

## **“Honor Your Father and Mother”**

Exodus 20:12

### **THE 5<sup>th</sup> COMMANDMENT EXPLAINED**

#### **1. The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment recognizes the worth of special roles established by God.**

- ‘Honor’ = Heb. *kabēd* means “to be weighty, heavy; of great value and worth”

#### **2. The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment recognizes the family unit established by God.**

- The family is the primary social unit of society.
- The family is the primary spiritual unit of society.
- The family is the primary economic welfare unit of society.
- It includes a man and a woman in marriage. Gen 2:24; Mt 19:4-6; Mk 10:6-9; Eph 5:22-31
- Parents have authority *over* children, *under* God’s authority. Eph 6:1,4; Col 3:20; Prov 13:24

→ The way to destroy a nation is to destroy the family. This was true in the OT (Dt 7:1-6; Josh 23:9-13) and today.

#### **3. The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment recognizes blessing attached with obedience to God’s commands.**

- A promise of long life is given to those who obey this commandment.
- This is “blessing” language. General rule: those who obey God are blessed. Dt 5:33; 6:2; 11:8,9; Ps 1:1-6

### **THE 5<sup>th</sup> COMMANDMENT APPLIED**

#### **1. The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment applies to *all* God-established authorities (not just parents).**

- Historically, believers understand this commandment as extending to all authority established by God.
- This includes family, civil government (Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-18) & the church (Mt 16:13-19; Heb 13:17).
- This applies as ‘superiors, inferiors, & equals’ – language of the Westminster Catechism. Eph 6:1-4

#### **2. Some dynamics to consider when applying the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment...**

- We are called to respect authority in our thoughts, words, and actions; to give inward and outward honor.  
-By praying for and being patient with those in authority; God’s plan includes imperfect (and sinful) people.  
-By faithful submission and obedience to their *lawful* requests; and seeking their counsel when appropriate.
- We cannot use the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment as an excuse for not confronting sin and dysfunction in our families.

→ Application: In Biblical & Christ-like ways we are called to lovingly & patiently point out truth. E.g., 2 Sam 12

- Guard against legalism: Pharisees ‘kept the Law’ at the expense of caring for their parents. Mark 7:9-13  
-1 Tim 5:8: If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

#### **3. The Bible recognizes the realities of sin’s impact upon family relationships:**

- Psalm 27:10: For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me up.
- Psalm 68:5: A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.
- Psalm 68:6: God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing...
- Isaiah 49:15: Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has born? Though she may forget, I will not forget you.

### **THE 5<sup>th</sup> COMMANDMENT FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST**

#### **1. Jesus fulfilled the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment.**

- He completely obeyed the whole law (including the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment) and never sinned.

-By being a faithful Son. Heb 3:6: *But Christ is faithful as a Son over God’s house.*

-By glorifying His Father. Jn 17:4: *I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work You gave Me to do.*

-By pleasing His Father. Mt 3:17: *...“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”*

-obeying His Father. Mt 26:39: My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.

#### **2. Jesus transformed the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment.**

- Jesus’ coming caused division in families. See **Matthew 10:34-37**
- Jesus’ coming re-adjusted the definition of family. See **Matthew 12:46-50**
- Jesus’ coming re-defined the idea of being born into a “blessed” family. Luke 11:27

Only Jesus ever loved the Father with all his heart and soul. The price of his love for his Father was to lose the love of his Father on the cross. He did that to bear the wrath that our sin deserved. The nurture of the Lord Jesus Christ is stronger than the bond of the family in the Old Covenant. Nurture in the Lord respects his lordship over our children. They do not belong to the state, as Communism and nationalism have claimed. Neither do they belong to themselves, as Americans since the sixties of the last century have believed. And ultimately, they do not even belong to their parents, into whose womb and home they are placed by God. They belong only to the Lord. Parents in particular, along with the whole fellowship of the church, have the duty and privilege of affirming Christ's lordship over the lives of their children....

"On your face before God, on your feet before men." So John Clelland, a Presbyterian preacher of the last generation, described the liberty we have in Christ. True freedom is not that shown by the man possessed by a legion of devils in Mark chapter 5. He was "free"—free of home responsibilities. He did not have to care for a wife or children. He could leave them and do his own thing. He resented the confinement of clothing. He took it all off. He could live where he wanted, so he lived in caves and howled all night. He disliked people. When they came through his haunts, he beat them up. When he was seized and chained, he had the preternatural strength to rip off the bonds and break the chains. Young people who resent the restraints of life at home need to reflect on the total "freedom" that Satan offers. The freedom of the demoniac was total bondage to a legion of devils. Satan is a destroyer, not a creator.

-Edmund P. Clowney, *How Jesus Transforms the Ten Commandments*

God is a jealous God. It is better to move your parents to scorn, than to move God to jealousy. -Thomas Watson

### From the Westminster Larger Catechism...

**Q124:** *Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment?*

**A124:** By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.

**Q125:** *Why are superiors styled Father and Mother?*

**A125:** Superiors are styled *Father and Mother*, both to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.

**Q126:** *What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?*

**A126:** The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.

**Q127:** *What is the honor that inferiors owe to their superiors?*

**A127:** The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defense and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government.

**Q128:** *What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?*

**A128:** The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.

**Q129:** *What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?*

**A129:** It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reproving, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body; and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them.

**Q130:** *What are the sins of superiors?*

**A130:** The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.