

**Meeting Jesus In The Fifth Commandment**  
**Exodus 20:12**

**October 21, 2018**

**SI:** We're studying the Ten Commandments this fall.

The theme verse guiding our of our study is Romans 10:4,

Christ is the end of the law.

Doesn't mean Christ gets rid of the law or abolishes the law so don't have to keep.

End is the Greek word telos—goal, aim, fulfillment—that kind of end.

When we study each Commandment we should end up at Jesus.

His perfection, his substitution, his deliverance—and ultimately we should see how the Commandments are ways for us to respond to Jesus in faith.

Honor your father and your mother,

that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the earth. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the nurture and instruction of the Lord.

**INTRO:** “What is happening to our young people? They disrespect their elders, they disobey their parents. They ignore the law. They roam the streets. They are inflamed with wild notions. Their morals are decaying. What is to become of them?”

Who said that? Was it James Dobson, *Focus on the Family*?  
Plato said that, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC!

How about this:

“The young people of today think of nothing but themselves. They have no reverence for parents or old age. They are impatient of all restraint. As for the girls, they are brash, immodest and unladylike in speech, behavior and dress.”

That’s from a sermon preached in the year 1274 by French priest, Peter the Hermit.

I listened to a sermon this week about the fifth commandment and the preacher said American popular culture has done something that’s never been done in history.

I has idolized youthful rebellion.

That’s how you become an authentic person—by rebelling.

That’s how you become the real you—by disrespect for old age and wisdom.

Because of this warped cultural value, things are uniquely bad in our day and age.

Maybe he’s right. But it sounds like it was pretty bad in 1274.

Girls being immodest in their dress.

Just this week Allison and I were laughing about a famous battle she had with Adrienne one Sunday morning over her clothes being too tight.

I just hope some day Adrienne has a daughter and gets a taste of own medicine!

The lesson we need to take to heart is not that young people are so bad today.

It’s that human nature doesn’t change. None of us like authority.

In fact, the Bible uses youthful rebellion to epitomize the sinful rejection of God’s authority that is in all of our hearts.

Proverbs says:

The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother  
will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.

Kids, don’t roll your eyes when your parents tell you to do something.

I think Eliza rolled her eyes at me once.

Being eaten by birds was considered a curse for those who had rejected God.

The prophet Micah declared that the Lord was going to allow Jerusalem and

Samaria to be destroyed by foreign armies because of their sins. One sin was:  
For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother,  
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

In Romans 1 Paul is talking about people who have rejected God.

Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. 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, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents . . .

Paul puts disobeying parents in the same list with murder and hating God.

David says in one of his Psalms:

Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways;  
according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD.

We think: I did those foolish things a long time ago when I was young.

It doesn't count. That's not the real me. That was a long time ago.

David, says, No—those sins of my youth are indicative of my rebellious heart.  
We love our autonomy. We push back against authority.

Here's why I'm focusing on this—

Because it would be easy to think the Fifth Commandment mostly  
applies to children or teenagers living at home. It actually applies to all of us.  
And, as we'll see, it's not just about honoring your parents,  
it's about all the authorities God has put in your life.

Proverbs 10:17 says:

Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life.

How do we respect, appreciate, and heed authority?

How do we get to the point where we don't resist authority but appreciate it?

It's going to take supernatural power.

It's going to take Jesus Christ's forgiveness and grace. We'll talk about that.

Look at Fifth Commandment under three headings, three key words.

1. Parents
2. Honor
3. Promise

## MP#1 Parents

One way of thinking about the Ten Commandments is that they are like chapter headings that cover every important dimension of human life.

The first three commandments—

No other gods, no manmade images of God, don't misuse the Lord's name—  
about our lives in relationship with God our Maker and Savior.

The fourth commandment, last week, remember the Sabbath Day—  
it's about our lives at work and rest.

The sixth commandment, next week, you shall not kill—  
it's about our lives as neighbors.

The seventh, you shall not commit adultery—covers our sexual life.

The eighth, you shall not steal—covers our life as property owners.

The ninth, you shall not bear false witness—covers our word life

The tenth, you shall not covet—our thought life

So what about the Fifth Commandment?

It's about our family life, and more broadly, our life under authority.

The biblical view is that all authority in our lives is derived from God.

God exercises his authority over us through human authorities.

And that starts with your parents.

One profound detail of this commandment that's easy to miss is the inclusion of "your mother." Honor your father and your mother.

All ancient cultures insisted fathers be honored, but mothers didn't get same honor.

When sons came of age they would often have authority over their mothers.

But throughout the Bible, mothers are authority figures who are owed honor.

