

This is What the Heart Looks Like

// #5 “Meet the Parents” // Exodus 20:12

Announce: *We’ve got a really important event coming up... I know a lot of you like to feel like... Rows vs. circles; If you’re a leader you need to be there. If you are thinking about being a leader, you need to be there. Details are in your worship guide.*

1 of the advantages of preaching through the Bible is you end up covering things you’d probably never otherwise think to cover. (If I just came up with my own series out of my head, I’d probably end up recycling the same 10-15 topics... But, when you just preach through the Bible, all kinds of things come up you normally wouldn’t have thought about, but that are actually incredibly relevant and helpful. ...It’s almost like God knows what you need more than I do. Who would’ve known?)

Well, that’s the case today... the 5th commandment deals with our relationship to our parents (and I probably would never think to talk about it but it’s surprisingly relevant.)

Exodus 20:12, ‘Honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving to you.’ (Command; promise – Paul notes that this is the 1st commandment with a promise attached to it)

Now... a little important background: The 10 commandments are divided up into 2 sections:

- 1st 4 commandments deal, primarily, with our relationship to God.
- The last commandments deal with our relationship to each other.

- 1st 4, vertical; last 5, horizontal.
- And inbetween is this little one...
- **So, here’s the question: which group does this one belong in?** Is it about our vertical relationship with God, or our horizontal relationship with each other? And the answer is... both. This commandment is the bridge between the 2 types of commandments.

It is a command that deals with a human relationship, but there’s hardly anything that forms or influences our relationship to God like our relationship with our parents.

For a while, especially when we are young, our parents stand in for God. In the home is where we learn authority; responsibility; it’s where we 1st learn right from wrong; and where we first feel what it is to be valued and cherished and loved unconditionally; it’s where we feel safety and security.

And when the home is screwed up, inevitably our relationship with God is affected.

- When I was doing my Ph.D. studies (in the early church) I discovered the most incredible thing: Almost all the famous atheists of the past century—Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Bertrand Russell, Madelyn Murray O’Hare, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Albert Camus—a screwed up relationship with their father. It’s not hard to extrapolate that that anger and resentment colored how they saw God.
 - Let me make a generalization here (which means there are exceptions): In my experience, atheists are usually not disconnected, coolly logical unbelievers. Atheists are usually believers who disappointed with and angry at God.
 - They usually start out as believers... (you see, there’s something in us that knows and craves God) but they get disappointed and don’t understand why God would do things. Atheism is usually not a matter of logical

reasoning (even when it masquerades as that); it's a matter of rebellion against how God does things.

- **Your relationship with your parents has a profound impact on how you view God:**

- If you had a really demanding, never-satisfied dad, you end up thinking that about God, too. You end up resenting him.
- If you had a dad who was unfaithful, then a lot of times you have a real problem believing that God is not ever going to leave you, or you have a hard time believing that during painful times God is working everything out for good.
 - **Eric Erickson**... did this famous study many years ago trying to demonstrate how many problems in an adult's life can be traced back to being dropped in childhood...
- If you had a dad who was emotionally distant,
 - then if you're a girl... a lot of times that manifests itself by craving the affection and attention of a boyfriend or a husband... and so you are a serial dater who can never be without a guy and then when you get married you get co-dependent and when, not if, but when your husband disappoints you, you either become really bitter in your marriage or start to with flirt with old boyfriends on facebook...
 - if you're a guy and your dad was emotionally distant, then a lot of times you'll have this insatiable craving to succeed, to get to the top. Psychologists say it is because you're trying to prove you're worth something and good at something so that someone will "good job," and "you're really important..." because your dad never did.¹

- There's even some really good research that shows that a lot of homosexual feelings in guys are rooted in emotional distance from their dad and now they are craving from other men in kind of a twisted way what they never got from their dad.

- Listen: Some of you really had screwed up homes—abusive homes, and, honestly, you've never come to terms with how it is affecting you. It affects your career; how you relate to your family; your marriage, and even how you relate to God. It's time some of you deal with it and you find the healing God has provided for you. I won't do it all today... some of you need to come to our church and take advantage of the counselors we provide... let us help you get connected.

So, let's look more this command... 1st, let's get our minds around what it actually says.

Again, there is a directive and a promise.

