

“Honoring Mom” - Mother’s Day 1996 - Deut. 5:16

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Story

1. A little boy wanted to buy his mother a special gift for mother’s day
2. So he took the money he had managed to save up from doing yards and washing cars, and asked his dad to take him to the department store
3. He went to the women’s department and asked a woman clerk to help him find something for his mother
4. He said, “I want to buy her a nice dress but I don’t know what size she wears.”
5. The clerk asked, “Is she tall or short, large or small?”
6. The little boy said, “My mommy is *just perfect!*”
7. The clerk picked out a size 7
8. The next week, Mom returned to the store and exchanged it for a 16

B. Repetition

1. Because today is Mother’s Day, I wanted to share a special message in honor of mothers.
2. Actually, I shared this message on Mother’s Day four years ago.
3. While I rarely repeat a sermon, I think this message is one that needs to be given every so often because the principles we’re are going to take a look at today are so important, we need to return to them again and again.
4. In writing his letter, the Apostle Peter said he knew he was saying things he had already said to them, but the repetition was good
5. When we play softball, every time I go up to bat, there is one thought going through my mind –
 - a. Keep your eye on the ball!
 - b. it’s the first lesson you learn when you’re a youngster
 - c. and no matter how old you get or how many times you stand there swinging that bat, it’s the most important lesson
 - d. coaches start saying it in the T-ball league and they keep saying all the way up to the big leagues.
6. What we’re about to take a look at is one of those most important lessons we can learn
7. I don’t think there’s been a day in the last four years since I originally shared this message that I haven’t had a chance to put this into practice
8. By the way, for those of you who knew *Lucille* – this was her favorite sermon.

II. TEXT

A. Deuteronomy 5:16

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

1. Mother's Day was the idea of a woman named Anna Jarvis.
 - a. Jarvis lived in Grafton, West Virginia
 - b. her mother died in 1905, and consumed with feelings of guilt for over 2 years for not having appreciated her more --
 - c. she convinced the pastor of the church where her mother had taught Sunday School for 20 years to hold a memorial service in her honor
 - d. other members of the church were so enthused, they decided to remember their mother's as well
 - e. other churches in the city and state quickly caught hold of the idea, and in short order, Mother's Day observances swept the nation
 - f. now, 90 years later, it has spread around the world as an annual event held the 2nd Sunday in May
2. You know, it's great to celebrate Mother's Day, but we shouldn't honor them just one day a year
 - a. we shouldn't take all our honor and appreciation and save it up
 - b. then bring it all out and show it on just one day by making them breakfast in bed, buying them a potted plant and a box of chocolates, and then taking them out for dinner
 - c. now – they love it that we do all that – but we shouldn't just show them honor one day out of 365 – right ladies?
3. This verse says that we are to honor our parents *continually*
4. In fact, this command is so important, it's included as one of the 10 Commandments!
 - a. it's one of the Big 10
 - b. it numbers as one of the fundamental and foundational precepts of the entire law of God
5. And there's good reason why
6. You see, this command to honor our father & mother is the bridge between the first 4, which speak of our *duty to God*, and the final 5, which detail our *duty to others*
7. In reality, our attitudes and actions toward other human beings will ultimately be determined by our attitude and actions toward God.
8. Christian philosopher Ravi Zacharias wrote a book a few years ago titled, *Can Man Be Good Without God*.
 - a. the conclusion was a resounding, "No."
 - b. without God, there are no absolutes
 - c. in the absence of absolutes, right is determined by might
 - d. and morality is decided by what the majority want
 - e. since man is fallen and bent toward evil, injustice and cruelty will eventually prevail
 - f. this is why secular humanism is doomed to failure
 - 1) secular humanists dream of Utopia
 - 2) but their beliefs hold the seeds of their own destruction
 - g. man cannot and *will not* be good without God.
9. So in the 10 Commandments, God *first* directs us how to relate to *Him*
10. The first 4 commands can be summed up by saying they call us to honor God

as our Creator *and* Master

11. The last 5 commands call us to honor other men and women by respecting their bodies, their property, and their reputations
12. The 5th commandment, the command to honor father and mother, is the perfect bridge between these two *directions of honor*

