

Title: Honor Your Father and Mother

Text: Exodus 20.12

Theme: Honoring our parents is a command!

Series/Occasion: Mother's Day 2008

One of the features of the book of Exodus that we are studying is the prominent role that women have in this account. The Ancient Near East was the cradle of civilization. The historical records we have from that era for the most part do not say that much about women. But, God's Word does. Chapter 1 features the Egyptian midwives – Shiphrah and Puah who “feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.” Chapter 2 features Jochebed, the mother of Moses, whose ingenuity and resolve resulted in the saving of the savior – Moses. Also in chapter 2 was the involvement of Pharaoh's daughter who, like the Egyptian midwives, ignored the infanticide order of the king. Miriam's sister was also part of the plan to keep him alive. Before the 2nd chapter is over, Moses meets and marries Zipporah, who is featured in an unusual event in chapter 4. At the end of chapter 3, God specifically tells Moses that when it comes time for the Israelites to leave Egypt that “every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians.” In Aaron's genealogy recorded in chapter 6, four women are referred to, 2 of them by name.

Here in an era where women were often used, and overlooked, God draws much attention to these women and provides us with great snapshots of a tenacious and dangerous faith. This morning, in deference to Mother's Day, I am skipping ahead in the Exodus account to chapter 20, where Moses is on Mt. Sinai in order to receive from God, the constitution for the nation of Israel. He is about to be formally given from God Himself, what God expects His people to live like. This, incredible, covenant-making, covenant-keeping, empire-busting, Red Sea-splitting, Egyptian army-destroying, God is now about to give to these people His terms and expectations. “And God spoke all these words” (v.1).

The basis of these commands is Himself. Again and again, God stakes his commands upon the fact that He alone is God. “I AM the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” Implied is the idea – therefore!

- 1) No other gods (because there are none)
- 2) No idols (it would be a lie)
- 3) Do not misuse my name
- 4) Keep the Sabbath for me

The first four commands speak directly to our relationship with God. The next six speak to our relationship with each other. The very first command that God gives to Moses regarding the relationship of His people with each other is the command to “Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.” Wow! With all the things that God could command us to do such as: stamp out hunger, stamp out poverty, help sick people, etc., He says, as a first relational command – Honor your father and your mother. It is quite simple isn't it?

Honor - defined - the word to honor in the Hebrew text originally had the idea of something that was heavy, meaning very important. Therefore, the word used in this verse means, to treat a person with the utmost importance. You are to be impressed with this person. Now, true honor, or true respect means that you give respect, attention and obedience to this person.

1. **Honoring your parents is a reflection of your honor of God.**

A. **Honoring authority is a command in Scripture**

The command to honor your father and mother is found here in the ten commandments in Exodus 20, is repeated again in Leviticus 19 and again in Deuteronomy 5, is covered again Malachi 1, is stated once more in Ephesians 6, and is taught by Christ in Matthew 15, and is illustrated both positively and negatively throughout the historical books and then again in the book of Proverbs. This is a very important issue to God. This is not a spare time issue. This is a prime time issue. This is not, when you get around to it, this is in your face, get to it now.

I recognize that addressing this topic to some seems like something that is from the cartoon channel. You've got to be kidding me? Are kids really supposed to honor their parents? How does that work? It works by parents teaching this, and by consistently enforcing this. If, as a parent you do not do this, you are dishonoring your heavenly Father, who as your authority has commanded for you to do this. Teaching this and consistently enforcing this is a very loving thing for you to do.

It has become acceptable in our society for children to disrespect their parents. But I do not fault the children so much as I do the parents. The reason this command is given is because children naturally, on their own will seek to dishonor their parents. Parents need to be told that they have a duty before God and a duty to their children to teach them to honor their parents. Instead, we live in such a brain-dead culture, we give our kids a gun, load it with bullets, stick it to our heads and tell them to pull the trigger. Let me illustrate. This past week, Grand Theft Auto IV was released. Lazlo Jones told the Washington Post, "If you let your child play this game, you're a bad parent." Lazlo Jones is one of the games creators who was apparently shocked to find out that this game is most popular among 12-14 year old boys. Since its release it has done \$500 million in sales. What on earth would possess a parent to let their child have or play a game like this? The same scenario is repeated over and over with lack of oversight parents provide their children on the internet, the blind eye that is turned toward what your children are viewing on TV and at the movies. When you fail to teach them, and fail to instruct them to honor God by honoring you and by living within parameters that are established for their good, you are teaching them to hate you and disrespect you.

