

God's Concern for the Family

Deuteronomy 5:16

Introduction

Learning to Drive (Passing on Important Details of Driving Near 18-Wheelers)

Deuteronomy 5:16

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Exposition

As the Ten Commandments transition from the first four commandments that deal with obligations to the LORD, this fifth commandment serves as a type of bridge to the final five commandments which reveal our obligation to one another. Hence, when Jesus summarizes the law of God as “love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself,” we see that Jesus is essentially summarizing the content of the Ten Commandments.

As God's redeemed people who have saved by His grace, we have obligations to Him and to others. With the fifth commandment, God's expresses His concern for the most basic and fundamental relationship between people: the family. God's intention within the family is for parents to be instructed their children in and demonstrating an obedience to God's covenant.

What this means is that God expects children amid the covenant people to be taught about God's wondrous salvation and our responsibility to hear and obey Him. God's expectation for such children is that they would “honor” or “give weight to, regard as of high value and worth” their parents in light of the parent's instruction in the things of the LORD (Deut. 4:39-40, 5:8-10). The idea of honor is related to honoring God. Thus, as children were taught to “highly value” their parents, they were also taught to supremely value God, who was greater than their parents.

Now, to be sure, the fifth commandment certainly includes a respect for parental authority. It is not simply about obeying the instruction that parents pass on to children regarding faith and obedience to God. So, kids, when your mom or dad says, “It's time for school,” the Bible does teach that you should obey your parents in that regard and “got to school.” When they say, “Do your homework or the dishes, or clean your room, or turn off the video games,” it is right and good for you to do so. However, parents, God has not placed you in the life of your child to merely instruct them about their chores and video game habits. That might be important, but it is not ultimate. Raising children that do their chores, clean their rooms, and only read books and never play video games, but know nothing of God because you never teach them, is not pleasing to God. A lot of well-behaved people will go to hell because behaving doesn't save us. We don't need behavior modification; we need to be born again by the work of the Holy Spirit in keeping with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, we must beware what we are teaching and stressing to our children regarding ultimate importance. It profits nothing to raise children who are successful in the eyes of the world yet blind to the glory of God because of unbelief, which is not to say that you can save yourself by your own willpower, but rather to say that you play in important role in the life of your child. God has ordained it as such. He commands children to honor parents insofar as much as the parent is fulfilling their God-given role mentioned in Deuteronomy 4.

Conclusion

As the people of God honored God and taught their families to honor what God had taught them, the covenant community would dwell in unity and blessing. However, where the people of God did not honor God and did not teach their families to honor what God had taught them, the covenant community would dwell in disunity and curse.

Application

1) Church, we must see importance of the family to God.

If the family is important to God, then you can mark it down that the world is going to do its best to try to disrupt and harm the family.

2) Church, we must prioritize equipping families to disciple the next generation.

Ministry to the next generation is not a fancy way to describe “childcare.”

3) Parents, beware of the legacy that you leave your children.

The things that we celebrate and value the most are likely the things that our children will remember and learn the best.

D. A. Carson – “The worst possible heritage to leave with children: high spiritual pretensions and low performance.” In other words, confess your sins to your children when you wrong them. Ask for their forgiveness. Give them grace. Love them as God in Christ has loved you.

4) Kids, God is greater and better than your parents.

While parents SHOULD reflect the mercy, grace, wisdom, love, patience, care, and protection of God, your parents will certainly fail at times (and likely often) to do so. Kids, even the best parents will disappoint you. They are not God. They are not perfect.

Now, to be sure, this does not mean that you should be subjected to or must tolerate abuse and mistreatment from someone just because they are called “mother” or “father.” You DO NOT have to obey people who harm you, regardless of whether they are your “parents” or not. The command to “honor” does not mean that you must do whatever your parents or someone in authority tells you to do because sometimes that would mean disobeying what God has told you to do. And obeying God is more important than obeying anyone else!

And parents, I would just address you at this moment and say “Be careful when you teach your children to be respectful to adults. While it is not a problem to teach your children to be polite and have manners around adults, we do not want to condition our children to think or believe that they are obligated to do anything or everything that an adult asks them to do. We want our children to know that they are free to tell an adult, “No,” if they are uncomfortable with something or someone. And adults, be kind, polite, and understanding to children. Be supportive of parents.”

With all of that said, Kids, I want you to hear this again, even the best parents will let you down. Please don't let your parents' failures keep you from seeing the perfection of your Heavenly Father. God does not and never will fail you.

5) Parents, we must know the grace of God in Christ ourselves.

If we ever intend to teach the grace of God to others, we need to know it ourselves. (Illustration of instruction to preachers about needing to be regenerate)

To know the grace of God in Christ means not only having an intellectual knowledge, but also an experiential knowledge of God's grace in Christ.

Gospel for Parents – The Grace that We aim to teach our children is also the grace that we need ourselves.

6) Kids, only Jesus can save you, and He desires to do so!

Gospel for Kids – We have sinned against God. But God loved us so much that He sent His Son into the world to save us. If we admit that we are sinners in need of God's forgiveness, believe in our hearts that God has done everything for us that we might be saved, and confess and turn away from our sins to Jesus, God promises to save us. He desires to save us.

Have you been saved?