



November 10–11, 2012
Exodus 20
“Honor Mom and Dad”
Pastor Gary Hamrick

Well, we’ve finally made it to the favorite Commandment of every parent! However, there’s something in this commandment for everyone, no matter what your stage of life or family status. This one’s for children living at home, as well as adult children who are grown and living on their own, plus those who have children or one day hope to have children, and finally, adult children with an aging parent or parents.

It’s interesting to note that the first four Commandments focus on our (vertical) relationship with God, while the last six are devoted to our relationships with one another (horizontal). Jewish scholars, however, divide them equally into five and five. They included honoring your parent(s) as part of a person’s duty to God. Their position is: How can we show honor to God whom we have not seen if we don’t first honor our parents, whom we do see?

God has placed parents in roles of responsibility and authority to love and lead children, and, since God has defined the family and delegated authority to parents, when we honor our parents, we honor God, because they are his representatives in the home. The Lord is declaring and defining this Commandment as being the building block – the family – for every society. Parental authority is indispensable to a stable society. The well being of a person, people or nation begins in the home, and, ideally, the home is where a father and/or mother work together with God’s help to provide a loving, stable environment for their children by bringing them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Studying this Commandment may be a bit challenging because everyone will approach this one from a different perspective, depending on the kind of family in which they were raised. Some will have had the blessing of having admirable parents, which obviously makes it much easier to honor their parents. Others have had adoptive

parents, so they are to be honored as Mom and Dad. Some have experienced the tragedy of an absent parent or parents, either because of death, divorce, or abandonment. In some cases one or both parents may have physically been in the house, but emotionally, they were disengaged. Sadly, some have had abusive parents who have mistreated or neglected them.

Even though we may not have the answer to every situation, we're going to learn in this study that God wants us to honor our parent/parents in all situations. We must remember that the Lord doesn't tell us to honor our parents if they were good, loving, caring, or "cool." Nor does he tell us to honor our parents if we like them. He simply says, "*Honor your father and mother.*"

Honor

1. The Hebrew word for honor is *kabed*, which means, to make heavy.
 - a. This word implies weightiness.
 - b. Another way of saying this is "value your parents," because precious stones and metals are weighed to determine worth or value.
 - c. God's instruction to us is to give our parent(s) "weighty worth."
 - d. Obviously, the opposite would be to make "light" of, make fun of or diminish the importance of parents.
 - e. What the Lord wants from us is to have a "heavy appreciation" for our parents.
2. Parents are God's appointed authority in our lives.
3. To honor your parents means:
 - a. Recognizing their worth as God's appointed authority in our lives.
 - b. Treating them as being valuable.
 - c. When they fail, honor them with grace rather than exposing their faults.

Respect

4. **Leviticus 19:3** - "*Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.*"
5. The Hebrew word for respect is *yare*, which means, to fear, revere, and stand in awe.
6. The Greek word for respect is often *phobos*, which means, to fear.

7. When you see the word respect in the Bible, a healthy dose of fear is often attached to its meaning.
8. It's not too hard to find evidence for the fact that a generation ago children respected their parents, and, sadly, the evidence can be found everywhere in our culture that would demonstrate that many children are no longer taught to properly respect their parents.
 - a. Parents *are not* supposed to be their children's best friend.
 - b. Parents *are not* supposed to negotiate with their children.
 - c. Parents are supposed to be loving disciplinarians who follow through with consistent consequences when their children dishonor or disrespect them.
 - d. If parents renounce their role as a loving disciplinarian, their children will grow up and not respect their teachers, coaches, boss, spouse, neighbors, country, etc.
9. Children are to respect their parents by the way they talk to them, listen to them, and respond to them.
 - a. This means children shouldn't sigh, mock, stomp their feet or roll their eyes.
10. **Proverbs 30:17** - *"The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures."*

Obey

11. **Ephesians 6:1-4** - *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother 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."*
 - a. Notice that the responsibility is on the father!
12. The Greek word for obey is *hupakouo*, which means, to "listen under."
 - a. The idea is that children are to listen to what their parents say because they are under the authority of their parents.
13. Children are to obey their parents *"in the Lord,"* which is conditional.
 - a. If parents want their child to do something that is against the Word of God, they don't have to do it.
14. **Deuteronomy 21:18-21** - *"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the*

elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid."