Children who disobey their parents and talk back to them when they are young, grow up to curse them when they are old. In the next chapter God instructs the Israelite community that a child who attacks or curses his parents is guilty of committing a capital

offense, and the law required that the child to be put to death. Now, let me ask you something, who has the greatest responsibility in that matter? The parents! I remember observing one time a dad who told his little girl “no” regarding a matter, and she became so angry, she started kicking him. He simply held her hand while they walked and every step she kicked him in the leg. His failure to respond was not patience and meekness. He was contributing to the death of his daughter by not teaching her and parenting her. You are to raise your child with the honoring of those in authority over them in view. But, that is not the American way. We pride ourselves on being rebels. After all, our nation was founded on a revolution. We don’t let anyone tell us what to do. Question authority is our creed.

Now, as a child I was familiar with that portion of Scripture. I remember thinking how scary that must have been to live in OT Israel and have your Dad or Mom say, “if you scream at me about your clothes, I’ll have you stoned.” Really, that is quite a bit of leverage. But as a parent, I see the matter much differently. If you were in a public place and your child cursed you, then you must understand that the law required that your child be killed. How many parents are going to press charges against their children? I am assuming that not too many. Parents do not want to see their children die like that. Therefore, the responsibility rests heavily upon the shoulders of the parents to raise their children in a manner in which that child is showing honor.

Listen to me moms and dads, this starts when they are very young. Your child is not an angel sent to you from heaven. Your child is a sinner who is falling off of a building and is going to be crushed on the pavement below if he or she is not caught. You have to get involved. If you do not parent with intentional involvement, you are passively watching your child fall and you are the parent for the purpose of catching them before they hit.

If your child pitches a fit when you say no! You have some work to do. If you have to tell your child the same thing more than once, you have some work to do. If you bribe your children, threaten your children find yourself in a debate with your child, you have some work to do. If your child does not respect you when you are on the phone, or in a conversation, you have some work to do. If your child interrupts you when he does not get your attention right away, that is not acceptable behavior. One of the fruits of the spirit is self-control, and we must teach the importance of that to our kids. By the way, our parenting portion of our website has a number of resources and ideas that are helpful.

B. Honoring authority does not assume perfection on the part of the authority.

Do you know why this is in the Bible, because, we do not do this naturally. Parenting takes time and it cannot be subcontracted. God put this in the Bible because we need this. And it is part of a larger picture that God has established. We live within authority structures and we are to honor that authority structure, even if there are flaws in the lives of the authorities, we can still honor them. John Calvin said, “the dishonoring of parents results in the dishonoring of God Himself. Nor can anyone despise his father and mother without being guilty of an offense against God.”

Excuses: “But my mom or dad hurt me.”
 “But my mom or dad drives me nuts.”
 “But my mom or dad tries to manipulate me.”
 “My mom tries to stick her nose in everyone’s business.”

I grant you that unresolved problems make normal relationships very difficult. But, even when there are these huge problems, we can still be respectful. Honoring parents does not mean ignoring problems. Some of you have parents who do not want to deal with serious problems in their lives and it limits the type and amount of relationship you can have with them, but even then, when you speak to them, you are called to honor them.

Dallas Willard quote:

By the way, before I move off of this, I want to mention that in Deut. 21, the people of Israel were instructed by God that if in their families there was a son who was stubborn and rebellious, and he is further described as a glutton and a drunkard, which again is describing someone who does not have self control, then the parents are to bring the son to the elders of the city and say, we cannot control our child any longer, and the elders would then stone the son, so that, the Bible says, you shall put this evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear and fear. Honoring your father and mother is more than a good idea, it is a command of God.

The attitude of honor toward our parents, and on this Sunday we are focusing particularly upon moms, does not change, but certainly as we become older, the manner in which we express that honor, does change.

2. Honoring parents must be taught and celebrated.

It is in the Decalogue!! God is teaching that to His children. God includes this in the revelation that has been preserved and handed down to us.

A. As Children we honor through prompt obedience.

When mom says to do something; that is not a suggestion. That does not mean that now the floor is open for discussion, or that the item is up for debate and vote. Unless what mom has said violates the Word of God, when mom says, the children are to do it, without murmuring and complaining.

