

## Ephesians 6-1-3

### Honoring parents

#### **Preliminaries:**

Newsletter announcement...  
Plug small groups for new folks....

#### **Scripture reading:**

**Ephesians 6:1-3 (ESV)** — **1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), **3** “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

#### **Prayer for illumination:**

Please join me in prayer....

#### **Sermon introduction:**

How many of you want to experience a long and prosperous life? Hoping for a long and prosperous life, we do many things.

Some people pursue advanced degrees.  
Others work really hard at their jobs to accumulate honor and wealth.  
Others invest heavily in the stock market or in property.  
Others spend all the time working out and eating healthy (they run, lift, and eat lots of broccoli and kale).  
Others invest in their friends and family.

What do you think will lead to a long and prosperous life?

According to the Bible, what leads to a long and prosperous life?

This brings us to Ephesians 6:1-3. Here, Paul reminds us that those who honor their father and mother will live a long and prosperous life.

Which raises the question, are we consistently honoring our parents? What would your parents say? To help us understand Paul's words, we are going to look at two aspects of honoring our parents.

*The mandate to honor*  
*The motive to honor*

#### **First, the mandate to honor**

*Who is called to honor their parents?*

**Children must honor their parents!**

**Ephesians 6:1–2 (ESV) — 1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),

Notice that Paul addresses the children directly, which means that the kids in the church in Ephesus were not sent off to “kid’s church.” Rather, they were part of the assembly that gathered for worship. This is one of the reasons we keep kids—age 5 and over—with us on Sunday mornings. Furthermore, we firmly believe that young kids understand more than we think on Sunday mornings. Sending kids away to kid’s church is a brand-new historical phenomenon in church history.

In 6:1-2, Paul tells kids to obey their parents, then he quotes the fifth commandment, which tells children to “honor their father and mother.” In other words, if you are a young child to obey means to honor and to honor means to obey.

A quick survey of the Bible proves that honoring parents is a big deal to God!!!

**Proverbs 20:20 (ESV) — 20** If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.

**Proverbs 30:17 (ESV) — 17** The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures. (See also Pro. 6:20-22; 13:1; 23:22)

**Deuteronomy 21:18–21 (ESV) — 18** “If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, **19** then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, **20** and they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ **21** Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear. (See also Lev. 20:9)

Dishonoring parents is not a capital crime under the New Covenant, aren’t you glad? Furthermore, stoning children rarely happened under the Old Covenant, since this was the absolute worst-case scenario. Yet, these verses give us a sense for how serious it is to dishonor one’s parents.

### **Application:**

In Ephesians 6:1-3, Paul is primarily addressing children living in the home. If that describes you, let me address you for a moment.

There are at least three things you can say to honor your parents.

You can say, “yes mom” or “yes dad.” In other words, you can honor your parents with quick and cheerful obedience. In other words, your obedience needs to be all the way, right away, and cheerfully. If your mom says, “Can you please sweep the floor????” You need to look her in the eye and say “Yes, mom, I would love to sweep the floor.” Not...

You can also say, “thank you, mom” or “thank you, dad.” Kids, gratitude is one of the best ways you can honor your parents. Kids, you don’t understand this yet, but the life of a parent is a life of constant sacrifice. Parents constantly sacrifice time, money, energy, sleep, and many other things for your happiness. One of the best ways we can honor your parents is by simply saying “thank you.” Thank you for giving us food and clothes. Thank you for paying for tennis lessons, and violin lessons, taking us to urgent care, cleaning up our throw up, wiping our bottoms, helping us figure out our acne medication, and taking us to soccer practice.

You can also say, “I’m sorry!” Not, “I’m sorry that you were offended” but I’m genuinely sorry for what I did, please forgive me.

Let me address the parents for a moment...

Parents, if you let your kids dishonor you, you are doing a massive disservice to them. You are keeping them from experiencing God’s blessings. Therefore, because you love your kids, you must make your children honor and respect you. How? Through loving, painful, and swift discipline. Next week’s entire sermon is devoted to this topic.

Parents, you must never ever, ever, ever, let your children be disrespectful with you. Father’s you must never ever sit by passively as your child dishonors his or her mother.

Parents you have the privilege and responsibility of making your young children honor you. When a young child continually dishonors his parents, the parents are as much to blame as the young child.

