

The Fifth Commandment

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Thursday, 12 October 2017 10:50

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Honor your father and your mother,

so that you may live long in the land the L^OR^D

your God is giving you.

Exodus 20:12,NIV

Introduction:

Many children do not honor their parents today. Why is this happening in the United States of North America?

The public school system fosters this by usurping parents' authority. The educational elite believe that children belong to the state and that they alone are qualified to teach them social and academic skills. Such arrogance!

Sometimes overzealous social workers usurp parental authority. Some try to forbid corporal correction. Sadly, the courts sometime support the professional social workers who have been indoctrinated by the anti-Semitic and anti-Christian educational elite.

The media and entertainment belittle parents. Sitcoms on television promote family dysfunction. *Murphy* glorified having a child out of wedlock and a single-parent family. *Married With Children* glorifies ignorance and dysfunction. The movie,

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Throw Mama From the Train

, distorts motherhood and suggests murder.

Parents are sometimes to blame because they do not make good role models or they fail to love and discipline their children.

Abortion and infanticide are destroying children's respect for their parents. Human life is devalued. The murder of old people gives the message to children that grandparents are of no value.

The lies of political correctness do not negate the values of our Creator. We are commanded to honor our parents.

A Transcultural Commandment

Moses Codified the Fifth Commandment

Moses, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, included this commandment and gave sanctions. Any child who attacked or cursed his parents was to be executed:

"Anyone who attacks his father or his mother must be put to death" (Exodus 21:15, NIV).

"Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death" (Exodus 21:17, NIV).

Other Old Testament references are: Leviticus 20:9; Proverbs 20:20; 30:17. The harshness indicates the importance of the commandment. Family integrity was not to be compromised and children were to submit to parents as unto the LORD. In ancient Israel, there was a deep respect for parents and the elderly. Anything less than respect and admiration was unthinkable.

It was vital that godly values be passed from one generation to another. It was important for Israel, God's chosen people. It was also important for us to receive the accurate understanding of God that was transmitted through the nation of Israel.

Jesus Verified the Fifth Commandment

Jesus rebuked some religious leaders who circumvented this commandment:

And he [Jesus] said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that" (Mark 7:9-13, NIV).

Jesus also affirmed five commandments and stated the heart of the commandments (love) to the rich young ruler:

Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

"Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

"Which ones?" the man inquired.

Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 19:16-19, NIV).

Later, Jesus implied to his disciples that this young man was guilty of breaking the tenth commandment—apparently he loved money. Notice that the young man kept the letter of the law, yet he had made an idol of money. (Jesus did not even mention the first four commandments which have to do with our relationship with God, or the last commandment.) The young man probably thought that he was keeping all ten of the commandments. It is impossible to keep all the commandments without God's help. That is why Jesus had to die on the cross—to pay for our sins. It is also impossible to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves, without the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Paul Affirmed the Fifth Commandment

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The Apostle Paul taught:

Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the LORD (Ephesians 6:1-4, NIV).

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the LORD."

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged" (Colossians 3:20-21, NIV).

Children Must Honor Their Parents

Show Gratitude for Parents

They gave us life. Our mothers passed through the shadow of death in giving us birth. Our fathers worked hard to provide our necessities and gave us protection. Our parents gave sacrificially in time and loving care. Let us not be guilty of the sin of ingratitude. Let us show love, respect and honor while we can. When they are gone it will be too late.

Obey Parents in the LORD

We are to obey our parents as long as their commands are in line with the LORD's commandments. Most parents love their children and will not knowingly tell them to do wrong.

Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old (Proverbs 23:22, NIV).

How long should children obey their parents? We should obey them while we are growing up:

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A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence (Proverbs 15:5, NIV)

If we disobey, we destroy ourselves little-by-little and we actually shorten our lives!

We should obey our parents until we are married, or until we set up a separate household. After marriage, we should seek their counsel. We must remember what we have been taught and follow that godly teaching for the rest of our lives:

My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck.

When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life, (Proverbs 6:20-23, NIV).

The new relationship in marriage supersedes the old relationship. Jesus taught,

"Haven't you read," he [Jesus] replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God hath joined together, let man not separate"

(Matthew 19:4-6, NIV).

God's descending chain of authority for the family is:

God



Jesus



HusbandFather



WifeMother



Children

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman [wife] is man [her husband], and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3, NIV). Wives, submit to your husbands as to the L ORD. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and give himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband (Ephesians 5:22-33, NIV).

The husband submits to Jesus' authority and loves his wife. The wife feels secure and submits to her husband. The father and wife then become good role models for the children, who submit to their parents and obey them. The children then grow up in a secure and loving "nest."

Love and Support Parents

We must love and help our parents all during their lives. However, parents need special help during their aging years.

Jesus is our example in this. Apparently Joseph, his earthly father, passed away before he was crucified. While dying on the cross, Jesus was concerned about Mary, his mother. From the cross he spoke these words to the Apostle John:

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved [John] standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home (John 19:25-27, NIV).

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Jesus' mother Mary must have been near fifty years of age when John took her home. There was no social security then and parents were dependent upon their children. Jesus was her firstborn and he made the decision for John to care for her.

Parents Must Love Their Children

This Love Is First of All, the Love of God

Agapē, or the love of God, must characterize the relationship between parents and children. *Agape* may be expressed by affection, support, confrontation, corporal correction or *whatever the child needs* at a particular time for his own good.

