

CCC HONORING MY PARENTS PART 5

Ten Values That Build Strong Families - Part 5

It's no secret that families are fragmenting; families are falling to peaces at alarming rates. Did you know that the average marriage in America lasts 7 1/2 years? Every thirty seconds there is a divorce in America; kids can even divorce their parents. We are in a series that we are calling Ten Values That Build Strong Families, 10 principles to building character and integrity. We are looking at the Ten Commandments that God gave us to live by and today we're going to look briefly at the fifth commandment.

"Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land." Exodus 20:12. It is interesting that there is no time limit or age limit on this principle. God's word, the bible just says, *honor your father and mother.*" You may be 60 years old and your parent is 90, and God's word

says, you are still supposed to honor your father and mother. Now let's take a minute and think about this for a minute, why did God give this commandment to us:

I. WHY DID GOD GIVE THIS COMMANDMENT?

Because:

1. There are no perfect parents.

All of us have weaknesses and faults and inconsistencies, We all have fallen short and made mistakes, no matter how hard we may have or have not tried to be a perfect parent. Only God is the perfect parent. Even the best parents have made mistakes and sinned and through that sin we all have a warped view of things. I saw a book the other day titled, *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 and neglectful parents. So, what is God telling me to do if this is the case? Am I supposed to ignore the pain, put on a happy face and pretend everything is great? No, that's not what God wants us to do. God is saying to you, I want you to honor the **position** of parenthood, because I, God created it. Another reason why God gave us this commandment was for us to learn respect for authority:

2. Respect for authority begins at home.

Dear friends, this is a critical lesson that every child must learn. The child who grows up saying, "Nobody tells me what to do!" is going to have a hard time in every aspect of life. There are a lot of times in life 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 and that begins

at home with our parents. God says, He put your parents in a position of authority over you in your early age and he says respect that parental authority. Another reason why God gave us this commandment was for us to know:

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. Surveys have shown that people who get along with their parents have far less stress in their lives. Okay those are some of the reason why God gave this command to us, but:

II. HOW AM I TO HONOR MY PARENTS?

And the answer depends on what stage of life you're in.

Each stage of your life you apply this command somewhat 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; they have the right to call the shots in your life. When you're out on your own that is 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 hang-ups, faults, the chinks in the armor. It becomes important for you to accept them in spite of their weaknesses. Acceptance does not mean pretending that your parents were perfect. It doesn't mean ignoring their mistakes.

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 and God chose to use them to bring me into the world.

Acceptance means:

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 either. God's word, the bible says, "*Listen to your father who gave you your life and do not despise your mother.*" Pr. 23:22. See, you can disagree without being disagreeable. You pay them courtesy of listening to them and you don't tune them out.

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... today people just blame their parents for all their problems. But when you forgive them for what they did wrong and you choose to focus on what they did right you

are honoring your parents 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: You can appreciate their effort and you can appreciate their sacrifice.

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, and that is to feel and to know that they made some kind of positive contribution in your life. They need your affirmation. 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."* 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.

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." Eph. 6:4 (LB) Paul is saying, don't drive your kids nuts by being unpleasable parents. Don't try to make your child another you. The key to good parenting is loving discipline. Every child must learn two things: What disobedience brings and what obedience brings: Disobedience brings pain and Obedience brings freedom to your life and every child needs to learn these two things.

For some of you this message for you 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. So what does God expect you to do? How do I honor a parent who was dishonorable to me? God is not asking you to gloss over anything. 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 and be real about it and dear friends, 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 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, 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. 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 then would encourage you to share your pain with a Christian friend, your pastor 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 listen carefully, He does know the pain your feeling 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. Remember your honoring 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 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.

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. 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."