Honoring Parents

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The Challenge

A. We live in perilous times of the last days with the rise of contemporary Christianity (II Tim 3:1-5).
   1. We can preach the word (II Tim 4:2) and separate from them (II Tim 3:5) to follow brother Paul.
   2. But we can also stand against their compromise of God's word by exalting the honor of parents.

B. Disobedience to parents is a symptom of Christians who love pleasure and only a ritual (II Tim 3:2).
   1. God's judgment on men and nations includes child rebellion against parents (Is 3:5; Rom 1:30).
   2. A form of godliness without the power thereof (authority) does not promote the honor of parents.

The Definition

A. It is important for a full lesson to clearly distinguish between obeying parents and honoring parents.
   1. God's commandments are exceeding broad, and we do not want to miss anything (Ps 119:96).
   2. The fifth of Ten Commandments is parental honor, not child obedience (Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16).
   3. It is the honor of parents that has the gracious promise and reward attached (Ephesians 6:1-3).
   4. It is possible to obey your parents, but not honor them; but you cannot honor and disobey them.
   5. Honor is the fullest expression in Scripture regarding parents, so we ought to emphasize it.

B. The Bible gives numerous connections to help us understand the nature of true honor of another.
   1. Honoring widows is specifically defined as financial support (I Timothy 5:3-16; Matt 15:1-6); you can see clearly that this obligation extends far beyond bare obedience to their requests.
   2. Observe how financial support agrees with honoring the Lord financially (Pr 3:9; I Tim 5:17-18).
   3. Observe that children considered here are clearly older than minors. Forget age in parental honor.
   4. Observe how this is called requiting parents – repaying them for work as parents (I Timothy 5:4).
   5. Observe that it is an article of our faith and something infidels do quite well (I Timothy 5:8).

C. The Bible gives positive synonyms and connections to help us fully appreciate what honor means.
   1. Honor is connected to fear: we should fear parents in the reverent way we fear God (Lev 19:3).
   2. Honor is connected to respect: for the parallelism in the text compares the two (Leviticus 19:15).
   3. Honor is shown by rising up: for you are to stand up before old men with gray hair (Lev 19:32).
   4. Honor is making high: for God made Israel a high nation with a name and honor (Deut 26:19).
   5. Honor is connected to glory: for God crowned Jesus Christ with both honor and glory (Ps 8:5).
   6. Honor is connected to preferences: for honor of another is preferential treatment (Rom 12:10).
   7. Honor is connected to reverence: for parents are to be reverenced by their children (Heb 12:9).

D. The Bible gives negative antonyms and connections to help us fully appreciate what honor means.

1. Honor opposes cursing: and it was punished by death (Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9; Prov 20:20; 30:11).
2. Honor opposes setting light: speaking disrespectfully was cursed (Deut 27:16; Ezekiel 22:7).
3. Honor opposes despising when old: your declining mother deservers your honor (Prov 23:22).
4. Honor opposes refusing to bless: so it includes the positive effort of blessing parents (Pr 30:11).
5. Honor opposes mocking with eyes: disrespectful body or facial expressions are sin (Prov 30:17).

E. We may practically apply these definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and connections to parental honor.
   1. Honoring your parents is figuring out unspoken desires and fulfilling them without their request.
   2. Honoring your parents is eagerly doing their every command, not merely cooperating with them.
   3. Honoring your parents is never jesting with them, to them, or about them and the parental office.
   4. Honoring your parents is openly communicating about everything in your life when they ask.
   5. Honoring your parents is giving gifts, providing service, and offering help without being asked.
   6. Honoring your parents is complimenting and praising them directly and before and to others.
   7. Honoring your parents is cheerfulness in all dealings with them, rather than begrudging respect.

F. Consider the great honor Moses showed even his foreign father-in-law in Israel (Exodus 18:7-8).

G. Consider how our Lord was thinking about taking care of His mother while dying (John 19:26-27).

The Importance

A. Parental honor is the fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:12; Deut 5:16).

B. Parental honor is the first commandment to which God attached a great promise (Ephesians 6:2-3).

C. Parental honor is a commandment with capital punishment attached for violating it (Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18-21; 27:16; Proverbs 20:20; 30:17; Matthew 15:4; Mark 7:10).

D. It is an article of our apostolic faith and something infidels even know to do, and it is to be charged upon the Lord's people so that they might be blameless (I Timothy 5:4,7-8).

E. It is an assumption of Scripture that children honor and reverence parents (Malachi 1:6; Heb 12:9).

F. It is a way we can adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:15-16; I Pet 2:12; 3:16).

G. It is a way we can defy and reprove carnal Christianity in these perilous times (Prov 28:4; Eph 5:11).

The Reward

A. Since all men want to live well and long, we should emphasize this duty with a promised reward.

B. You can do more for your longevity and health by honoring your parents than by diet or exercise.

C. Since we shall all one day be older, we must set an example for our children to follow toward us.

D. Since we all want our children to honor us some day, are we sowing for this future return (Gal 6:7)?

E. Age brings evil days without pleasure (Eccl 12:1), so we should give parents pleasure when we can.

F. God acknowledges that supporting parents is something good and acceptable to Him (I Tim 5:4).

G. Consider the blessing God pronounced on the honorable descendants of Jonadab (Jeremiah 35).

The Details

A. If your father or mother is unconverted, you still owe them the full honor God expects for the office.

B. Of course, if your father or mother is a scornful fool, you must apply wisdom in giving them honor.

C. In-laws and stepparents are your father and mother by marriage: honor them with full rights as well.

D. Guard against excessive familiarity. Keep some distance between parents and children for respect.

E. There is nothing wrong with a good nursing home, as long as parental honor is completely fulfilled.

F. Marriage is an act that ought to receive full parental blessing at any age (Genesis 27:46 – 28:9).

G. Do your parents have any outstanding request regarding reconciliation with a sibling? A visit to see them? Visit of grandchildren? Pictures of the family? A family reunion? Treatment of the children?

H. Do your parents have any health, financial, personal, marital, or spiritual needs you could provide?

I. Could you creatively honor them with a card? A call? A visit? A dinner out? A gift? And so forth?

J. Do you praise your parents to your children, with and without your parents' presence? A good test.

K. Have you honored your parents by expressing your love, admiration, and appreciation for them?