1. Respect

Obedience is shown through respect. You are to esteem the words of your mom. You are to show her respect. Open the door for her, not because she can’t but because you want to do it for her. Let her proceed through the doorway first. Do not eat until she is seated at the table, unless she says to go ahead. Address her in respectful tones. Do not call her by her first name. And by the way dads, we lead the way on this. If your child is being disrespectful to your wife, hey, that is your time to shine. That is the time to stand

up and get to the battle brother. “Look, I do not let anyone talk to my wife that way. God gave this girl to me to love and respect and honor and protect and no one treats her this way not outside this family and not inside this family. So, unless you want to breathe through your socks, then I strongly suggest that you speak to her with respect.” Now wait a minute, before you get bent out of shape, I do not advocate abuse. Responding to a lack of self control with more of the same just adds more sin to the pile. I do not advocate abuse, but I do advocate a very healthy dose of the fear of God!

2. Listening

Another way in which we respect our moms is by listening to them! Respect and honor means that we are considering them to be more important than ourselves. Listening is selflessness put into action. You may think that your parents do not listen to you, and they may not very well, but you can listen to your mom.

3. Consulting

When you are older and you are on your own, you are not under the direct authority of your mother anymore, but out of an attitude of respect, you ought to at least consult her opinion from time to time. That demonstrates that she is highly esteemed in your eyes.

B. As Adults we honor our Moms through our conduct.

When you live in a responsible manner choosing to do things based upon principles and not based upon convenience, you are reflecting well upon your mother. I am a generally competitive person. I enjoy victories and accomplishments, but I had no idea how much I would enjoy victories and accomplishments done by my children. But when I see or hear about one of my kids making a responsible decision, I am thrilled, and I know that Cathi is honored.

C. As Adults we honor our Moms and Dads by our care.

Now, here is where it is going to start to get a little warm in here. Are you ready? As we move from being children to adults, our attitudes toward our parents does not change, but the manner in which we express that does change. As children living in the home, we are under their leadership and authority. When we become adults, we leave our father and mother. We are no longer under their authority. But, we are not divorced from them either. Instead of expressing our honor to our parents in terms of obedience, we now express our honor in terms of our responsible care.

1. We are to care for them financially.

Whoa that’s a switch isn’t it? I thought that my mom and dad were supposed to support me! **THEY ALREADY DID!** Now, it is your turn. What if they don’t need it? Good for them and good for you, but if they do, it is your job to help them. Now, I am not saying that it is your responsibility to send them on cruises to the Cayman Islands every

other month. But what I am saying is, stop hitting them up for money. You ought to be giving her money and not asking her for money. And mom's, this is a tough one, but if your adult child is living off of you, you need to wisely, graciously, yet intentionally cut off the funding, because you are not training that child to live without you, which is probably going to happen given the normal course of life's events.

2. We are to care for them physically

Again, honoring means putting their needs ahead of our own. We need to provide them with the best care that we can give them. That may involve some inconvenience on our part, but remember, life is not about seeing how convenient we can make things. Life is about pleasing God.

3. Mothers provide a picture of Christ.

Sarah Palin is the governor of Alaska. Elected in 2006, she and her husband have a son, who is in the US army, 3 daughters and just recently, a 2nd son and fifth child, Trig. While pregnant with Trig, Sarah was informed that he had an extra chromosome, and would likely have what is called, Down's Syndrome.

Back in 2005, ethicist George Neumayr commented: "Each year in America fewer and fewer disabled infants are born. The reason is eugenic abortion. Doctors and their patients use prenatal technology to screen unborn children for disabilities, then they use that information to abort a high percentage of them. Without much scrutiny or debate, a eugenics designed to weed out the disabled has become commonplace." We sacrificed thousands of lives to fight against the Nazi regime so that we can repeat its beliefs? This type of thinking is becoming ingrained upon our national conscience that couples with large families are mocked, and parents who know they have conceived a child with problems are being challenged by some to discard the child.

Today is a special day in the Governor's mansion in Alaska. Sarah, like many other mothers, has an opportunity to show the love of Christ, in caring for a child who cannot care for himself. We are the children who are born with problems that we cannot fix. Christ knew that when He created the world, that He was making a decision to come and be part of His own creation. He is the One who loved us and birthed us knowing all of our flaws, sins, failures, and needs. He gave us life, knowing that we would reject Him, and knowing that He would have to come and die in our place in order to provide the means for our sins to be forgiven.

Concl.

"My teacher told me to walk in Jesus' footsteps. But I can't see him, so I'm walking in yours."