Proverbs says:

Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

Even when you're a grownup, honor your mother by listening to her and not ridiculing her ideas and advice. We need to appreciate how countercultural this.

The reason mothers are revered in Western culture is influence of biblical ethic.

But mothers and fathers are not just the parents who raised us.

The Bible applies the language of fathers and mothers to the spiritual leaders and authorities in our lives who are not blood relatives.

When the prophet Elijah was being taken up to heaven in the chariot and whirlwind Elisha, called out, My father, my father.

They were not blood relatives, but Elijah was Elisha's spiritual mentor and leader.

The prophetess Deborah. During a very troubled time in Israel's history she held

court under a palm tree in her hometown and people came from all over to have their disputes settled. She was called a mother in Israel.

When Paul writes to the Christians in the Galatian church he calls them:

My little children. They aren't his biological children.

But spiritually they were, because he had brought them into the faith.

The most interesting place in the Bible where this occurs is Matthew 12.

Jesus himself says: Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

Even Jesus, perfect, sinless as he was, recognized older believers as spiritual authorities in his life, worthy to be called mother and father.

That's all within the church as the family of God.

The Bible also extends authority to those who are over us in other spheres of life.

We wouldn't give these people the title father or mother, but still authorities.

There are two key passages that we ought to know. 1 Peter 2 and Romans 13.

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right . . . Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

There's so much in that passage that needs comment, but let's take the big point.

As believers living under God, recognizing ourselves as servants of God, we submit and give honor to authorities because God has instituted them.

Paul says much the same in Romans 13

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities.

The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Paul calls governing authorities God's ministers. Ends by saying:

This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's ministers, who give their full time to governing.<sup>7</sup> Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

The Apostles' teaching is quite something when you realize the king was Caesar, the governing authorities were the Roman government, no friends of church.

Finally, the Bible insists that all elderly people are owed deference and respect.

Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God.

I am Yahweh.

So in every sphere of life—family, work, state, church, society—God has established authorities that we are to honor.

## MP#2 Honor

So let's think for a minute about honor in the Fifth Commandment.

At the most basic level it's about obeying your mom and dad when you are a child in the home under their authority.

But the Bible acknowledges that parental authority requiring obedience doesn't last into adulthood.

At the very beginning of the Bible we are told that a man will leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife. Which speaks of a new family.

What if someone never gets married?

Is that person still under parental authority requiring obedience even if they are and adult? Of course not. Children obey your parents.

But no matter how old you are, God expects you to honor your parents.

Is there also a limit to the obedience we owe governing authorities? Yes there is.

It's best summed up with the Apostle Peter's words. The Jewish Ruling

Counsel told him to stop preaching: He said, with all respect:

"We must obey God rather than men." Honor always required. Obedience not.

So let's focus on honor. What does it mean?

The verb translated honor is interesting.

It's derived from a Hebrew noun meaning weight or an adjective meaning heavy.

The adjective is used to describe Eli as a heavy man, Absalom's hair was heavy.

This lead to the figurative idea of something weighty being noteworthy, glorious.

We even use it in English this way: That's a weighty matter. Weighty decision.

It's something of importance, something that requires full attention.

So to honor someone from the Bible's perspective is to consider them weighty.

To respect, esteem, acknowledge their worth, pay attention to them.

Obedience is one way of doing that, but there are other ways.

In one of John Piper's books he talks about his father who was often away from the family. He was a traveling evangelist. His absences were hard on them.

Piper acknowledges that but he focuses on his father's strong sense of call.

Even though his father is dead, he honors him in way he speaks of him.

So anything a child or an adult child does that shows affection, esteem, and gratitude to a parent is honoring them.

Expressions of affection and gratitude, remembering a birthday,

maintaining regular communication, caring for them in age and infirmity.

Remember, when Jesus dying on cross, one of last actions, Mary into John's care. You don't have to be a Christian to understand that.

When Paul says: Children obey your parents for this is right.

That phrase “for this is right” is his appeal to universal right and wrong.

Even pagans understand it’s right to honor and obey parents.

But to emphasize this, think now about your own situation, your own family, your own parents. There may be things that have made your life difficult.

There may be things your parents have done that trouble you.

Maybe they are still doing things that cause problems.

As a Christian, with a deeper understanding of the sacred calling of parents, you are probably even more attuned to your parents’ failings.

Some of you had dads who were angry and overbearing.

They provoked to anger or discouraged you—exactly what Paul says shouldn’t do.

Some of you had mothers who were indifferent or smothering.

Some had parents who never taught you the Bible, never demonstrated prayer.

Or parents who paraded their unhappy marriage before their children.

Just this week a woman told me: My mother never showed me how to be an encouraging wife to a husband. I’ve had to figure that out myself.

