

The Fifth Rule of the Ten Commandments is “Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you” (Exodus 20:12). Children version translates this fifth rule like this: “Treat your parents with respect.” We might ask ourselves: Why did God give this commandment to us? Because this rule is so natural and common that we might think everybody would follow this rule and say, “No Problem.”

A few months ago while I was watching an evening news, one news story embarrassed me. During congressional hearing, one elderly celebrity explained that he was abused by his son and son-in-law; not only did they rob his money, but also they even physically hurt him. So he was asking the lawmakers to consider making a new law which prevents abusing the elderly parents. This is an extremely rare case, but many kinds of abusive behaviors toward elderly parents are occurring in our society. For example, robbing money or property of parents as well as insulting parents so they are hurt and abused –mentally or physically.

To be honest, I am so often moved by many of you; I often see you honoring your parents – alive or dead – by showing your love and care. Especially for your caring for the elderly parents. I am learning a lot from you, reflecting on myself how I honor my parents.

“Honor your father by word and deed, that his blessing may come upon you. For a father’s blessing strengthens the houses of the children, but a mother’s curse uproots their foundations” (Sirach 3:8-9).

Good examples from the Bible: Ruth’s response to Naomi exemplifies such honor and reverence, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16). Jesus asked his beloved disciple to take care of his mother Maria, “Dear woman, here is your son, and to the disciple, “Here is your mother” (John 19:27).

On the other hand, what about disobeying parents? The Bible strongly warns those who disobey their parents: “A son who does violence to his father and sends away his mother causes shame and brings reproach” (Prov. 19:26). “Anyone who robs father or mother and says, “That is no crime,” is partner to a thug” (Proverbs 28:24).

Then, what does it mean to honor our parents? How do we honor them?

To “honor” parents is to regard them as persons of great weight, to treat them with high regard – “to make heavy.”

First, we honor our parents by loving them and by showing them that we love them – words and deeds as a sign of the respect and affection. We should not wait until they are dead to show that we really love our parents.

**Second, we honor our parents by doing the things which bring pleasure and pride to them. Nothing pleases parents better than to see their children do well. It may be that a young person is not really very interested in passing examination and doing well at school or college. Even if he does not care for his own sake, he should care for his parents' sake. Ex) When I remember my parents, especially my mother's face, I am motivated to do my best at my ministry as well as to live a fruitful life so I want to please my parents.**

**We must honor our parents, because it is natural, because we must show our gratitude, and because it is wise to listen to the voice of experience. We honor them by loving them and by showing it.**

**C.F Andrews writes concerning his parents: "They represented Christ to me. Through their eyes I saw Him and loved Him. Whenever I used to think of Christ, I would picture some one as gentle as my mother and with my father's good nature." They mediated Christ to the lad. They were Christians. J.Penry Thomas**

**The Fifth Commandment is the Law of Caring given to the adult children, especially the male members of the community in the Bible. Honoring your mother and father does not limit within one's blood parents; it extends to church parents – elderly parents and even elderly people in your community. Caring relationship in a blood family can be exercised in church family by our faith in Jesus Christ. It means we have many elderly parents that we need to show our respect and honor in the life of church.**

**"Honor your father and mother so that you'll live a long time in the land that GOD, your God, is giving you." May it be so by God's help. Amen.**