical lesson that every child must learn. It determines how well you're going to do at school, in your career, in relationships. The child who grows up saying, "Nobody tells me what to do!" is going to have a hard time keeping a job. There are a lot of times you have to do what somebody tells you to do whether you want to or not. So God wants us to learn to respect authority.

When you go to a judge and you say, "Your honor" you're not making a value judgement about that guy's character -- he may be a jerk. You're saying "Your honor", you show respect for the position and God says He put parents in a position of authority over you in your early age. So we are to respect it.

3. How I relate to my parents will affect every other relationship?

It is the major forming factor in your life. Your style of relating is set at home. Even today, as a grown up, when you act in ways you don't understand and can't figure out your behavior, many times it's because you're still reacting to your parents. Many marriages have been ruined because a spouse has never resolved a relationship with a parent and they're taking it out on their husband or wife or kids. They say things like "You're just like my mom." Surveys have shown that people who get along with their parents have far less stress in their lives.

II. HOW AM I TO HONOR MY PARENTS?

It depends on what stage of life you're in. Each stage you apply this command differently.

1. AS A CHILD, I HONOR MY PARENTS BY OBEYING AND RESPECTING THEM.

Eph 6:1 "Children, obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has placed them in authority over you."

Obey -- do what they say, willfully, pleasantly, immediately. The Bible teaches that as long as you're under your parent's roof you're to obey them. Since you are dependent upon your parents for food, clothing, shelter, insurance... they have the right to call the shots in your life. When you're out on your own that's a different issue. But as long as they are providing for you and you're dependent upon them, the Bible says, you are to obey them.

2. AS A YOUNG PERSON, I HONOR MY PARENTS BY ACCEPTING AND APPRECIATING THEM.

The older you get, you start seeing the faults of your parents. You start seeing their hangups, faults, the chinks in the armor. It becomes important for you to accept them in spite of their weaknesses.

Why should I choose to accept my parents? You say I didn't have a choice. Neither did they. You're kind of stuck with each other. That's why acceptance is vital.

Acceptance does not mean pretending that they were perfect. It doesn't mean ignoring their mistakes. It doesn't mean agreeing with all they did or agreeing with all they asked you to do.

Acceptance means:

1. Realizing that God used them to bring me into the world. Your parents may have been excellent, mediocre or poor but regardless of how they treated you growing up, the fact is they gave you something that nobody else in the world could give you -- they gave you your life. You owe them your life, regardless of the parenting skills they used. God chose to use them to bring me into the world.

2. Listening to what they have to say. When you're out on your own, you're not bound by their advice but you don't despise it. "Listen to your father who gave you your life and do not despise your mother." Pr. 23;22. You can disagree without being disagreeable. You listen to them, pay them courtesy of listening to them and you don't tune them out. That's part of acceptance.

3. Acceptance includes forgiveness. The fact of life is we often hurt those we love the most -- intentionally and unintentionally. If you live together for any length of time you're going to be hurt by the people in your family. Families must be built on forgiveness because we hurt each other.

Today it's not so popular to honor your parents as it is to go lie on a couch and blame them for all your problems. Prov. 20;20 "If you curse your parents, your life will end like a lamp that goes out in the dark." Bitterness is self-destructive. It always hurts you more than the person you're bitter against.

Even today, if you're still hurting and being resentful and bitter over things your parents did in the past, you're still allowing them to control your life today. "You make me mad." You're admitting -- "you make me," you have control over me.

I'm to accept my parents, not despise them, listen to what they have to say, offer forgiveness. The fact is God gave you your parents for a purpose. Even those who were mistreated severely growing up -- does God want you to honor their sins, weaknesses and the things they did wrong to you? No. But He's saying accept the fact that God chose them to bring you into the world.

God gave you your parents for a purpose and He can even take that hurt and turn it around and bring good out of it if you choose to react in the right way.

