

Honor your Father that it may be well with you!

Exodus 20:12

“Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”



Grace and peace from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Today we honor all fathers as we observe Father’s Day.

And for the purpose of celebrating father’s day, I would like to mediate on a theme that God has actually commanded us to do, in the third Commandment: “Honor your Father and your Mother.”

To honor our fathers is the right thing to do. After all, in our day we often honor other people, for example: sports heroes are honored for their athletic abilities. Entertainers are honored for their talents. Nobel laureates are honored for their brilliance. Military personnel are honored for their patriotism and service. First responders are honored for their sacrifice. And why not honor Father’s for who they are in their vocation. Assuming they have done their vocation properly! No wonder God commands Honor your father and your Mother. And to honor means to show abundant, merited high respect; to affirm great worth and value.

And how interesting it is that after the first three commandments dealing with our relationship with God comes this one introducing the commandments that deal our relationship with others.

Now, as with all the other commandments, we are not saved by obeying them, but by obeying them we do walk a Godly life, for it requires faith to walk through a process of honoring a father, for example. For we are to honor fathers of all kinds, attentive or neglectful fathers, kind or abusive, believer or non-believers; the command is not conditional.

Now for a Christian to truly honor a father, it must start from the fatherly relationship God has with us, for it is who models for us the attitude of a loving and caring father, but also gives us the strength to obey God’s commandments that on our own we are not able to fulfill.

Now, this model of a caring fathers is seen and given in God’s only Son Jesus Christ and what He has done for us as He gave his life on our behalf and rescue us from death, from sin and the devil, and that by doing the will of the Father he always honored him.

And as he redeemed us He made us into His children, beloved children and more, he also gave us the Holy Spirit and the gifts of grace to be able to honor our parents. And we do so in peace for he gives us the peace that the world does not provide. (John 14:27)

Now, honoring our fathers is not only a commandment, but also has some implications that I would like to explore with you this morning.

First, honor expresses love into imperfect relationships. It is true! you and I are imperfect people who were raised by imperfect people! As we interact even now with parents, family, spouse, children and grandchildren, we relate to each other as imperfect people, we are primarily children of Adam and Eve, but because of God's grace, He enables us to "To honor" our parents. He enables us to affirm a person's worth and value apart from their imperfections. Those imperfections don't count, what stands is the obedience to the commandment as Christ himself is showed us: "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8).

But that obedience requires healing! Healing of the soul and of relationships! First it requires the healing of our souls done through the confession of our sins and the forgiveness of God that restores us into a relationship with God and with one another, which is also the second aspect of healing, healing of our relationship with our fathers.

Now, just as our sins destroy our relationship with God, so is our sins against our fathers and vice versa, the sins of the fathers against their children causes brokenness in our relationship with them that leave the soul and even the body sick, that requires restoration and healing.

And just as we do ask God for forgiveness when we confess our sins, so it is with our parents, to restore a healthy relationship with our parents we must seek their forgiveness, and or parents need to ask children for forgive them for the pain, the sorrow that they caused them as well. That can also be achieved through confession and absolution

You know, an "honoring" heart loves enough to confess any unhealed offenses to parents, siblings, and other family members, seeking their forgiveness. Seeking the forgiveness of those we have hurt paves the way for our initiative to fully forgive them. It is nearly impossible to forgive another without a contrite heart that first deals with its own faults, but that can only be done once we experience God's forgiveness, for in the gratitude and wonder that springs from having been forgiven by God seems to empower us in forgiving others.

The Scriptures tell us: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).

Is there anything that on this father's day you are reminded of? Maybe you have hurt your parents when you were growing-up, maybe a family member, whatever you did, rebellion, disrespect, insensitivity, rejection, ungratefulness, etc. Maybe your parents hurt you as well, and you are still harboring resentment to this day. Pray that the Lord will help you to either confess your sins, or forgive your parents for what they have done to you.

Acknowledge your responsibility to God, bring your guilt to him, as well as your pain, and then rejoice gratefully in his promised forgiveness as you claim the promise of 1 John 1:9, that reminds us that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

There, dear friend is your comfort. There is your healing especially if you were hurt in the past.

Emotional hurt during the growing-up years is inevitable. Just like a physical injury, emotional pain must be treated in order to heal. We may be tempted to say, "Forget it; it happened a long time ago. Let bygones be bygones."

True, the experience may be past, but the pain of resentment, fear, or anger may still be an unhealed issue of the present. Consider, for example, the Christian single adult who repeatedly ends dating relationships because of a fear of relational intimacy.

There is an often connection between such a fear of intimacy and the childhood trauma of parental divorce.

Consider a man's anger that seems to boil just below the surface, reflected not only during moments of controversy, but even conversations with members of the family. Seething anger may be connected to one's exposure to significant neglect or rage during the growing-up years.

Unresolved pain from our family of origin can exhibit and express itself in many unhealthy ways in our lives. Part of the healing process that facilitates greater "honoring" in relationships involves ministering comfort when deep hurts from the past are exposed. That too can be healed in Christ, through confession and absolution received from Christ, but also from you, as you absolve those who have hurt you. That's love in action.

Scripture is clear about the importance of forgiveness. Jesus told His disciples, and others, "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 11:25).

And immediately after teaching us the Lord's Prayer, Jesus said: "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14–15).

Forgiving others, no matter how significantly they have hurt us, is a direct command from God, and more than a commandment it is another fruit of the Gospel as well.

Forgiveness is a beautiful gift from the God who has our best interests at heart. To refuse God's gift is to remain in bondage to the pain of the past, not only eternal condemnation but a painful life as well. God wants us to forgive so we can put away our anger and experience the full healing that comes from His comfort.

In another part of the Bible we are taught: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.³² Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31–32).

Now, not confessing our sins and not forgiving can certainly hinder honoring our fathers the way God commands. But not honoring them will prevent having a good relationship and receiving blessings that we are also giving.

Yes, honoring our parents brings blessings. "Honour your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you." (Deuteronomy 5:16).

Later on in the New Testament, Paul tells us: "Honour your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise)," (Ephesians. 6:2).

Having confessed our faults and apologized to our parents for the pain we caused them, and having forgiven them for any pain they caused us, we continue follow through with the commandment of honoring our parents as God commands us.

Yes we are to honor our parents no matter what, but let's face it, we are humans so, true honoring comes only when we have been forgiven and loved, so we love and honor as Christ did and demonstrated that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). So we ought to love our parents.

We honor them when we acknowledge their strengths, their wisdom, and their character qualities in loving and consistent ways. Yet, we also honor them when we come to accept them as "real" people with weaknesses as well as strengths.

And that will certainly bring glory to God's name and joy to you parents as well as to your heart. There multiplying God's blessings in the form of joy and peace in your heart.

But will also create in you the blessings of a new set of patterns of behavior marked by God's love. Having been forgiven by Christ we are giving a new life and different nature that pursues a different and loving behaviour marked by love of others. It is not in our old nature to put others first and focus on meeting their needs in order to experience relational intimacy, but in Christ it can be so.

This is father's day! We do bless you and honor you. My you be honored by your children, and your children's children.

And if a barrier of pain and resentment has been in between, today is the day to bring those things to God. To leave Him everything and destroy them through his Son Jesus Christ who died on the Cross of Calvary, there he gave up his life in our place so that another relationship, so that another Father, the true Father honor you and you honor him in return, God our creator and redeemer.

Blessed be His name, blessed be this day, Honored be His name, and honored be you His children.

In Jesus Christ, amen.