- **Directive:** Honor your parents: in short, to honor means to recognize your parents as the stand-ins for God that they are... and reverence and respect them for the fact that they represent that. We'll get more into that in a minute.
- **But first, let me show you the promise...** "You will live long in the land."
 - **Now, one thing commentators note is that this is not a promise to isolated individuals...** as I've he's saying that if you personally are nice to your parents then God will keep you cancer-free and quadruple your stock portfolio. He's telling the whole nation of Israel that if they honor their parents their community will flourish and their nation will thrive.
 - **You see, the family is the fundamental unit of society,** and if it is healthy and intact, the community will be healthy.

¹ For more on this, see Stephan Poulter, [Father Factor: How your Father's Legacy Impacts Your Career](#).

- In fact, in the next chapter, Moses says that rebellion and deep disrespect toward the parents is a punishable by death... **Exodus 21:17 'Whoever curses his father or mother shall be put to death.'**
 - *(How many of you would have made it out of high school under that system?)*
- You're like, "Whoa, that's a little harsh... And what's the law doing messing in private family affairs?"
- The answer is that they didn't see this as a private offense, but a public crime. The community saw an assault on the family as an assault on the public good. Because if you unravel the family, you unravel society. So, an attack on it was an attack on the society.

So, God says to honor your father and mother, because from the family unit I'm going to teach you about Myself—you're going to learn my love and my authority, and through strong families I'll make you a strong, thriving nation.

Alright, there it is...

So now, from that, I have a very word to the parents (**how many parents?** – quick word to you) and then I have a word to those of you have, or have had parents (how many of you, that is you? – you have, or have had, parents—yeah, that's right, that's all of you... unless you're virgin born, or you got trans-planted here by Martians... that's you.)

To Parents: In your role as a parent, you temporarily stand in for God

Let that sink in. Because, if that concept sinks in, it will fundamentally change how you see your role (it will give you some comfort and then scare you to death.) As a parent, temporarily, you fill in for God.

- You're supposed to teach them what God sees as right and wrong;

- They are supposed to feel from you the 1st touches of God's delight and His love and His unconditional acceptance;
 - 3 things psychologists say every kid needs to hear...
 - I love you
 - I'm proud of you
 - You are good at something...
 - Those are things God says to His children, 1st through his parents..
- You teach them to honor God's authority by honoring yours.
 - That will change how you discipline. My main concern in discipline is their learning to properly respond to God's authority.
 - When they disrespect or disobey me, I don't get upset with them because they have disrespected me, I get upset because they are learning to disrespect the God behind me (that I temporarily represent).
 - My discipline should not be an attempt to keep them under my control, or to punish them for annoying me or making life difficult for me or embarrassing me... but to bring them to God's authority.
 - Think about that, parent... when you get angry at your kid, what is it usually about? Is it because they have inconvenienced you, or annoyed you, or embarrassed you, or broken something that upset you... or is your anger a godly, righteous, loving anger that is grieved at how their little hearts are in rebellion against God?
 - You see, my reaction to their behavior should never be "How did this affect me?" but "What is going on in their heart toward God?"
 - Give you an example: (**Ryah and her paci**)... The other day I caught my daughters' head above the table... she immediately ducked her head down... we have a rule... for those of you who are single and don't know what a paci is... plastic lollipop. I told her that it

needed to go back in the bed. Later I came back, she was lying down and she looked up, all I could see was her eyes... she puts her head face down... it's not affecting me, it's cute, (Picture: "peacock": look at that! how can you be mad at that? But the bigger concern is what is happening in her spirit about how she submits to the will of God. Defying authority and hiding from God's presence is what got Adam and Eve kicked out of the Garden of Eden.

- So, the issue in discipline is that... how are they learning to respond to God?

Now, parents: If you are a temporary stand-in for God, that means that there is a place your authority ends and where God's begins. All you are doing is training them up for His purposes handing them off. Releasing them.

- I know parents who try and control their children long into adulthood. *"This is where I want you to live. This is what I want you to be and do."*
- I know parents whose grown kids feel sincerely called to go the overseas mission field in response to the call of God and the parents just refuse or get angry with them (not even talking about atheist parents... I'm talking about parents in the church... they say, "No. I want you to live here.") **Shame on you.** You are not God. Those kids are ultimately His, not yours, and after you have taught them to obey God you release them and let them go.
- If your kids don't grow up and go into the profession you want; if they don't take over the family business... if they are doing what God wants, well, they belong to Him, ultimately, not you.
- **You parents should rejoice when your kids grow up and become independent, especially if they are obeying God**

and making spiritually-wise choices, because that was your job.