You honor your parents when you forgive them for what they did wrong and you choose to focus on what they did right. Deut. 26:11 "Be grateful for the good things that the Lord has given you and your family." God says I'm not only to accept my parents, the good and the bad, but I am to appreciate them. It's easy to take parents for granted. Some of you had super parents and it's easy for you to appreciate them. For some of you it's a little more difficult. I would suggest that there are at least two things you could appreciate about your parents regardless who they were:

1. You can appreciate their effort. Parenting is a difficult, time-demanding, energy draining job. As a parent of three children I have a new appreciation of what my parents went through. It takes incredible energy just to corral your kids, much less teach them anything. Have you ever considered how much easier your parents' life would have been if they hadn't had you?

They say they can tell the stress in the different years of a tree's life if you cut it and look at the rings. Certain rings are real small, those are years of crisis and stress. I would say that for many of us, our lives growing up could be seen in our parent's grey hair. When was the last time you thanked your parents for just putting up with you? Who else would have?

2. You can appreciate their sacrifice. Parenting is expensive. The economics today alone are staggering. If you're a parent today it will cost you to raise a child to maturity about a quarter of a million dollars.

Somebody said a father is somebody who carries pictures where he once carried money. Mike Gilmore said of somebody who was going in for the church directory: the dad said "In this family portrait, why don't you have my sons put their hands in my pockets so it will look natural."

When a couple chooses to have kids they are choosing to do without some other things. So we should appreciate the sacrifice. What could your parents have afforded if they hadn't spent that money on you, and your clothes, your school, your doctor bills?

Prov. 23:22 "When your mother is old, show her your appreciation."

(By the way, there are three stages in a man's life: he believes in Santa Clause, he doesn't believe in Santa Clause, he is Santa Clause, he looks like Santa Clause. Appreciate him in all four stages.)

It's a great transition when your parents become your friends.

3. AS AN ADULT, I HONOR MY PARENTS BY AFFIRMING AND NOT ABANDONING THEM.

For many parents, growing older, the older they get the less respect they get. All of their affirming friends start to die off. They are no longer wanted in the market place for their skills and wisdom. Their grown children are busy with their own families. They lead lonely lives. Your parents have a great need, a desperate need, to feel and to know that they made some kind of positive contribution in your life. They need affirmation. God says He wants you to affirm your parents for the rest of your life as long as they're alive.

How do you do that? You affirm your parents by staying in touch with them. Every time you write a letter, a card, make a call, you're obeying this command -- honor your father and mother. To honor means to understand the significance of. I would encourage you to share with them the details of your life. They're very interested. The Bible says we are to value and to treasure and to hold in highest esteem our aged parents.

Prov. 3:27 "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act." Do the right thing while you've got time to do it. Affirm your parents now. All the flowers in the world at their funeral won't do them one bit of good. The

Ten Values That Build Strong Families - Part 5

flowers at the funeral are for your benefit, not theirs. If you're going to give them flowers, send it to them while they're alive, not when they're dead.

Affirming them means listening to counsel, giving them the courtesy of asking for counsel. Even if you don't follow it at least you listen to it. I think this involves in-laws too. We have good examples of Moses listening to his father-in-law, and Ruth listening to her mother-in-law.

The Bible says that the way you treat your older, elderly parents is the demonstration of your true faith, of whether you're really a Christian or not. I Timothy 5:8 "Anyone who won't care for his own relatives when they need help, especially his own family, has no right to say he is a Christian. Such a person is worse than the heathen." That's pretty strong.

There is a shameful tragedy in our society today where busy families are abandoning the elderly and the aged to die all alone. The Bible teaches when your parents or your grandparents become too old to care for themselves it is not the government's responsibility, it's yours. This is the cycle of the family. As time passes, the rolls reverse. Where, at one point in life, they fed you, bathed you, and cared for you, and took care of you. As they grow older, people are living longer, longer, the roles are reversed. And it may be that you will need to feed them, and bathe them, and care for them. God says that's part of being a Christian.