We all know from experience how parents can make life difficult for sons and daughters in law, grandchildren, adult children.

Some aged parents are demanding to point of exasperation, don’t forget slights.

And the list goes on.

Even the best Christian parents have faults that affect their children for the rest of their lives. We know this. And if you are a parent all too aware of faults.

And probably worried about unhappy consequences for children.

I think I’m more grateful for God’s forgiveness of my sins as the father of my children than his forgiveness of any other of my sins.

Those are the sins and failures that trouble me the most.

Maybe you had wonderful, kind, balanced, loving Christian parents and never a cloud darkened your childhood. Honoring your parents should be easy.

Or maybe you have a list of genuine wrongs and failures

and honoring your parents is hard. They haven’t been honorable.

But the Lord says that you are to honor them and to this command is attached a promise.

Let’s look at it.

### **MP#3 Promise**

The promise is:

that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

This promise has three levels.

On this first level, this is a statement of the way things are in God's world.

God's law is woven into the fabric of reality.

In general, people who honor their parents have a longer, better life than those who don't. Their days are longer.

This sounds very much like something you would read in Proverbs.

Like Prov 4:10 Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.

One time my sister and I were watching my mother cook and she took some pans off the stove and said to us. Now do not touch these burners.

They don't look hot, but they are still hot.

My sister, who was about four years old at the time, placed her hand on the burner closest to her and said, "This one's not hot." "This one's not . . . ahghh!!"

In the most fundamental sense obeying your parents extends your life.

Look both ways when you cross the street.

Choose your companions wisely. Study hard. Marry well.

If you honor your parents, listen to wisdom, will in a general sense go well.

But there's a second level to this promise.

It's in the word "the land." Your days will be long in the land.

What land? Remember who this command was given to.

Israelites. Newly freed from slavery in Egypt. On way where?

To the Promised Land. To Canaan.

Honor your parents and you'll enjoy long life in the Promised Land.

But God's commands and his promises weren't just for national Israel.

They are for us too. For Gentiles.

When Paul quotes this command in Ephesians 6. Children obey your parents.

This command has a promise. He doesn't say land, he says earth.

Long life on the earth.

Jesus does the same thing in the Sermon on the Mount.

OT says the meek will inherit the land—Promised Land

Jesus says: The meek will inherit the earth, the world.

What does this change signify? Why does it go from land to earth or world.

It's a pointer to eternal life. It's a pointer to the new creation.

The Promised Land itself was just a foretaste of what God has planned



for his people. Life forever in a land flowing with milk and honey—  
which is this world redeemed and made known through Christ.  
So the promise in the Fifth Commandment is not just practical wisdom—  
you obey your parents, you'll live longer and better in this life, this world.  
It's a promise of eternal life. It's a promise of life in heaven and new creation.  
It's by honoring and obeying parents that we learn what it means to  
honor and obey God—and that is a path to eternal life.

Wait a minute, your theology is kicking in at this point.  
Salvation is not by obeying the commands, it's by faith in Christ.  
And besides I have not kept this command. I've disobeyed my parents.  
I've dishonored them. I've resisted authorities in my life.

Remember David's prayer:

Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways;  
according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD.

That brings us to the deepest level of this command and promise.  
It's kept and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

There's a mysterious statement in Hebrews 5.

It says that during Jesus' days on earth he learned obedience.

How did he learn it? He learned it first as a boy and then as a man.

He learned it by learning to obey his parents. Which he did. Subject to them.  
When the Devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness and he responded by quoting  
three verses from Deuteronomy, how did Jesus know those verses?

From obeying his parents when they said: It's time to go to synagogue.

And he went with a good spirit. Sabbath school teacher, memorize verses.

He honored that authority too.

Jesus didn't appear on the earth as an adult man like Adam.

He was a little baby, dependent on his parents. He obeyed them.

And then what was the result of Jesus learning to obey his mom and dad?

There came a very hard day, when his heavenly Father said—this is how you  
must obey me. This is the plan of salvation.

For you to be betrayed into the hands of cruel men and mocked and crucified.

This is what I want you to do. To be the lamb slain for the sins of the world.

And Jesus Christ honored his Father and obeyed him.

And that means we who trust him will live long in the Promised Land.

There's so much in this commandment.

We could flip it around and look at what it says to parents.

How the command for our children to honor us means we must be honorable. We could explore how as a body of believers we are to view and raise children of this church family.

We could explore in more depth application to other authorities in our lives.

But let's leave with this:

In keeping the commandments of God there is great reward.

Jesus Christ kept the commandments as a boy and as a man for your salvation. Now you respond in gratitude by honoring the authorities God has placed over you.