Is that heavy? OK, that's the word for the parents. (Your role is that you are a temporary stand-in for God)

Now, let's reverse the flow: A word to those of us who have or have had parents: (which, again, I'd imagine to be just about everybody)
2. Honor your parents

Now, you're like, "What does that mean? Always do what they say? Obey them like slaves?" (A lot of you have questions about what this means when you are older... **what if they don't approve of who you want to marry, or what you are doing with your life,** or how you are raising/rearing your children? What does honoring mean in that situation?)

So, let me give you a really concise description of what it means, biblically, to honor your parents, and then we'll ask some questions about it:

To honor your parents means to recognize the institution of parenthood as the temporary stand-in for God that it is and respect it accordingly.

2 implications:

A. When you live at home as a child, you obey them; and for all of your life, you respect them.

- Now, that brings up a few questions:
 - **You say, "But what if they don't deserve respect?"** You say, "J.D., you don't understand. My parents are truly bad, manipulative, controlling people;" There are some of you that will say, "My parents abused me... How am I supposed to respect them?"

- I know; I don't want to minimalize or trivialize that; but even if you can't respect them as individuals, you can respect the institution they represent... Which means, you certainly don't put approve of or condone what they do; you don't even always submit to what they tell you, and you certainly don't allow them to dominate you, control you, or abuse you; but you can still show a level of respect to the office they hold.
 - **Because when you honor your parents, you are honoring the God behind your parents** (the God the institution of parenthood represents).
- **You say, "But what if they are telling you to do something that you know God doesn't want you to do?"**
 - Remember: Parenthood is given to you as a temporary fill-in for God. That means the real point is obeying God... so once you are doing that you are fulfilling the purpose of this commandment.
 - The point of this commandment is getting you to obey God.
 - A few weeks ago I told you about my wife's engagement ring... **Brad Dingler**, a jeweler that goes to our church, helped me replace it.
 - *In this analogy your parents are the stand-in, the temporary authority that teaches you about God... but obeying them is not the ultimate point; obeying God the eternal Father that they represent is the point.*
 - So (this might blow your mind) **the way you can most honor them is by growing up and obeying God, even if they don't want you to.**
 - That's why Jesus made a statement like this: **Luke 14:26, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother... he cannot be my disciple."**
- **Hate?** How do you reconcile that with the commandment to "honor" your parents? Was He overturning this commandment? No, He was fulfilling it! He was showing you that ultimately the point is learning to obey Him.
- In light of our obedience to Him, who is the real thing, the institution of parenthood, the temporary fill-in, takes a permanent backseat... so that our commitment to Him makes our commitment to everyone else look like hate!
 - It's like this... say my kid goes over to play at a neighbor's house. I tell my kids to do whatever Mrs. So and so says... if I call and say, "Come home..." and the neighbor says, "No, Kharis, I want you to stay." And Kharis says, "But daddy wants me to come home." And they say, "But I want you to stay." I expect my kid to say, "Up yours. I'm obeying my daddy.... And I'm calling channel 5 on you b/c you're trying to steal kids; you don't even know the password."
- Does that make sense? Does it? **Listen, the greatest honor you can do to your parents is to obey God**, because in so doing you are honoring the institution of parenthood and fulfilling the purpose of the commandment.

- **My illustration:** telling my mom I would do what God wanted. I have never honored my parents more.
 - Why would I say that?
 - My mom's statement... "We gave you to God."

OK, so, you honor and obey your parents as a way of learning to honor and obey God.

- Now, let's be honest... some of you have never been able to submit to anybody... as a teenager, not to your parents; not your bosses, your teachers; the police, or the tax authorities.
 - Some of you, your whole life you've thought you should be best able to determine what is good for you; sexually; in your relationships; what you wanted to do.
 - The problem is, this is an attitude you have toward God. That whole way of life and thinking has to change. There's a more fundamental question at work here, and that is, "*Who is going to be in charge of your life?*"
 - 2 choices: You, or God. You've either go to say with Jesus, "Thy Will be Done," or sing with Frank Sinatra, "I did it my way." 1 is the mantra of the child of God, the other is the anthem of hell.
 - You're either a person under authority or you are a person who makes their own rules.
- And I'm not just talking to people who aren't Christians... A lot of Christians are like this... You want Christianity, but on your terms.