That may mean all kinds of different things. It may mean going and changing the oil in their car when they need it. It may mean inviting them into your home. It may mean hiring a nurse to care for them when they are frail and can't take care of themselves. There are all kinds of applications to it. The point is it's your responsibility to make sure they're cared for.

Many of you are already facing this issue. God says, honor your parents. "They should put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God." I Tim. 5:4. It is interesting to me that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, dying for the sin of the world, one of the things that He did not forget was to care for His aged mother after He was gone. Hanging on the cross, dying in pain, one of the seven last things He said looking down at John the disciple, "Take care of My mother." While He's dying for the world He does not forget to provide for the care of His aged mother.

A word to parents: If you want to be honored, you must be honorable. "And now a word to you parents: Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with loving discipline." Paul is saying, don't drive your kids nuts by being unpleasable. Don't try to make your child another you. One's enough in this world. We need individuals. Circle "bring them up in loving discipline". The key to good parenting is loving discipline. Every child must learn two things:

1. Disobedience brings pain. Every person has to learn that. God says that -- you disobey God there is pain in your life. Every child has to learn that disobedience brings pain.
2. Obedience brings freedom. You are more trusted and you're more responsible.

As a Christian parent, your number one goal in your life should be to insure the fact that your kids come to know Christ when they are old enough to understand. I want you to know that I held my breath for some time as I raised my three kids until each of them on their own without any coercion made their commitment to Jesus Christ. I know if I died today I'd see them again in heaven because they all know Christ. As a parent I would not rest easy until I was sure that all my family was in the fold and had made that personal commitment to Christ. I'd pray for it, work for it and do everything I could to bring that about.

For some of you this is a very painful message. It is easy to honor your father and mother when they are good, godly people. But some of you had parents who hurt you deeply. Your life was devastated by it. I want you to know that the Bible says there is severe judgement for child abuse, and mistreatment and neglect and molestation and all of these things -- severe judgement. Jesus said, "Anybody that offends one of these little ones, it's better for him to have a millstone tied around his neck and thrown in the bottom of the ocean." It is serious business.

So what does God expect me to do? How do I honor a parent who was dishonorable to me?

God is not asking you to gloss over it. He's not asking you to deny the pain. He's not asking you to repress it or to make excuses for your parents, their alcoholism or something else. God does not want you to fake it. He wants you to face it head on. That's scary. But it's the only way to get past your pain.

The truth is many of you are still carrying unfinished business with parents. Just the thought of it can bring tears to your eyes and a pain in your heart. You're wondering how in the world can I deal with this. You're still reacting to your parents. Chances are you're venting that anger on your husband or wife or kids or friends because you've never resolved it with them. If you're still angry with a parent years later, you're still letting them control your life. It takes a courageous decision to make peace with your parents but you must release that anger. Admit it. Don't hide it. It eventually must be discussed. It's a courageous decision to stop blaming and start being honest. What some of you need to do is to prayerfully have a conference with your parents. Set down and say, "Mom, dad (or both) I want to be free to honor the good that was in your life but I can't until we talk about the pain that I felt and still feel and come to some kind of resolution of it. I want to get it behind us and get on with life and I want to forge a new relationship with my parents." Face the issue. It's scary but you cannot get on with your life until you get over this. If there are wrongs to be made right do it while there's time to attempt some kind of reconciliation.

If you can't talk to your parents -- maybe they've already passed on, maybe they won't listen, maybe because of some chemical dependency or maybe they are losing their mind and you're unable to talk with them -- I would encourage you to share your pain with a Christian friend or counselor and at least get some kind of partial relief from it. But for your own sake and for the sake of your kids, stop the cycle of deception. End it right here.

Only God knows the pain you feel. But He does know and He does care and He can help you overcome that pain. He can even bring good out of it if you'll let Him.