It is contorted logic that says abortion and infanticide are expressions of love. *Every child has a right to be born,* *a right to be loved, a right to a safe, secure home and to be taught God's Word.*

There are three other types of human love: (1) *Eros*, which is sexual and romantic; (2) *Philia*, which is friendship and (3) *Storgē*, which is family love. (See chapter thirteen in my e-Book, *How to Raise Your Self-esteem Using Proven Biblical Principles*, for a more full discussion of love).

We are commanded to love everyone with the love of God. Jesus said,

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35, NIV).

This is especially true for our children. The command to love people with the love of God is humanly impossible. God must give us the ability to love as he loves. We receive the love of

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God and the ability to love when we accept Christ as our Savior:

"And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love [*agapē*] has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us"(Romans 5:5, NIV).

We are not to love our children with *eros*. Incest damages children and it is one of the worst forms of child abuse.

We are certainly to love them with *storgē*.¹⁰ *Storgē* [family loyalty and love] is strengthened and balanced when we begin with *agapē*.

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We are to be friends with our children. *Philia* is a good love. However, friendship must not be the primary love. Parents are more than "pals"with their children. They are parents, with parental responsibilities!

Please remember that every child conceived has a right to be born, to be loved, protected, nurtured, disciplined and die a natural death.

"And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Romans 5:5, NIV).

Love Will Nourish

Children need nourishment spiritually, socially, morally, intellectually, and physically. Jesus is the role model for proper child development:

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Then he [Jesus] went down to Nazareth with them [his parents] and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in [moral and intellectual] wisdom and [physical] stature, and in favor with God [spiritual development] and men [social development] (Luke 2:51-52, NIV).

Love Will Discipline

A primary role of parents is to teach, train, and discipline their children. Teaching speaks of academic, intellectual and professional learning. Training speaks of character development. The external discipline on children achieves the internal goal of self-discipline. Without self-discipline, children are ill-fitted for life. And isn't it a goal to fit children to be successful in life?

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it (Proverb 22:6, NIV).

The Shema

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Moses gave this instruction:

These are the commands, decrees and laws the L^{ORD} your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the L^{ORD} your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the L^{ORD}, the God of your fathers, promised you. Hear, O Israel: The L^{ORD} our God, the L^{ORD} is one. Love the L^{ORD} your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:1-9, NIV).

Parents must teach their children about God and his Word. An education without character training spells disaster!

Chaplain Rufus Spraberry, a personal friend, shared how he led his son to accept Christ. Nothing could please our Heavenly Father more than for parents to lead their children to Christ! Chaplain Spraberry has gone on to be with the L ORD, but his son will continue in the fine Christian tradition of his father.

But suppose parents do not obey God's command to teach their children spiritual values? A pamphlet published by the Houston Police Department reads,

For Parents How to Make A Child into A Delinquent: 12 Easy Rules

1. Begin at infancy to give the child everything he wants. In this way, he will grow up to believe the world owes him a living.
2. When he picks up bad language, laugh at him. This will make him think he's cute.
3. Never give him any spiritual training. Wait until he is 21, and then let him "decide for himself."
4. Avoid the use of the word "wrong." It may develop a guilt complex. This will condition him to believe later, when he is arrested for stealing a car, that society is against him and he is being persecuted.
5. Pick up everything he leaves lying around, books, shoes, clothes. Do everything for him so that he will be experienced in throwing all responsibility on others.
6. Let him read any printed matter he can get his hands on. Be careful that the silverware and drinking glasses are sterilized, but let his mind feast on garbage.
7. Quarrel frequently in the presence of your children. In this way they will not be too shocked when the home is broken up later.
8. Give a child all the spending money he wants. Never let him earn his own. Why should he have things as tough as you had them?
9. Satisfy his every craving for food, drink and comfort. See that every sensual desire is gratified. Denial may lead to harmful frustration.
10. Take his part against neighbors, teachers, policemen. They are prejudiced against your child.
11. When he gets into real trouble, apologize for yourself by saying, "I could never do anything with him."
12. Prepare for a life of grief. You will be likely to have it.

Love Will Encourage

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(See Colossians 3:21 above). The child's will must be broken—not his spirit. Physical or psychological abuse can break the child's spirit. Physical abuse can crush a child's spirit. Continual criticism will imprint on the child's mind that he is unworthy and will not amount to anything in life. Martin Luther said,

Spare the rod and spoil the child—true! But beside the rod keep an apple, and give it to him when he does well.

Love Will Understand and Communicate

Communication must be established and maintained. The child should feel welcome to come to the parents for advice and help. The parents must communicate that their love will not be cut off if the child does something wrong. The child must never be rejected. However, bad behavior must be swiftly corrected.

Love Will Respect

The parents must respect their child. They are human beings, made in the image of God. They are God's children, on loan to parents. The intelligent and talented child is not a thing to be exhibited. The headstrong or spoiled child is not to be placated, but transformed. The child is not a piece of property to be used, exploited or abused!

Conclusion

Both parents and children each have biblically-defined roles. Too often, bad parents spawn bad children. But this tragic cycle can be broken with God's help.

All of us are children, and most of us will be parents. Therefore, let us both *Honor Our Parents and Be Honorable Parents*

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[Much of this chapter was adapted from William Barclay, *The Ten Commandments for Today* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), 55-68].

Chapter 5, from my eBook, *The Ten Commandments*.

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