

First Century Fellowship Ministry

A Biblical Church of God

The Fifth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives you.

(Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16)

“Master, which commandment is the great commandment in the Law?” And Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment; and the second one is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:29-31).

As we have seen, this first great commandment covers the first four commandments. They deal with Who and What God is and how and when He expects us, His creation, to respect, honor and worship Him as our Creator God. We will see that the second great commandment covers the last six which deal with the relationship we have with our fellow man.

The fifth commandments placement allows it to act as a sort of bridge between these two great commandments. It transitions us from our respect, honor and worship of our Creator God to the honor and respect of our parents which in turn will ultimately help us in our relationship with others. It is the first commandment to regulate our relationship with others. This is especially critical in a

child's learning process. Learning to respect, honor and obey their parents sets the foundation on how they should approach God. As we learn to respect our parents we learn the importance of respecting others as well. Additionally, we learn that we alone are responsible for our actions.

Although the commandment states, "Honor your father and your mother..." the initial responsibility is on the parents to properly teach their children respect for others. Parents need to develop traits in their children that allow them to show the proper respect for proper rules and principles. It is their obligation to live lives that will breed honor and respect in their children. Contrary to current popular belief it does not take a village or community to raise a child, nor should it. It takes a father, as the head of the home, and a mother. The same formula our Creator God laid out in the beginning. Adam and Eve, joined to/married to each other. God created a family unit as the building block of an orderly, responsible and respectful society. The success of the society depends on the stability of the families within that society.

The parents are to raise and train their children to become responsible adults. When they do this it not only do the children benefit but society does also. Teaching them to honor and respect others should be a normal and natural pattern for them to follow as they move on to adulthood. This is the primary responsibility God gives to parents. When this is done in the home the children will grow to be respectful members of the society, respecting their parents, respecting others and being responsible for their own actions.

Parents need to remember they are children of God and must show Him, their heavenly Father, the honor and respect He deserves. Children who see their parents obeying and respecting God will see their parents actually practice what they preach.

The Apostle Paul stated, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and your mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, That it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1-3). Did you

notice, this commandment carry's a promise, "...That it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth." The promise of a blessing for keeping it.

Jesus condemned the Pharisees for neglecting the elderly through their traditions. "Then He said to them. 'Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your own tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man shall say to his father or mother, "Whatever benefit you might receive from me is corban" (that is, set aside as a gift to God), he is not obligated to help his parents.' And you excuse him from doing anything for his father or his mother, nullifying the authority of the word of God by your tradition which you have passed down; and you practice many traditions such as this.'" (Mark 7:9-13). We can see by this statement that Jesus, and God the Father, expects the children to take care of the needs of their elderly parents. In this regard, they were not obligated to give the money to the church for an offering to God. Care of the parents was to come first.

We have said throughout our study of the commandments that we use the Bible as our guide and specifically the examples set forth by Jesus and the first century apostles. "If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love." (John 15:10). Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. He could not have been if He had sinned. He did not. He kept His Father's commandments. Jesus gives us a great example of this when He is on the cross. He still knew His obligation. "And Jesus' mother stood by the cross, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son." Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother." And from that time, the disciple took her into his own home." (John 19:25-27). Jesus subjected Himself to His earthly parents from an early age. In Luke 2 when Jesus was 12 years old He was missing from His

family for a couple of days. He had been speaking to teachers in the synagogue. When Mary and Joseph found Him they took Him home. "Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He was subject to them. But His mother kept all these things in her heart." (Luke 2:51).

The relationship between children and their parents is a type of spiritual relationship. To them their father and mother are their creators, sustainers and protectors. They depend on their parents for their very life, as we do our Creator God. As they grow older they should see the same reverence to God by their parents. If they do not develop a loving and respectful attitude towards their parents how will they learn to properly love God.

One thing that seems lacking today is parents disciplining a child. They do not want to spank them for any reason. They are more concerned with being a buddy to their child than to be a parent. How many times have we observed a child dictating to a parent what he or she is going to do? Too many parents do not set any type of bounds on their children and shrug off their bad behavior as just part of the process of growing up. We must correct our children in love when they need to be corrected. "Do not hold back discipline from a child, although you strike him with a rod, he will not die. You shall strike him with the rod and rescue his soul from Sheol." (Proverbs 23:13-14 NASB). Notice it says strike which sounds to be very harsh in today's language. Some translations say beat, however, but none are saying to continuously strike or beat a child. They do indicate corrective action and not abuse, a big difference. If we do not, the results are all around us. "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother." (Proverbs 29:15). "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child shall have joy from him. Your father and your mother shall be glad, and she who bore you shall rejoice. My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways." (Proverbs 23:24-26).

Our society is crumbling because we have lost our moral compass. Nothing is out of bounds or taboo. We have allowed

society to dictate moral bounds to the church. Churches calling themselves Christian are so far from the Biblical teachings of the Bible it is pathetic. Isaiah tells of a similar situation, "And the people shall be crushed, every man by another, and every man by his neighbor; the young shall rise up against the old, and the base against the honorable. ... As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. Oh, My people, those who lead you cause you to err and destroy the way of your paths." (Isaiah 3: 5 and 12). The men, the ones who should be leading are not and are being led by women and children who should not be leading. Think how this relates to today's world. Single parent families attempting to negotiate in this carnal, immoral world. Two parent households are very important to the proper development of children and to the betterment of society.

The church needs to reestablish itself within each community. The church sets the moral code and tone, not the people. Who are the true servants of God? Only those who keep ALL of the commandments. What did Jesus tell us? "If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15). He also told us we had an example to follow, "For I have given you an example, to show that you also should do exactly as I have done to you." (John 13:15). And Paul also spoke of His example, "Be imitators of me, exactly as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1), and, "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children;" (Ephesians 5:1).

Bucking the world is not an easy road, but it is much easier knowing that God is on our side and His Son, Jesus has set us an example. Even in His most horrific time on earth hanging on a cross after being beaten and scourged he still thought of His mother's wellbeing, "When Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son." Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother." And from that time, the disciple took her into his own home." (John 19:26-27).

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