B. What Is Honor?

1. What does the 5th command mean when it says we are to *honor* our parents?
2. *honor* means *to esteem*; to attribute *value* to
 - a. when we say that we *honor* someone, it means we recognize and accept their value
 - b. but honor goes beyond a mere *mental* acknowledgement of someone's worth
 - c. honor is only *real* when our actions demonstrate that recognition of worth
 - d. you cannot honor someone unless you *treat* them with dignity and respect
 - e. such respect reveals the value you recognize in them
3. Let me use an example . . .
 - a. when you go to the store and take out your wallet to pay for whatever items you've selected,
 - b. the cashier *honors* those dollars you hand them because he or she *recognizes* their worth
 - c. the sale is made because the value of the items is considered by both you and the store as being equivalent
4. In a similar way, we are to show honor, first to God, then to others
5. We are to recognize their worth, and then *act* in such a way that that worth is *lived out* in our relationships with Him, & them
6. The way we treat others is a kind of "making payments" on the debt of honor that is place on us be God.
7. For example, returning to my illustration:
 - a. you're at WalMart – you pay for your items because of the value both you and the store put in those dollars in your wallet
 - b. then as you leave and walk to the front door of the store, because you recognize the value of that lady who is coming into the store with a stroller, you hold the door open for her and let her through before you exit.

C. A Failure in Honoring One Another

1. There's something deep within every heart that yearns for God
2. It's the call of the Creator on the soul of His creation
3. There's a stirring at the core of our being that recognizes we are more than just the result of evolution
 - a. we are far more than grown up germs who crawled out of the primordial soup
 - b. and no matter how *different* we may all be in this room this morning
 - c. there is *one thing* we all have in common
 - d. and that is the desire to be treated with dignity by others
4. Man, though fallen, still bears the image of God

5. We sense the value and worth of our own person and want others to honor that worth
6. The problem is that because we *are* fallen, because sin has distorted and marred us, we've become selfish
 - a. we want others to honor us and treat *us* with dignity
 - b. but all too often we fail to honor and respect others
7. God's command is simple, and at the same time profound
 - a. we are to recognize the value He places on others
 - b. and the first place we learn to do that is in the home, as children

D. Children & Honor

1. When children are born, they are perfect object lessons on the fallenness of the human race
 2. If you want a graduate level education on human behavior and the theology of sin, sign up for a shift in the Nursery
 3. Babies think about only one thing – *themselves*; their belly, their comfort, their sleep - SELF sits central in an infant
 4. As a child grows, one of the signs of maturity we look for is that he/she becomes more responsive and responsible to others
 5. It's God's plan that children first learn to value *others* by valuing their parents
 6. Ultimately, God wants each boy and girl to value *Him* above all
 7. But when children are young, the concept of God is a bit deep
 8. So God gives them parents to *learn* the principles of honor and respect
 9. He wants them to learn that they are to live out this honor by *obeying* mom & dad
 10. Then, when they are a bit older and able to grasp the idea of God, they will have learned the heart attitude and principle of honor and be able to transfer it to Him
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11. One night during a terrible storm, a terrified little girl got out of her bed and went into her parents room.
 - a. she woke her mother and said, "Mommy, I'm scared."
 - b. the mother told her to go back to her room and say a prayer and ask the Lord to protect her.
 - c. a few minutes later, the girl was back at her mother's bedside asking if she could get in bed with her; she was still scared.
 - d. when the mother asked her if she had prayed, the little girl said she had
 - e. the mother then told her, "Honey, God is here with you. He'll protect you."
 - f. the little girl replied, "I know – but I need someone with skin on."
 12. The time to learn the principle of honor is when we are young, very young
 - a. and God intends parents to be His representatives with skin on
 - b. it's as children learn the principle of honoring mom and dad that they are then able to transfer it to others, and ultimately, to God.