- **Illus.** When I went flying with a friend (...cuz, I have awesome friends like that), how the instructor really steered for me. **Or, illus.** when I did Driver's ed, the instructors break peddle
 - That's how you want to be with God. You want to be able to have Jesus as an influence, but you still want to have veto power in the ultimate decisions.
- Your whole life, you've always had to be in charge.
 - Now, you're in here... you want a little bit of God... you're singing the songs, but, ultimately, you still want to call the shots; your foot is still on the break pedal.
- You look surrendered to Christ, but it is an illusion.
- Here's the fundamental question. *Have you submitted to God in all areas of your life?* Are you a person under authority or are you in charge of your life?
 - Is God in charge of who you date? How you're handling your marriage? What you do with your finances? Where you live?
- **The Lordship of Christ is either total in your life, or it is an illusion.**

B. Caring for them in their old age

- Honoring your parents means you understand that there is a cycle to life... and God has placed both parents and children in that cycle with responsibilities to one another at various stages.
 - Here's what I mean... when a baby is born, he is totally dependent on his parents. You feed him, dress him, wipe

his bottom. His role is to take the pure white milk you put in and recycle it into a rainbow of neon colors... both your responsibility.

- But as your child grows, he gets increasingly independent. Hopefully by the time he gets to high school you are still not wiping his bottom.
- Well, while the child is growing up and moving toward independence, the parents are following an opposite path... also assigned by God. They are moving from independence to dependence.
 - Seinfeld says the 1st birthday party you have and the last 1 you have are quite similar. You just kind of sit there. You are the least excited person at the party. You don't even realize that there is a party. You don't know what's going on. People have to help you blow out the candles... you can't do it. You don't even know why you're doing it. What is this ritual? What is going on? It's also the only 2 birthday parties where other people have to gather your friends together for you. They might not even really be your friends. Other people make the judgment. They bring them in, they sit them down and they tell you, "*These are your friends.*"
- So, at that older stage, the parents become dependent on the children they raised.
 - (Which is why I have lots of them... only 1 out of 4 have to get it.
 - But, at any rate, in old age, the cycle is complete.² And we honor our parents by caring for them in their old age as they cared for us in our young age... and I'm not even saying this because I'm old. I'm only 26.
- Interestingly, you see this even in the life of Jesus... even on the cross, in his last hour, He was concerned to make sure His aging mother was cared for and asked his buddy John to do it for him.

- It's the God-ordained cycle of life. So, listen, don't you dare think you have more important things to do that care for your parents.
- You say, "But you don't understand my schedule. I'm really important and I've got lots of stuff to do." Listen, if the Son of God was thinking about taking care of His aging mother as He was, literally, saving the world, rearranging your schedule to take care of your parents is not that big of a deal. (***And all the seniors said:*** "Preach on, Pastor Greear")
- What if your parents had been too busy to care for you when you were dependent? What if they had 'more important things to do' than really make sure you felt loved and included and in a place where you could thrive? They'd be considered 'bad parents.' Many of you should be considered 'bad children'.
- Honoring our parents means make sure that in their old age they are in a comfortable environment, that they feel like part of the family, and that you communicate over and over to them that they are loved.

Got 1 other place to go with this commandment, and then we'll be done. Ultimately, Jesus fulfills this commandment.

In Jesus is where you can gain the trust to submit to God. The point of this whole thing was to learn to submit to God. Many of you won't submit to God because you don't trust Him. Maybe that was because of your parent. You think life will be better if you run it and that if you submit to God He'll ruin it.

- But think about this... The only 1 to ever submit to God perfectly was Jesus. He was the 1 who obeyed this commandment perfectly. He was the perfect Son. Yet, when He should have heard, "You are my son and I'm proud of you," but instead he heard "depart from me you worker of iniquity." God turned His back while evil people took His own Son and tore Him apart. But He did this not because of Jesus' sin, but because of ours. He did it for us.

² Bill Hybels, *Laws of the Heart*, 61.

- Listen: This is the God who calls you to submit to Him. Some of you resist the authority of God because you don't trust Him... but do you really need to resist a God who would go through this for you? If this is what He would do, why wouldn't you trust Him? Don't you think He can handle your problems and that He has your best interests at heart?
- If you don't trust Him, it's because you don't know Him... know Him and you'll trust Him

In Jesus, we find the love and acceptance we searched for first from our parents.