*Children must honor their parents! In addition...*

### **Adults must honor their parents!**

Doug and Nancy are both successful authors. Furthermore, Doug is the pastor of a large church in Moscow Idaho. He is also the founder of a publishing house, the classical school movement, a university, and a seminary. They are both in their mid to late 60s. They have successfully raised three children who are raising many godly grandchildren.

At this point in life, most people think, “you know what, I have put in my time, I have worked really hard, I have raised kids, I have sacrificed, now it is time for some me time. I’m going to relax, play golf, and sit by the beach.”

This was not Doug and Nancy’s perspective. Rather, they moved out of their dream house a few years ago (which they spent many years planning and then building) to move into Doug’s dad’s much smaller and inferior house. Why? Doug’s dad’s health was failing, and he had no one to care for him. Furthermore, they realized that Doug’s dad would be much more comfortable in his own house.

Now they spend their spare time caring for Doug’s dad. I’m sure Doug has often thought, I could write so many more books and get so many more things done if I was not caring for my aging dad. I’m sure Nancy has thought, I too could write more books and spend more time with my friends and grandkids, if I was not caring for my invalid father-in-law.

Nancy said, “Many people say to us, how much they respect us for moving in with Doug’s dad to care for him.” She went on to say, “but this is what all Christians are supposed to do. We are all called to honor our parents.”

Doug and Nancy are not alone. I think of the many people in this church who have made similar sacrifices.

I think of Brian Huseland, who helped his aging mother move into his house.

I think of Roland Pearson, who faithfully brought his wheelchair bound father to church every Sunday and spent many hours at his bedside.

I think of John and Stacy Kershinar. John’s move lives in their home.

I think of Kim Williams who buys groceries for her mom most weeks.

Why? Back to our text...

**Ephesians 6:1–2 (ESV) — 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),**

Although verse one applies primarily to small children, verse two applies to all of us. If you have a father or a mother, you must honor them, no matter how old they are. Notice, I did not say that you must obey them. Young kids must obey their parents (v. 1). All children, regardless of their age, must honor their parents (v.2).

Jesus reiterates the importance of this command when he criticizes the pharisees in Mark 7:10 for not honoring their parents with their wealth. Furthermore, he tells the rich young ruler, a grown man living on his own, that he needs to obey all of the commandments, which includes the fifth commandment (Mark 10:19).

**1 Timothy 5:3–4 (ESV) — 3 Honor widows who are truly widows. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.**

In other words, Paul says that an older widow must be provided for by her own children first... before the church steps in.

**1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV) — 8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

Anyone who does not provide for his relatives (based on the context of verses 3-4, this includes his parents) has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

### **Application:**

What does it look like for adults to honor their aging parents?

I think it starts by forgiving your aging parents for all the times they wronged you. Every parent falls short of God's glory.

It also means speaking well of your aging parents when talking to others.

It also means thanking them. Have you considered thanking your parents for how they taught you to save money, work hard, persevere through adversity, or love the church?

It means thanking them for all the ways they sacrificed for you.

Honoring your parents also means seeking their wisdom, even though you may disagree with their advice.

It means picking up the phone and calling them on a regular basis, sending them texts and emails, and sending them pictures of the grandkids.

It means being present with them, when possible, for the holidays.

It means respecting their property. Some of you are expecting an inheritance from your parents (Prov. 13:22). You may be tempted to think that your parent's money already belongs to you even though they are still alive. This dishonors your parents.

It also means caring for them physically, emotionally, and financially (Ps. 71:9).

This does not imply that everyone must have their aging parents live with them. But it surely means ensuring that your aging parents have what they need to thrive. This may involve moving them into your house, or helping them find professional nursing care, or visiting them frequently while they are in their assisted living home. Every circumstance is different!

But the principal is the same... We must find ways to honor our aging parents.

When we were young, they cared for us sacrificially, now that they are old, we must care for them sacrificially.

When kids move out of the home, they stop obeying, but they never stop honoring!

The mandate to honor parents is very clear in Ephesians 6:1-3. But why should we honor our parents? This brings us to the next point...

First, the mandate to honor...

## **Second, the motive to honor**

### **Why do we honor our parents? It honors the Lord!**

**Ephesians 6:1–2 (ESV) — 1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),

Paul writes, children obey your parents *in* the Lord...

In other words, Paul is saying, Children you must obey your parents as you obey the Lord. This means that submission to parents is the same thing as submission to God almighty. When you disobey your parents, you are disobeying the Lord. This is a big deal. If a kid disrespectfully says to his parents, “Why should I obey you?” The parent could say, “because I said so.” But it is better to say, “Because God said so.” Since, the parent represents God to the child. And then the parent should spank his or her child for being disrespectful. Disobeying a parent is disobeying God.