15. **2 Timothy 3:1-2** - *"But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents..."*
16. Even when we grow up and leave home to start a life or a family of our own, we are still expected to honor and respect our parents.
17. Obedience can be a different matter altogether.
 - a. Once we leave home, we become directly accountable to the Lord.
 - b. It's okay to consider the counsel of your parents, but the final decision on a matter is to be decided by you and the Lord - through prayer and the Scriptures.
18. Children are supposed to care for their aging parents.
 - a. **1 Timothy 5:4** - *"... children... should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God."*
 - b. Honoring your parents means that you are to provide adequate care for them in their old age or at the very least see to it that adequate care is provided for them when you aren't able to physically or financially care for them.¹
 - c. One biblical example of this would be Jesus, who made provision for his mother, Mary.
 - i. **John 19:26-27** - *"When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved 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 [John] took her into his home."*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.

¹ With the modern reality of things like Alzheimer's and other illnesses, sometimes it's not possible for us to care for our parents, but at the very least, we are to see to it that they get the kind of professional care that they deserve when we can't do it ourselves.

2. Read [Exodus 20:12](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Read and spend time talking about the humorous illustration Pastor Gary shared about the man who wrote his PhD Thesis on child psychology.
 - a. When he was single the title was *5 Definitives on Child Rearing*.
 - b. When he married and had one child, the title was changed to *5 Principles on Child Rearing*.
 - c. When he had three children, he changed the title to *5 Thoughts on Child Rearing*.
 - d. When his fifth child was born, he changed the title to *Help Me, I'm Dying*.
4. Provide an overview of the [Genesis 9](#) account of Noah and his sons, one of whom dishonored his father and the other two who honored Noah.
 - a. Noah, his wife, their three sons, and his daughters-in-law were on the Ark for one year and ten days.
 - b. When they left the Ark after the water receded, Noah planted a vineyard, and, in time, he made wine and got drunk.
 - c. Noah's son, Ham, went into their tent and saw his father drunk, naked, sprawled out and passed out.
 - i. The Scripture indicates that he at the very least mocked or dishonored his father in some way.
 - d. When Shem and Japheth, Noah's other sons, found out what happened, they took a garment, put it across their shoulders and walked into the tent backwards to "*cover their father's nakedness.*"
 - e. When Noah awoke from his stupor and learned what had happened, he cursed Ham's family and blessed the families of Shem and Japheth.
 - f. The son who dishonored his father was dishonored himself, and the sons who honored their father were honored themselves.
 - g. Parents do stupid things from time to time, and one way you can honor your parents is to cover their shame, not exploit it.
5. Give opportunity for people to share a little bit about their relationship with their parent(s) and the home life they had growing up. *
6. Read and discuss [Psalm 68:5](#).
 - a. Allow time for people who grew up in a troubled home to share their experience of God being their father as described in this psalm. *
7. Allow the people in your group to share experiences they've had when they dishonored their mother and/or father.
 - a. Describe the short-term and long-term effects on their relationship with their mother and/or father.
 - b. Read and discuss [Deuteronomy 21:18-21](#) and [2 Timothy 3:1-2](#).

- c. When you read [Proverbs 30:17](#), what level of importance does God place on valuing, honoring, respecting and obeying parents?
8. Allow the people in the group to share experiences they've had about times when they honored their mother and/or father.
 - a. Describe the short-term and long-term effects on their relationship with their mother and/or father.
 - b. How have your parents or the Lord blessed you because of your God-honoring relationship?
9. If your group is made up of young adults in their 20s and 30s, spend time talking about ways they are honoring and respecting their parents now that they are out on their own.
 - a. How have you handled being obedient to your parents?
 - b. Has there been conflict, both resolved and unresolved, over things your parents wanted you to do that went contrary to Scripture or what you felt was the Lord's will for your life?
10. If your group is made up of adults in their 40s, 50s and 60s, spend time talking about ways they are honoring and respecting their parents by providing appropriate care for their aging parents.
 - a. Read and discuss [Ephesians 6:1-4](#) and [John 19:26-27](#).
11. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: honor their parents by giving grace rather than exposing their faults; strive to honor God by valuing, honoring, respecting, and obeying their parent(s).

- i. You shall have no other gods before me
- ii. You shall not make for yourself an idol
- iii. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God
- iv. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy
- v. Honor your father and mother
- vi. You shall not murder
- vii. You shall not commit adultery
- viii. You shall not steal
- ix. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor
- x. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor

* Leaders/Hosts – Please make sure you carefully monitor the discussion when it comes to people sharing their experiences about growing up in a non-Christian home. Let your group members know you would be willing to meet with them for prayer and encouragement regarding unresolved family issues, hurt feelings, damaged relationships, etc.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).