There's another group of you -- some of you were abandoned by your parents, by one or the other, or both. The Bible says honor your father and mother. Today that's a hard thing to do with divorce. Many kids are being forced to make a choice between mom or dad. The Bible says honor both. The position, not the personality. For those of you who were abandoned by one or maybe both of your parents, God says you are a special person. You get special attention from God. In the Scriptures, God says, I assume responsibility for abandoned children. "My father and mother may abandon me, but the Lord will take care of me." Regardless of your circumstance, you have a heavenly father and He's perfect and He loves you unconditionally and He will never leave you and He will never forsake you and He wants you in His

Ten Values That Build Strong Families - Part 5

family. He wants you to know Him and He wants you to get to know Him through His son Jesus Christ. He loves you more than you will ever realize. Get to know your heavenly Father.

The Bible says that the church is a family. It's going to last longer than your physical family. In terms of eternity it's far more important. There will be no physical families in heaven but there will be the family of God. Those of us who belong to the family of God, the church, will be together forever. It's going to far outlast your physical family. The church is a family. Become a part of our family here at Saddleback, this local expression, where you will have lots of brothers and sisters in Christ, aunts and uncles and spiritual moms and dads. You can be a part of a family that will never break up because it's going to be together for eternity. Find security and stability and comfort and care in relationships in the body of Christ, the family of God.

You are who you are for a reason
You're part of an intricate plan
You are a precious, perfect, unique design
Called God's special woman or man.

You look like you look for a reason
Our God made no mistake
He knit you together within the womb
You're just what He wanted to make

The parents you had are the ones He chose
No matter how you may feel
You are custom designed with that plan in mind
They bear the master's seal

The trauma you faced wasn't easy
And God wept that it hurt you so
But it was allowed to shape your heart
So that into His likeness you'd grow

You are who you are for a reason
You've been formed by the Master's rod
You are who you are, beloved
Because there is a God.

This has been a painful message for some of you. God sees and understands your pain. I invite you to ask God to help you. In your hearts say, "God help me let go of the hurt and the bitterness. Help me to forgive. Help me to begin to accept,

appreciate and affirm the good parts in my parents. Help me to forge a new, positive relationship, if possible. I want to be a part of your family. Thank you Heavenly Father that You loved me unconditionally and You made me for a purpose and You will never reject me. You've accepted me and today I accept You and I accept Your Son Jesus Christ into my life. I want to be a part of Your family for eternity."

HONORING MY PARENTS
Ten Values That Build Strong Families - Part 5
Exodus 20:12
Rick Warren

Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land..."

I. WHY DID GOD GIVE THIS COMMANDMENT?

Because...

- There are not _____ parents!
- Respect for _____ begins at home.
- How I relate to my parents will affect every other _____

II. HOW TO HONOR MY PARENTS

1. AS A CHILD, I HONOR MY PARENTS BY

_____ AND _____ THEM

"Children, obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has placed them in authority over you."

Eph. 6:1(LB)

"A son who mistreats his father or mother is a public disgrace."

Pr. 19:26 (LB)

2. AS A YOUNG PERSON. I HONOR MY PARENTS BY

_____ AND _____ THEM

"Listen to your father who gave you your life and do not despise your mother.."

Pr. 23:22

"If you curse your parents, your life will end like a lamp that goes out in the dark."

Pr. 20:20 (GN)

Acceptance includes:

"Be grateful for the good things that the Lord has given you and your family..."

Deut. 26:11 (GN)

"when your mother is old, show her your appreciation."

Pr. 23:32 (GN)

3. AS AN ADULT, I HONOR MY PARENTS BY

_____ & NOT _____ THEM.

"Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power go act."

Pr. 3:27

"Anyone who won't care for his own relatives when they need help, especially his own family, has no right to say he is a Christian. Such a person is worse than the heathen."

I Tim 5:8 (LB)

"They should ... put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God."

I Tim. 5:4

A word to parents: Be `honorable'!

"And now a word to you parents; Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with loving discipline..."

Eph. 6:4 (LB)

Matt. 18:6 (Ph)

A word to those without parents

"My father and mother may abandon me, but the Lord will take care of me."

Ps. 27:10 (GN)

