

Family Matters – Your Parents Matter

May 8, 2016 - Pastor Randy Eliason

Ephesians 6:1-3 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

The 5th commandment reads, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you. I've had people ask me, is this really a promise that honoring leads to a long life? The association always seemed obvious to me. I knew that if I DID NOT respect my father or mother I would not have very long to live.

The first four commandments are related to the greatest commandment and the last six are related to the second. Honoring parents is an expression of love for parents.

Honor comes from a Hebrew word meaning “to be heavy” or “to give weight.” It doesn't treat them lightly, but recognizes their importance and value. The NT Greek word translated honor means to esteem, to regard highly, to value greatly. The opposite of honoring someone is demeaning, devaluing or trivializing a person, treating him/her as if he/she didn't matter.

The importance of honoring others is largely overlooked in our culture. I heard someone say that, “A Culture that idolizes rebellion will demonize honor.” That has happened in our culture. We love the rebel and mock the person who submits to authority. We push others down in order to pull ourselves up.

God calls us to show honor in all of our relationships. In the NT we are instructed to show honor to civil authorities, church leaders, widows, wives, and, on at least two occasions, we are told to honor people in general!

All people deserve a degree of honor because they are created in the image of God. This is why we speak of the human life as sacred. That means it has a special value greater than all other living creatures. The command not to murder is based on the fact that we are created in the image of God. However, there are certain categories

Family Matters – Your Parents Matter

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of people for whom the bible ascribes a special degree of honor. Parents are one of those categories.

Why are parents to be honored?

There are two basic reasons why parents deserve a special degree of honor.

THEIR STATUS: First of all, they ought to be honored because they are the instruments God has chosen to use to create us. One of the reasons we owe God honor is because he is our creator. It follows that God's means of giving us life is also worthy of honor.

So there is this honor that is due our parents simply because they were God's creative means of bringing them into existence.

Illustration: Doug Bolan, is a friend and ordained minister. I can't even count the number of times he would tell people, "Randy's dad led me to accept Christ." He honored my father, not because he considered my father to be his savior, but because he recognized him as an extension of God's work of redemption in his life. When we recognize that God has chosen to create life through the miracle of sexual reproduction, we recognize that honoring our parents is an expression of honor for God. Conversely, to dishonor our parents is to dishonor God.

The second basis for honoring parents is:

THEIR SACRIFICE. This is what I call the *Honor of Appreciation*. We honor them because we recognize that they have given so much of themselves for us. The sacrifice that a parent makes is extraordinary raising a child. Dishonoring ones' parents is considered shameful and wicked because it demonstrates ingratitude in the face of the immense sacrifices that parents make to bear and raise children.

How are parents to be honored?

When you are an adult

Mark 7:9-13 And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe[c] your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,'[d] and, 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'[e] 11 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used

Family Matters – Your Parents Matter

May 8, 2016 - Pastor Randy Eliason

to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

According to the OT law, the 5th commandment to honor parents required providing for them and caring for them in their old age. Jesus is addressing a situation where the religious leaders are exploiting the Corban vow - a vow dedicating ones' property to the temple - as a means of hindering adult children from helping their parents in need. Jesus criticism is that they have facilitated the breaking of the 5th commandment by requiring people to place a traditional vow above the commandment to honor ones parents by caring for them.

Adult Children honor their parents by taking care of them when they are old. Give them your time. If you took them for granted in the past, let them know you NOW recognize their sacrifice! Show your appreciation. Find ways to affirm their value even when they can't do what they used to.

When you are a child

In Ephesians 6:1 Paul clarifies the meaning of the 5th commandment as it relates to children. Children are commanded to honor their parents by obeying their parents.

Children owe their parents honor because they are under their delegated authority. Authority is directly related to responsibility. Let me explain the definition of a “child”. If you are still depending on your parents to take care of you, you fit in this category. Unless your name is on the deed of the property, you don't get to make the rules.

Earlier I mentioned that our parents deserve honor because of they are God's chosen instrument through whom we have been given life and to whom we owe our very existence. We honor God when we honor His instrument. But there is an additional reason to honor our parents beyond the fact that God has given us life through them. Parents are also God's instrument through whom he exercises

Family Matters – Your Parents Matter

May 8, 2016 - Pastor Randy Eliason

providential care. God exercises authority over us because he loves us! Parents have a responsibility to be an instrument of God's loving, providential care by exercising authority over their children. In other words, the parents' authority over their children has been delegated to them by God. Young people, God exercises His authority in your life through your parents.

Parents need to handle their authority humbly, carefully, and diligently. Remember, authority is tied to responsibility. The reason parents have authority over their children is because they bear a God-ordained responsibility for them. Don't deceive yourself and think you have the right to assert authority when you aren't willing to assume responsibility. It is not uncommon for parents to treat their children as their servants, rather than teaching them to serve as part of their spiritual development. Are we "using" them for our "convenience" or are we teaching them to serve and work as part of their character development?

Young People: Respect your parents' authority. It is unjust, and foolish, to expect someone to fulfill a responsibility for which they have not been granted the necessary authority over that which they are responsible for.

Honoring delegated authorities in our lives means that we submit to their authority. Submission is only tested when you are in a position of disagreement with those you are supposed to obey.

Youth ministry I would often encounter teens who agreed in principle that they should obey their parents. BUT....what about when my parents are unreasonable, unfair. The problem is that what is unreasonable or unfair is in the eyes of the beholder; it is subjective. As a parent of two boys I am 100% supportive of the parents right to be unreasonable! You know why? Parents: If your children never perceive your decisions to be unreasonable, you should be very concerned. Their complaints about you being unreasonable are very strong evidence that you have not lost your power of reason. Most teens think it is unreasonable that they should have chores to do, or that they would have to perform them before going to hang out with friends. Most kids find it unreasonable that they might have to do their homework before watching TV or playing video games!

Family Matters – Your Parents Matter

May 8, 2016 - Pastor Randy Eliason

Summary: Children, you are honoring your parents when you submit to their authority; when you obey your parents instructions.

Parents: There are things you can do to help or hinder your young people from honoring you!

Eph. 4:6 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

1. Model honorable behavior: It is foolish for parents to say, "Don't do as I do, do as I say".
If we do what we teach, they will do what we teach, because they do what we do.
If we don't do what we teach, they won't do what we teach, because they do what we do.
2. Love them like Jesus loves them. Leading them like Jesus means being willing to sacrifice for them.

It is vital that we take note of the relationship between honoring our parents and honoring God. If parents are God's chosen instrument in His creation of new life, to dishonor or to despise God's instrument is to dishonor God. In the same way, God has delegated to parents both the responsibility and authority to raise their children. God's providential care for us is mediated through our parents. To honor them for what they have done is likewise to honor God because He has done it through them. To dishonor them by ingratitude is to dishonor God. Honor is directly associated with gratitude. Romans 1:21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks.

Last week I gave you three things you can give your spouse to honor them. The same applies to parents. These are things we need to give our parents, but specifically our moms, are on a regular basis.

1. Affection – Hug them. Kiss them. Pray for and with them.
2. Attention – Ask questions. Show interest.

Just simply spend time with them.

Family Matters – Your Parents Matter

May 8, 2016 - Pastor Randy Eliason

3. Appreciation – Write a note. Don't buy a card! Be specific.
4. Acts of Service – Do something for them. Surprise them by