- Some of you, your 1st major disappointment was from your parents. You looked to them for a tenderness and an affirmation that they never gave to you... and when you couldn't find it there, you turned elsewhere.
 - I'm talking to some of you out there who, as little girls, were never loved and adored by your daddy, so you've spent trying to find that adoration in the arms of lovers...
 - I'm talking to some guys who all they wanted as a kid was to hear **"Son, I'm proud of you."** But you never heard it so now you are a workaholic trying to prove yourself to God knows who.
- Listen, the identity and approval you've always been looking for... it wasn't even in your parents, your parents were just supposed to represent it for a while... it's really in God.
- The Apostle John said, **"What an incredible kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God."** (1 John 3:1)³
 - In Jesus you can find the tenderness, affection, and approval you've always craved.
 - Your parents will disappoint you; but God won't. (You are created for God! Each of you, even if you don't believe, there is a longing for an eternal Father)

And, some of you need to forgive your parents...

- Listen, some of you have deeply damaged relationships... (and I don't want to minimize that... it is things unspeakable... your dad left you; or abused you, or raped you. I don't want to minimize any that. But you've carried around this huge life-destroying weight.
 - It's time to let that go. And can I tell you how you'll do that?
 - The only way you can do that is to realize that even though they hurt and disappointed and abused you, the God they represented (very poorly, I might add) has not. And in His love and acceptance you'll find the power to forgive them.
- **You see, let me tell you something I've learned about forgiveness.** The only way to forgive someone is when you consider the wound they have inflicted on you to not be fatal. For some of you, the wound from your parents has been fatal. But in Christ, you can find freedom from that wound by finding the tenderness and affirmation you craved from them in Him.
- And then you'll be able to say to them, *"You wounded me, and it hurt, but it wasn't fatal. 'I used to need your approval, but no longer'; 'I used to weep over your lack of love for me, but no longer.'* I found it in God...
- *In Christ, I found* what I most craved, what you were supposed to represent, but I have found in Him the approval and tenderness that I craved. And now that I have His, I can forgive you for not giving me yours.
- You see, the reason many of you can't forgive your parents is because you, ironically, have made an idol out of them (which is ironic b/c you didn't even really like them and they weren't good people). But you made an idol out of them in that you demanded from them what you can really only find in God.

³ John 16:27; 1 John 3:1

- Your parents will always disappoint you; but they were only a temporary and fallen shadow of God. Only God never will fail you. In Him and Him alone you can find the tenderness and affirmation you've always craved.
- And you're never going to be healthy and free from bitterness and able to forgive until you grow up and quit looking to your parents for things only the Heavenly Father can give to you.

Let me close all this today by walking you through some practical things:

- I know for some of you this really opens up some wounds... Here's what I'd say... Don't go away messed up. Talk to your campus pastors before you go. Let us connect you with some counseling. Little secret around the Summit: we're all screwed up. A lot of us cover it up and put on a good show, but, it's just an act, don't be fooled. Around here we say... Everybody's normal until you get to know them.
- And for those of you who have a real broken relationship with you parents, can I encourage you to do something? Tell them. Confess it to them. Write them a letter!

Heard a pastor once talk about a man in his congregation who was very successful... an accomplished surgeon. But he had lunch with pastor and told him that there was real hurt in his relationship with his dad... because his dad had a business and the expectation was that he would take it over, but this guy wanted to be a surgeon... and even though he was successful there was this shroud of hurt and pain...

So the pastor said,

"We went out to lunch and we talked about it one day. We were sitting there over lunch and -- this just shows how deep it is -- this prominent surgeon sat there and never ate his salad. He just cried into it, because more than anything else, he wanted to have his dad's blessing over his life. The pastor told this guy to cancel all of his appointments and go see his

dad and ask for his blessing. And his dad sat there and listened to him but really struggled with it...

But about a month later, he called me on the phone and he said, "can we go out and have lunch again? I want to share with you a letter that dad sent me." He gave me a copy of the letter and here's what his dad said:

