



"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged." - Colossians 3:20-21

Honor your father and mother.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

How do we fear and love God in keeping the Fourth Commandment?

- A. We fear and love God by not despising our parents, guardians, or other authorities. Despising means
 - a. Looking down upon them or making fun of them;
 - b. Disobeying or rebelling against their God-given authority.
- B. We fear and love God by receiving and recognizing parents and authorities as His representatives. We do this by
 - a. Honoring them;
 - b. Serving and coming to the aid of our parents;
 - c. Obeying our parents, pastors, teachers, employers, and government authorities;
 - d. Loving and cherishing our parents and other authorities on account of their God-given vocations.

When I was a teenager, I struggled with this commandment. Don't get me wrong: my parents are amazing. They are still married, raised me in the faith, and provided my daily needs of food, shelter, clothing, love and affection. In fact, they were, for lack of a better word, even nice! But when I was angry, I didn't feel like I always respected them. I wasn't sure how to honor my parents when I didn't feel like I respected my parents.

I didn't think I despised my parents, but the truth is, I did look down on them, and at least to myself (and sometimes to my friends or brother) I even made fun of them. While I mostly followed their rules, when I did disobey, I either convinced myself that it wasn't a big deal, blamed it others, or tried to cover it up.

I saw myself as obedient and not rebellious because I didn't smoke, do drugs, or have sex outside of marriage, (in fact, I thought my parents were lucky) but I did rebel in the tone I used with my mom, my eye rolling, sighing, door slamming, and even the occasional broken curfew. Even if I followed all the rules they laid out for me, I was still breaking God's commandment when I failed to love and serve my parents as I should have.

Now I'm the parent of a teenager. Now I'm the one getting irritated when my teenager thinks I'm nagging, while I feel like I'm simply reminding him of things he already knows he should be doing. Parents are broken humans too, even when they have your best interests at heart. Now I have to focus on the "not exasperating" part of Colossians 3!

And now that I'm a parent, I appreciate my parents more than ever. I respect the sacrifices they made for me, and I'm grateful for the way they taught about the love of Jesus, not only through words, but my modeling forgiveness to me, and each other, and by taking us to church every week.

It can be hard to ask for forgiveness for your sin, especially within our family. Honoring each other means being willing to repent and to offer forgiveness because Jesus has forgiven us. Can you also be brave enough ask your parents for forgiveness? Can you share the love of Jesus with them when they ask for your forgiveness?

Questions/Journal Prompts

- What disobedience do I need to ask my Heavenly Father forgiveness for?
- What makes me bitter? How can I initiate reconciliation with my parent(s)?

Prayer

Jesus, forgive my sin against my parents. Bless our relationship. Help us to forgive one another and keep in mind your commandments. In Jesus name, Amen.