

*UNEDITED DRAFT*

Dear friends in Christ,

We are continuing our series on the 10 Commandments. Why study the 10 Commandments? So we know God's rules and hopefully get it right so he'll accept us and we can be his children? No! The 10 Commandments are not preconditions of God so people can perhaps get into his good graces. No, the original 10 Commandments were given to people who had already been declared God's people. People whom he rescued from slavery in Egypt. People whom he had promised to bless. People to whom he would give a land. People to whom he would ultimately give a Savior... one who would rescue the whole world from their sins. To these one he gave his 10 Commandments.

God gave these Commandments to them because he loved them. These Commandments are for us as well, because we are also dearly loved children of God and he loves us too. What does our loving Father know we need? We need a constant reminder that we are helpless sinners in need of his love and forgiveness.

Every once in a while you'll see a very bold 2 year old that is pretty sure he's ready to live on his own... ready to go off an explorer this vast world in which he lives. He marches away from his parents and never looks back, because he's on a mission! But how mistaken he is. He's not even going to get across the street without getting hit by car without his parents. They have to stop him and make it clear to him that he is not able to live on his own. He needs his parents. God's law... the 10 Commandments ... help us clearly see that we need our heavenly Father yet. They show us that we are rebellious, wandering children who get ourselves into all sorts of trouble all the time. Without his rescues and help, we would be doomed to death and eternal destruction. We need God! We need our Savior!

The Commandments also serve another loving purpose. Through them, God protects what is important. He protects what is needed for our safety and well-being. He teaches us how to live in a way that is pleasing to him and good for us. God's way is better than our way. So in the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment, God protects his glory. If his glory goes to another, 2<sup>nd</sup>, he protects his name (it's the only name that saves!) In the third he protects his Word and the rest needed to meditate on it... through which we have rest in Jesus.

So last week we concluded the 1<sup>st</sup> table of God's law which deals with our relationship with him. Now we begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> table which deals with our relationship with our neighbor. "Love your neighbor as yourself" Jesus said.

The first of the Commandments in this second group ... the one that is most foundational, is this: Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." In this Commandment, God is protecting the authority of father and mother in the family. By the way, that the mother is specifically mentioned as having authority along with the father is unprecedented for this time.

The father and mother are God's representatives who carry God's authority in the family. From the rest of Scripture we know that the family is not the only sphere that has authorities, and

that God requires that we honor and obey other authorities as well. So in a more general sense, God is protecting those to whom he has given a bit of his authority.

- In the home, the main authorities are mom and dad. Through them God provides many blessings to you, both for body and soul. So honor and respect them!
- In the work place. (Boss, manager, owner, etc.). Through work authorities, God gives you many blessings of body. Obey them!
- In the State (President, congress, judges, police officers, military personnel.) Blessings of body: Security, stability, law and order. Honor and respect!
- In the church ( pastor, teachers, church council.) Blessings for the soul: Honor and respect!

In each of these, there are people who lead, people in charge. It is God's will that you submit to their authority, respect them, and obey them.

What about the ungodly ones? Their authority is also derived from God's authority. Jesus told Pilate, a heathen, Roman ruler, that the authority he had was given to him by God. If their commands do not contradict God's commands, obey!

But what about ungodly people in authority? God says: Romans 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Why so important? Without a respect of God's authority, society breaks down. More importantly there can be no respect for God's authority and no salvation.

Now there is so much to discuss, with this Commandment that I want to narrow our focus and mainly talk about the honor and respect God requires to mom and dad.

### **What does it look like to dishonor authorities?**

TO CHILDREN:

1) A child is asked to empty the dishwasher or clear the table. Possible reactions:

"It's not my turn! I did it last time! Why do I have to do all the work?" Honor?

Or... little to no response. Then they proceed to not do the work. Honor?

Or... BIG sigh. Eyes roll. They go to work. Honor?

2) A teenaged girl is on the phone. You're listening nearby and there is obviously an unhappy exchange taking place. Then you simply hear forced air escaping her lungs. Repeats several times. Then you hear, "That's not fair. Fine whatever." Click. You ask, "Who were you talking to?" My mom. Was that honor and respect?

3) A teenaged boy is on the phone, and you listen and this is what you hear. ". . ." Nothing. After a long time. "Yeah. . . . Uh-huh." Click. Who were you talking to? My parents. Except he wasn't talking. Is that honor and respect?

4) Or imagine this scenario. A wife says to her husband, "Your Mom is on the phone. She wondered if we're coming for Thanksgiving." He responds, "That woman drives me crazy. She's always sticking her nose in our business and telling us what to do. We will not even CONSIDER going there for Thanksgiving." "Well, take the phone... talk to her." "No way. You tell her. I don't want to speak with her."

We can find ways that we have not listened to the authorities that God has placed over us... especially our parents.

Now, we could certainly list many reasons as to why parents deserve your honor and respect. First, children, understand what your parents have sacrificed for you. COST (\$235,000) to raise a child to 18, HEALTH, TIME,

But... obedience NOT based on the worthiness of the one in authority. Ephesians 6:1 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right." Obey, honor IF... no... because it is right.

**1 Peter 2:18-24 18 Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. 19 For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."**

"But you don't know my Dad. He was never there. He beat my mother..."

"But you don't know my Mom. She was an alcoholic. She gambled all the money away..."

"You didn't hear how they lied all the time..."

Some parents do not live as God wants. Some have completely abused the authority God has given them. But God says their authority is still given by God and honor and respect for their position as parent is still required by God. Again, never sin if they require it. But in all else, give honor and respect.

TO PARENTS:

Just because you have this authority from God, does not mean you can use it however you want. You are answerable to God. You can make it difficult for your children to obey you. You as a parent can make it easier or harder for your children. Eph. 6:4 "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." "Col 3:21 "Do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged."

Also understand the tremendous responsibility God has given you as a parent. The child or children you have are not yours. They belong to God. He entrusted a precious human life to you. How will you treat it? They watch your example. How you treat each other heavily influences how much honor they give. How you treat those who have authority over you teaches them about how to treat all authorities.

So... in what ways have you broken this Commandment? In what ways have you failed to honor and respect the authorities God has placed over you?

Repent. Confess these sins to God.

Then turn to Jesus for his forgiveness. God forgave you not with the wave of his hand from heaven, but at great personal pain and loss. God sacrificed his one and only Son... for YOU. Jesus kept the fourth Commandment perfectly.

- 12 years old: **“He went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” Lk 2:52** He was obedient at the beginning, and he honored his mother to the very end. When Jesus was dying on the cross in great pain and agony, he honored his mother. He said to John, “Here is your mother.” And to Mary, “Here is your son.”
- That perfect life, sacrificed on the cross for our sins against the fourth commandment. The complete payment! You are forgiven.

Now, thank God... by keeping this Commandment. What do you need to change this week in your life to bring it into line with the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment?

- Younger children, new attitude? Now response to what your parents tell you?
- Teens: What will it look like to give respect to your parents? Listen thoughtfully. Speak respectfully. In your mind and heart, lift them up to a high position. They’re not “just your parents.” They are authorities from God! If you love God and desire to treat them with honor and respect, then treat your parents with honor and respect too.
- Adults: Do you need to make a phone call this week? Do you need to plan a visit in the near future?

“Honor your father and mother.” May God help us to do this! Amen.