"Dear Son, I love you more than you will ever know. I am so proud of you; your brilliant mind; your tenacity; your tender, loving heart; your determination to go the second, third or many more miles as it takes to make a good marriage. You have a God-like love that never gives up, and Son, I want you to look into my heart today wherever I go in this world, my heart fills with pride when I say, 'my son is a doctor. A surgeon. He helps save lives every day. Son, I want you to know I have felt pain and hurt in my lifetime: the pain of depression, the pain of at one point, having no hope -- not even having any food. The pain of being a dropout from high school with no one who seemed to care for me. The pain of going to college with no money, and no letters and no help. But the deepest pain I have ever felt was when I hurt you with stupid, foolish words. Oh, how I have wept when I think how I hurt you, my beloved son. I weep even now as I write this. Please, please erase those words. They were not from my heart. Please forgive from your heart and think of me as not only your daddy, but your best friend and supporter. I know you have forgiven me, but I wanted you to hear my heart cry. Only the guilty need mercy. Son, I remember when I saw you and held you and loved you. When you were a little boy in bed one night, you were scared and you said, 'Daddy, are you awake?' And I said, 'Yes, Son, I'm awake.' And you said in a few minutes, 'Daddy, is your face turned towards me?' And I said, 'Yes, it is.' And a frightened little boy went to sleep. Son, I want you to know that my face is still turned towards you and will never be turned away. Sleep well, my son, your old daddy will always love you and help you."

- What if they are dead? Write it anyway... write out your thoughts, then the letter, and release it to God.

Lastly, can I say to you dads... some of your kids really need to hear the voice of God from you... and at this stage in their lives you are the only one they can hear it:

Your son needs to hear, frequently, these 3 phrases: (1) I love you, (2) I'm proud of you, and (3) there's something you're really good at. God

wants to say that to every son, and you, dad, are the only one who can do that in childhood.

- Your daughter needs to feel the love and tenderness of the Heavenly Father from you: She needs to hear you say, Often, “Sweetheart, you are beautiful. You are special. You are pure and I love you.”

Listen: what I’m about to say is life or death: **If your kids don’t learn to feel the love that God has for them from you, they may never learn to feel it at all.**

(And, can I tell you, it’s this message right here that drives me. People around the world need to hear this. There are broken, hurting lonely children (orphans, kids to be adopted) who become broken, lonely adults who need to hear that their Father God loves them and has run to save them.)

Prayer: you are created for God

Bullpen:

- I don't need your approval or your security or even your affection, ultimately... I needed God's. And now I have that so I can forgive you for failing me and not giving me yours.

Matthew 15:4 (ESV) ⁴ For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.'

You are walking more Christianly than your parents... how do I honor my parents when they are not living well?

- Lots of grace and lots of truth

A word to you as a parent

A word to you as a child

Successful parenting is teaching your children what is right and wrong, so that they can live independently. Christian parents want to get their children to the point that they no longer need their authority. (Not something to control them... so they cannot get on our nerves or keep meeting our needs. My authority is only a tool to bring them to submit to God's authority, at which point it is no longer needed)

It is common for modern parents to 'hand-over' their kids to the education system – the 'experts' – to teach them morals

- We must honor our parents. It does not say to obey them, or even to love them. Some people have good parents, but some don't. If you have evil parents, then it is inappropriate to love them. Honor is not an emotion. Honor is a moral choice. You honor your parents whether it is appropriate to obey them or to love them.
- When you honor your parents you are honoring the God behind your parents – you are honoring the institution of family that God has set-up. Treat them with significance and respect.
- You honor your parents best by growing up.
- No parent has ever loved their children perfectly.
- J.I. Packer,
 - "The kind of love we really need is love that is completely accepting and completely unconditional, and yet never puts up with self-destructive behavior."
- No parent is capable of this. Therefore every person comes into adulthood feeling they haven't been loved properly.
- We never grow up until we can look at our parents and say 'you are no longer god to me.' As a child, parents stand in the place of God for you. This is how God designed the family.
- Too many adults still worship their parents. They either idolize them for being great parents, or greatly resent them for being the cause of their own insecurity.
- So many adults' lives are controlled by their responses to their parents. You put an unhealthy amount of time into your work trying to find the approval that your parents never gave you. Or you keep trying to find the love you never got from your parents in sexual lovers.
- We need to grow up and be able to truthfully say 'I used to need your approval, but no longer'; 'I used to weep over your lack of love for me, but no longer.'
- Parents ought to rejoice when their children no longer need them. They rejoice when their children are free from them.

- Parents cannot love us with the love we need. No human being can.
- Through Jesus, you can have perfect parent-love. John 17:25–26
 - Paul notes in the New Testament that this is the 1st commandment with a promise attached to it. If Israel does this, God will bless and multiply them and cause them to flourish.
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 - When I was 1st thinking about this commandment, I was worried about how to make this relevant... but then I realized... our parents are how we learn authority; the 1st place we look for acceptance and love. That is incredibly relevant. This commandment has unbelievable implications for how we know and relate to God.