Said positively, obeying your parents pleases the lord...

**Colossians 3:20 (ESV) — 20** Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Children, when you obey your parents, the maker of heaven and earth is pleased with you. Children, the only time you can disobey your parents is when they ask you to disobey God.

I read a story this week about someone, “whose parents had prohibited him from reading the Bible when he was a high school student. He disobeyed them and read the Bible in his room secretly with a flashlight under the covers at night. Today he is the successful pastor of a large evangelical church.” (Grudem, FN.6)

*Why do we honor our parents? It honors the Lord.*

### **Why else do we honor our parents? It is right.**

**Ephesians 6:1–2 (ESV) — 1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),

It is right for kids to obey their parents for several reasons. But let me highlight the main reason. The vast majority of parents lavish their kids with love.

Changing thousands of dirty diapers.

Getting up several times a night to feed the infant child.

Potty training.

Cleaning up puke...

All the children's books read...

Taking kids fishing, making bike jumps, going to ballet recitals, etc...

Then there are just the basics- providing kids with food, shelter, clothing, and education...

Then as they enter the teen years- up late at night worrying... did he put diesel instead of gasoline in the gas tank, how fast is he driving with his friends, is he going to pass calculus, is she going to get fired from her job, etc..

Parents sacrifice nearly everything for their children. Therefore, it is right for kids to obey their parents.

*Why do we honor our parents? It honors the Lord!*

*Why else do we honor our parents? It is right!*

**Why else do we honor our parents? It leads to blessing!**

**Ephesians 6:2-3 (ESV) — 2 “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”**

Paul is quoting the fifth commandment from the OT. The emphasis on rewards in the OT was much more earthly and material, while the emphasis on rewards in the NT is much more heavenly and spiritual. Yet, yet, yet most scholars argue that the shift in emphasis from OT to NT does not negate the blessings of the fifth commandment for all the people living under the New Covenant (that is us). In other words, we must not over-spiritualize the promised blessing in the fifth commandment.

Why? First, Paul directed the words of Ephesians 6:2-3 to people living under the New Covenant. Furthermore, kids that obey their parents do much better in life than kids who don't, generally speaking.

Kevin Deyoung writes,

“Anyone in the social sciences field, whether liberal or conservative, has to acknowledge that study after study has shown that the best predictor for health as an adult and for making it through school, staying out of jail, keeping off drugs, and avoiding promiscuity—and whatever other pattern of social benefit—is what happens in the home. Again, there are all sorts of exceptions that go better or worse than what the statistics say, but the best predictor is whether you had a mom and a dad who loved you and were there for you, and whether you listened to them and followed them. This is the way the world works.” (Deyoung, 89)

This is not a mathematically precise formula. In other words, we can't say, “Hey, I earned 13 obedience points today because I took out the trash, made my bed, got to school on time, and practiced the trombone for 60 minutes. Therefore, I get 2.3 extra years of life.”

No... Paul is simply acknowledging that God has set the world up to work in a certain way. Generally speaking, when you honor your parents, life is much longer and better.

**“Proverbs 3:1–2 (ESV) — 1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.”**

Application:

Do you want a blessed life? It starts with honoring your father and mother!!! Will there still be trials? Yes. Will there still be persecution? Yes! Will some of you die young? Possibly! However, we can't let this promise die the death of a thousand nuances. There is real blessing to those that honor their parents.

Notice that God does not say, “honor your father and mother or else!!!” Furthermore, God does not say “this is the first commandment with a big threat.” Rather, God very kindly reminds us that it will go much better for us in this life if we honor our parents.

At this point some of you may be thinking, “I have not honored my father and mother like I should have! Is there any hope for me?”

Yes, but first you must apologize to your parents and to God. When you do, he will forgive you? How?

Jesus obeyed his earthly parents perfectly.

**Luke 2:51 (ESV) — 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.**

Jesus obeyed his heavenly father perfectly.

**John 8:29 (ESV) — 29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”**

Jesus obeyed his father all the way to the cross. On the cross, Jesus suffered and died in the place of those who did not honor their parents.

Honoring our parents can be very challenging. But remember once again, the context of this passage. In Ephesians 5:18, Paul tells us to be filled with the Spirit. Since we have the Holy Spirit, we have the power necessary to honor our parents.

Let's pray...