

From time to time, students will come up to me and ask me if they have to listen to their parents when it comes to a particular decision they have to make. Sometimes they have disagreements over what college they want to go to. Other times, students just want to go out and their parents want them to stay in. I also have parents who come up to me and ask if I can help their student listen to them more. When situations like these come up, students will always ask, am I supposed to listen to them if I am to honor my parents? Growing up, I always thought honoring my father and mother, God wanted me to just obey my parents. Listen to whatever they say and respond right away. It was always so one-sided too. In this understanding I had of the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment, parents had no role in it. So Is honor thy father as simple as students listening to parents and always obeying what they tell you to do? Well, that's what we're going to try and answer today through Proverbs. And I want to start by asking this question: What does God desire when He says, Honor Thy Father and Mother? This is where we will go today: God desires to be honored by the Father and Mother first. Secondly, God desires children to bring joy to their Father and Mother. Lastly, God desires families to flourish.

Before we move on, just a quick word to those who are young adults. You might be thinking, well, since this is about families and honoring Father and Mothers, and I'm 28, I don't live with my parents anymore, this doesn't apply to me, I'll just encourage you to keep listening. Don't move onto the response song just yet. I believe there are things that will be said that you can still apply to your life.

God desires to be honored by the Father and Mother first.

- Let's take a look at **Proverbs 10:1: A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.** What we need to see here is that this verse implies that the father and mother are wise themselves. It wouldn't make sense for parents to expect their children to be something they are not. The father is glad that his child is walking in the path of wisdom. He has chosen wisdom. This is the same path as that of the parents. They are aligned in their thinking, beliefs, and living. You can see the opposite being describe. When parents and children are at each other's throats, it's because they don't see eye to eye on something. Wise parents and foolish children bring about sorrow.
- Parents must honor God themselves first. This proverb only makes sense to for Solomon and his readers if the parent is wise, if the parents is someone who honors God because proverbs 10:1 is the application of what God has already said. This is how God designed it to be.
- One book I read describes it like this: *First Adam, the leader, is created to rule and subdue the earth. Then Ever is created to help Adam rule and subdue the earth. The family grows out of this union and is a vital part of that original goal: for man to rule and subdue the earth. Therefore, it follows...Parents' role, then, is to train their children for this calling. The Propagation of the human race Is for the end of subduing the earth and ruling it under God. Children must be brought up with that vision in mind, and taught the convictions and skills necessary to pursue it.* (Phillips, 264)
- God's design is for it to start with the parents. Parents must honor God themselves first. We see this happening in **Deuteronomy 6:4-7: [4] "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. [5] You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. [6] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.**
- God calls the parents to love Him and then charges them to teach it diligently to their children. Look at that word: Diligently. You're going to know how to live a life that is spent loving God first before you can teach it to someone else. Loving God is part of your routine. It's who you are. It's what you do. See how God tell parents to teach it to their children: At any point in the day, whatever you're doing, walking, laying down, sitting, you teach it. It comes out of you naturally.
- So much in the book of proverb, it is Solomon telling his son to listen to the wisdom that he is sharing with him. He's sharing wisdom, he's sharing things that he has received from God. How you teach and what you teach to your children is really an overflow of your relationship with God, or even a lack of relationship with Him.
- Can I challenge you in this way? When all of the news of this virus started to ramp up, how did you react? What flowed naturally from your thoughts? Did anxiety rise? Did

random passages of scripture come to your mind to help put you at ease? Did you believe that God would be faithful to you in these moments? If I asked your students: Hey, how did your parents react or what did they teach you in these moments? What would they say?

- Because in times of crisis, your theology will be revealed. Parents must honor and Love God first in your lives. And whatever your relationship is like with God the Father, that will be revealed to your students. If you have a deep love for the word, your child will pick that up. If you are always responding to crisis and problem with prayer, your children will learn that from you. If your relationship with God is shallow and God is only a “Sunday deal,” then your children will realize that and will most likely live the same way.
- God’s design is for parents to disciple their children and teach them what it looks like to follow God, and they can only do this, if they live it out and honor God themselves first.
- That was directed at parents (at the same time, also a challenge for you non-parents to check where your relationship with God is at), so what about the kids who are listening? What do you do?

God desires children to bring joy to their Father and Mother.