E. Trouble

1. Friends, one of the main reasons why we are experiencing so much trouble in our nation today is because as our culture has rejected God and His word,

- we've turned to the bankrupt philosophies of man in the raising of our children
2. For the last two generations parents have chucked God's direction for raising kids and have followed what is called "child-centered parenting"
 - a. in child-centered parenting, mom & dad *reinforce* a child's sense of selfishness
 - b. the child is made to feel that he/she is the *center of the universe*
 - c. the chief concern of the parents is the child's *happiness* rather than *holiness*
 - d. and they do what ever they can to make sure the child is *happy*
 3. Instead of being mom and dad, they try to be *friends* with their kids
 - a. instead of taking charge and *raising* their children
 - b. they see themselves as coaches who come along side
 - c. while it's true that the role of the parent has to change as the child grows up,
 - d. when children are *young*, they don't need mom and dad to be their friends,
 - e. they need them to be an adult and to give them firm and loving direction
 4. It's not hard to understand why children raised under child-centered parenting become totally self-absorbed and self-obsessed
 - a. these are the ones who when they grow up, leave *their* families after 10 years of marriage with three kids so they can "find themselves"
 - b. these are the ones who lie, and cheat, and steal with little sense of guilt
 - c. after all, their personal happiness is all that matters
 5. Because they were never taught to recognize the value of anyone but themselves, they live totally for self

F. The Wisdom Of The Command

1. Look again at what God says in the fifth commandment . . .

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

2. Most people think that you have to *earn* honor
3. But that idea is foreign to scripture
4. God doesn't say we are to honor our parents *if they deserve it*
5. He simply *commands* it
6. Remember, honor is the recognition of someone's worth
7. And it is *God* who places worth on people
 - a. people have value, not because of what they've done
 - b. not because of what level they've risen to in society
 - c. they have value because God says so – they are valuable *to Him*
8. Honor simply means to recognize and actively respect that value
9. In Romans 13, the Apostle Paul writes . . .

Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are *due*, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

- a. because God commands us to honor our parents, we owe them a debt of honor
- b. we must get it out of our heads that honor is earned – it isn't earned, it's owed
- c. that's what Paul means here when he says, "Render to all their due."

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10. The reason God included the honoring of parents in the Big 10 is because the first place a person learns honor is at home - and if they don't learn it there, it's likely they never will
 11. That is why we find a promise attached to the command
 - a. if a person learns as a child to honor her parents, then she'll know a good life
 - b. actually - this is less an iron-clad *personal* promise so much as it is a general principle for all of mankind
 - c. God is telling *families* and *nations* that if they learn this foundational principle of life, then their society will know blessing and prosperity
 - d. indeed - imagine a land where children from a young age were taught to respect others, to value them as people created in the image of God
 - e. imagine a society in which people thought not only of their own welfare but the welfare of others
 - f. where people actively and consistently respected the feelings and happiness of their fellow man
 12. Honor is not something one *earns* - it is something own *owes!*

III. CONCLUSION

A. Let's Get Practical

1. Okay, so let's get down to brass tacks
2. How can we put this into practice - how can we take this and apply it right now?

1) Parents - Don't follow a child-centered form of parenting

- a) rather, use a *God-centered* form of parenting
- b) make His word the standard of your training, not the empty and vain philosophies of Dr. Spock and Co.
- c) help your child to see that they are but a part of your family, and also, an important part of God's larger Kingdom
- d) as soon as your child is able to, help him or her start respecting others
- e) of course, they will never do that unless you are doing it first - and that leads me to the second point of application

2) You! Show honor to others

- a) recognize others as men and women God loves, values, and Christ died for
- b) actively show respect for them by deferring to them
 - 1) this has to start in our homes;
 - a) in the way mom and dad treat one another
 - b) in the comments and attitudes we have when we see certain people on TV
 - c) trust me, your children are learning a lot about honor as they watch you watch the news and see the President or the Governor appear on the screen
 - 2) after showing honor in the privacy of our own homes, it moves out

into the mall, the job, and school

- a) how do you treat that clerk behind the counter at Macy's?
- b) do you respect the cashier at Von's?
- c) do you constantly put down your supervisor at work?
- c) remember, the honor you are called upon to show others has nothing to do with merit: we show honor to others regardless of whether or not they deserve it
- d) honor is a debt placed on us by God that can only be paid when we treat them as *we* would *want* to be treated

B. For Christians

1. For Christians, everyday is Mother's Day and Father's Day
2. Every day is children's day, and grandparents day
3. Really - everyday is another day to love, honor, and serve others to the glory of God
4. And as we do, ultimately, we are honoring God!