

# Honor Thy Father and Mother

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## Introduction

We all have parents. Parents are special people. They are the people who brought us forth into the world. It is true that God is the source and author of our life. But it is our parents who gave birth to us. None of us came into the world by fiat. We were all nestled in the protective womb of our mother. For nine (9) months they carried us, provided for us and nurtured us. How we are formed from the moment of conception to birth is a miracle and this miracle happens through our parents and in our mother's womb.

Our parents are the instruments God used to bring us up as a person. As a child we receive the much needed TLC (tender loving care) from our parents. In those early formative years, we depended 100% on our parents. We were nursed in the bosom of our mothers and cradled in the arms of our fathers. They taught us how to walk, talk, how to use the laptop (haha), and they took care of us when we were sick. They stayed up all day and night to watch over us. Our parents made a lot of sacrifices in the course of raising us. (*Aguilar's Anak ha ha ha*)

Because of this, being the authors of our birth we owe them our lives. We give them due honor and respect. For this reason comes a command – the command to honor our father and our mother. This command is enshrined as the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment of God. This is the first command with a promise.

### Exodus 20:12

12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

### Deut 5:16

16 “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

The command is about relationship - the bond between a parent and child. This bond is and should be stronger than any other human relationship there is. Our parent stands in the authority of God on earth; being our progenitors. As such, we are to give them due honor.

## Honor

We are commanded to honor our parents. What is meant by to HONOR? For us to honor our parents we must first understand what Honor means. “Honor” is a very interesting and revealing word in the context of the command.

In the New Testament, the word HONOR your parents is from the Greek word “Timao,” a verb, which means “to assign a value, to prize, to esteem and to revere.” Honoring our father and mother is being respectful in word and action and having an inward attitude of esteem for their position and authority.

More interesting is the Hebrew word “Kabbed” translated HONOR in the Old Testament scripture. The root word is “Kabed” which means “to be heavy or weighty” in terms of impressiveness and importance.

In ancient times, the heavier a person was, the more respectable he or she was. The obvious reason was rich people could afford to eat whatever they wished, whereas poor people were undernourished, eating very little and looking thin, unimportant. Today, we value skinny, trim and slender features. But, in ancient times, the fat ones are the respectable ones. You can see this in ancient paintings and drawings.

The importance of the command is significant since the word translated ‘HONOR’ is derived from the root word “weighty” and is often used to refer to the glory of God. Therefore, the context of ‘to honor’ is “to show great weight and respect” to parents.

As significant, is the English word “respect” which means “to look back, regard.” Therefore, to honor means “to regard with weightiness, great respect and dignity.”

The 10 commandments consist of two (2) sections. The first section consists of our vertical relationship with the Lord. The second section refers to our horizontal relationship with others. We are in an “L” shape – vertical and horizontal relationship towards God and towards our fellowmen.

The first section is summarized by Jesus in what many know as the ‘Shema’ or what Jesus called the greatest command; i.e, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, the second section is ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Luke 10:27.

The Fifth Commandment of honoring the parents is the vertex, the point where the vertical line of our relationship with God and the horizontal line of our relationship with others intersect. The commandment to honor our parents is therefore basic to our character.

## Honor Versus Love

As a parent, would you rather be honored or be loved? There is a difference between honor and love. Love is to have a strong affection for parents. On the other hand, honor is to revere and show respect in recognition of the important value of parents.

The fifth commandment is to HONOR our parents. In the scripture, we are told to honor God, honor parents, honor the king and honor the husband. Honor is to respect and to esteem the position and authority of parents. To honor our parents goes beyond loving them but to accord them great respect and dignity.

We love our children but as parents we do not honor our children. But, children are commanded to honor the parents.

## Ways To Honor

Now knowing the etymology of the word ‘HONOR,’ we now consider how to put it into practice. Have you ever asked your parent how they want to be honored and what makes them happy? I would surmise that their answer would surprise us. If the answer is “I am happy” or “be as you are”, then you can be sure you are doing right.

I will present to you the proper way to show respect to our parents. Romans 1:28-32 presents the clue.

### Romans 1:28-32

28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32 Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Inasmuch as we also have a vertical and horizontal relationship with our parents, the key to show respect is propositioned in the 10 commandments.

(A) Vertical relationship		Verses
No other God before Me	Revere and fear them Call no one father or mother	Leviticus 19:3 Matthew 23:9
Do not take God’s name in vain	Do not curse them	Exodus 21:17 Leviticus 20:9
Do not worship graven image	Obey them Do not rebel against them	Colossians 3:20 Deut. 21:18-21
Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day	Visit them	

(B) Relationship	Horizontal	Verses
Do not murder	Do not be angry at them	
Do not commit adultery	Show decorum and respect of position	Leviticus 18:6-9
Do not steal	Do not steal from them	
Do not bear false witness	Edify them Be honest with them	
Do not covet	Provide for them with cheerfulness	1 Timothy 5:8 2 Timothy 3:2 Mark 7:1-16

## Mark 7:1-16

### That Which Defiles

7 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.  
7 They worship me in vain;  
their teachings are merely human rules.’

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

9 And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ 11 But

you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.”

The Pharisees have the tendency to provide for traditions that over-ride God’s immutable laws. One of which is with regards to honoring parents. To honor parents involves providing for their needs. But, the tradition says if a man’s parents are in want, and he wants to withhold help on them, all he has to do is swear by the Corban, that is - by the gold of the temple - then his parents shall not be able to benefit from any assistance because the money had already been pledge to the temple. Therefore, the pledge exempted him from fulfilling his obligation regarding God’s holy law which is to honor the parents by providing for their needs. Jesus called it an evil thing.

### **Mark 7:23**

23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

Therefore, Jesus is emphasizing the point that to honor our parents is to take care of them and provide for their needs financially. The principle is for children to take care of their parents in the same way our parents took care of us when we were young.

## **Summation**

### **Ephesians 6:1-3**

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3 “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

The instruction of God is very clear. We are to honor our parents in all circumstances. This is a command that comes with a promise – a promise of long life and well-being.

The blessing comes in two (2) parts. The first part is the natural result of obedience, and of the loving and respectful relationship within the family. There are many benefits to the children and the generations after them if respect for authority and the elderly prevail.

And, the second part is the special blessings from God. Our parents stand in the place of God within the family. Therefore, to honor our parents, who are our earthly father,

is to indirectly honor God, who is our heavenly Father. The principle can be found in 1 John 4:20.

20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

To paraphrase the verse using the same principle: “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his father and mother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his parents whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” And, if I may add: if he cannot love his earthly parents, how can he love His heavenly Father?”

The command to honor our parents is an important command. It is the vertex of the moral principles of God. For us to build a relationship with our Heavenly Father, we must first learn to build one with our earthly parents. If we learn to do so, then we are able to build one with God and receive His eternal blessings.