

Newsletter April - May 2016

Honouring Your Parents

"Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

Exodus 20:12

To honour our parents is to elevate them to a place of high value. To give them substantial weight.

We live in a time when many people wish that the fifth commandment - to honour our parents - could be taken out of the Bible. This sentiment becomes stronger when the focus shifts to fathers. Some schools have banned celebration of Fathers' Day because it offends too many children with absent fathers! Some of our churches have not been very helpful either. Fathers' Day church services are opportunities for father bashing.

Yet many who dare to honour their parents (Mum & Dad) are finding that obeying this forgotten commandment is one of the most profound experiences of adulthood.

We all have very deep connections with our parents. They actually live in you through their words and actions. That is why the pain we feel when things don't go well is of a different sort. Some people do a good tango with their parents and they wish it could go on forever, whilst others know nothing else but pain inflicted on them by their parents. Pain of abandonment, neglect, abuse, unspeakable evils perpetuated against you by parents who perhaps continue to excuse or even justify their actions! That connection you have with them down deep in your soul still leads you to yearn for things to work out right. Then you feel trapped and the pain and anger gnaws

constantly. Damned if you stayed and damned if you abandon the offending parent. "Stop running for you cannot outrun what is in you."

Honouring parents as children simply requires you obeying your parents. So what does it look like when you become an independent adult?

Thanking our parents is the starting point for honouring them. It is so easy to write a thousand volume catalogue of things our parents did not do right, but if we look carefully, we will find something good to thank them for. However, if your situation is peculiarly unique in evil meted out to you, then simply thank your parents for showing you how not to treat a child. C.H Spurgeon was mugged on a street in London. He was manhandled and had his belongings stolen. He got home, fell on his knees and thanked God that he was not the one that did such a thing to someone else. Then he prayed for the offending thieves. That is what I mean.

Honouring your parents also means forgiving them for all they've done or omitted doing in your life. Let go of the offence. What you do not let go of will cling to you. If you don't forgive and totally let go, you will most likely find yourself parenting your own children from the place of fear and pain and not pleasure. Without knowing it, your pain will spill over into your relationship with your children and spouse. Sadly for some people, the offending parents are long dead, yet they remain within you and continue to pull the strings of your life. Forgive them posthumously.

If you are bold enough to thank your parents, you will be able to praising them for something good in their life. This is very liberating. Every wounding parent was a wounded child.

AAA Sincerely praising someone shows honest appreciation of the person. Everyone needs acceptance and love. You cannot love someone you do not accept. Most parents know that failed in some way, and they fear that their children might never forgive them. So, thanking, forgiving and praising them breaks every yoke in their lives and sets off a tsunami of freedom and hope in the wider family.

Honouring your parents also means taking the initiative to build honest relationship. Remember that every one of us starts life as a child, and if you happen to be blessed with a really long life (at least to see your children established with their own families), then you will finish as a child. You will experience role reversal. Once upon a time you parented your children now they will parent you! Ha! Ha!! Ha!!!

So now that you are an independent adult, you must take the initiative to reach out to your parents. This will necessarily involve patiently listening to them (“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” James 1:19). If you must disagree, do so respectfully (“Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father...older women as mothers” 1 Timothy 5:1-2). Regular contact (“See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!” Galatians 6:11) and visits will be marvellous (“I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete” 2 John 12).

Be generous towards your parents (“If a widow has children or grandchildren, these 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”

1 Timothy 5:4). Love them consistently (“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other” 1 Thessalonians 3:12).

Correct your parents gently (“A person finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word” Proverbs 15:23).

Continue to ask God to show you good things about your parents that you can fondly reminisce (“You always have pleasant memories of us” 1 Thessalonians 3:6). Confidently share your testimonies faith in Christ with your parents. Let the life of Christ in you flow unencumbered (“This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life” 1 John 5:11-12).

When you honour your parents you break free from negative generational patterns and allow yourself the opportunity to leave healthy legacies for future generations.

Honouring parents is a keystone in building healthy families and strong societies.

Honouring our parents is so significant that God made it the first commandment with a promise (“Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;” Ephesians 6:2)

Your obedience will be greatly rewarded.

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