- Before I get to our second point, I have to ask the questions, what if your parents aren't believers and they don't honor God first, and since that is God's design, does that mean I don't need to honor my parents then? To answer that question: No. God still desires for you to honor your parents.
- Which then leads me to ask another question to help us think through this point. What does it mean to honor Thy Father and Mother?
  - Two quick thoughts: This does not mean that children are slaves to their parents, you do whatever they desire.
  - Obedience does not mean honoring. BUT I do want to say that this doesn't mean you don't have to listen and obey your parents. I just want to make sure that you're not equating obedience with honoring.
  - So what does it mean to honor?
- Our second point when asking: What does God desire when He says, Honor Thy Father and Mother? God desires children to bring Joy to their Father and Mother. I believe the idea of bringing joy will make sense of what it means to honor your parents. Let's look back at **Proverbs 10:1: A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.** We see that a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother. Let's put that in a positive term. A son or daughter is not only to not bring sorrow to the mom, but the child should be actively bringing gladness and joy to his/her mom.
- When you honor your parents, you're giving weight to them. No, not making them fat. But to regard and treat them with respect. Think about what happened right after Kobe Bryant died. People from all over brought flowers, pictures/posters, basketballs, Kobe's jersey to the staple center. They wanted to honor Him. Why? Because to them, Kobe made an impact in their lives. He meant something to them. Many of the younger basketball players grew up watching him. Kobe was their inspiration. They gave weight to Kobe. They respected Kobe. They honored Kobe.
- When you give weight and respect to your parents, that brings them joy. When you obey your parents, it should be out of respect and love for your parents. I'll never forget this one time, my mom said, "Why does no one listen to me?" I don't think we (my two brothers and I) were doing what she was asking us to do. We didn't give respect to her requests. We did not give weight to my mom. I can still hear the hurt in her voice. What she was really asking is, why does no one care about me. A foolish son can bring sorrow to his mother. It wasn't about doing what she asked, that was secondary. It was about what I thought about her. Did I care for her enough to listen to her?
- Sons and daughters – do you see that you have the capacity to bring joy or sorrow. You have a lot of influence over your parents. To a certain extent, you can control their emotions by your actions and responses to them. This means your actions have a lot of weight to them. What message are you sending to your parents by your actions? When you respond and obey on the first time your mom asks you to do something, you are pursuing joy and not bringing sorrow. When was the last time you thanked your parents and told that you are grateful for the sacrifices, they make for you?

- I saw an article this week, and I shared it with some of you on Wednesday, but it challenged children to make their home life easier the next few weeks since there's no school: *You have the power to make these next few weeks miserable for your family. You also have the power to make them more bearable. What if you organized games and activities for younger siblings? Volunteered to take over the laundry? Cooked a meal so your mother could rest? Brainstormed a movie night schedule where everyone gets a turn picking the movie?*
- Students, when you're at home, I'm not saying you need to help out around the house but what I'm saying is, do you see how much your parents do around the house? Do you know how much your parents do for you? Because if you did, you'd give weight to your parents. You would honor them by helping out wherever they need it. You can make it easier for your parents.
- But children bringing joy to father and mothers doesn't just apply to youth kids. This is for all of us who still has parents alive. It doesn't matter how old you are. Just this week, someone was telling me that their parents wanted them to go back home in another city, but it's not like this person can just pick up and go. This person said, I'll honor them by calling them more. My guess is that his parents were worried and just wanted to make sure their son was safe. And so, the best way he could respect and care for his parents is to call them. As we get older, bringing joy to our parents looks different. Very different for some of us.
- Before my dad had passed, every time I went to see him, I made it a point to hug him multiple times. I did this because at that stage in his dementia, that's all I could do to make him happy. Every time I hugged him, he would say in Chinese, "Good kid." That brought him joy, that His son loved him.
- This is the picture that God desires, for parents and children to come together. Parents teaching and disciplining their children. Children, loving and honoring parents. This brings us to the last point. God's desire is for families to flourish.

## God desires families to flourish

- Let's look at: ***Proverbs 30:11 - There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers.*** Solomon uses his words very carefully here. What bible passage do you think of when you hear the worse curse and bless. It should point you back to ***Genesis 12:1-3 - [1] Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. [2] And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*** On the flip side of this, there ARE those who bless and do not curse. This is the family that Solomon has in mind. Ones who are a blessing to the people around them. This is the design for the family.
- Let's look back at the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment in ***Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."*** What we need to see here from this passage is that when it says, "your days may be long in the land" it doesn't mean a length of time, but it is about the abundance of life. As Kevin Deyoung puts it: "If you want to enjoy to the full the blessings that God has for you in the Promise Land, you'll listen to your mom and dad." The whole point of being blessed by God (living this abundant life) is to be able to be a blessing to the nations around them. The blessing and abundant life should lead to blessings others.
- God desires families to flourish. This is His design. But this leads me to ask, what is this flourishing for? Is it just so that you can have a good life and blessed life? Deyoung makes it a point to say that if the first commandment is the foundation for Loving God, then the commandment to honor your father and mother is the foundation upon which love for our neighbor is built. The parent and child relationship shapes the rest of our relationships with other people. In line with our message today, it begins with the parents relationship with God, trickles down to the parent child relationship and then leads to impacting a family's relationship with everyone else. More specifically, a family's impact to be a blessing to others. As a family, you live for the glory of God and point others around you to the glory of God.
- In the youth group this past Friday, I challenged the youth to think about their response to this whole virus situation. More specifically, I asked them how they can be caring for people who are in need. Maybe as a family, think brainstorm ways you can help people around you.
- Here's one suggestion: I'm taking idea from a friend who is pastoring in California. They had printed out on cards or pieces of paper that says, "NEIGHBOR CARE: Hey neighbor! As we learn to navigate this challenging time as a community, I wanted to reach out to you to offer my services in any capacity I am able. If you have a need due to these ongoing circumstances or would like me to pray for you, please reach out." And then you put your name and contact info. What you can do as a family is drop this off around your neighbor's doors.
- If you go to the grocery store, shoot your neighbors who might need help, and ask if you can get them anything.

- I would even suggest, just like we first talked about, parents must honor God first, your family must Honor God first before you can even be a blessing. You must experience God's blessing first as a family before you can show it off to others. Continue to use this Social distancing time to build up your family. Practice home worship and utilize it throughout the week. We have chosen to use this format so that families can start and practice doing family devotionals. It's not so bad is it?
- Worship God as a family first. He wants to see your family flourish so that you may be a blessing to others.

### Conclusion

Honoring Thy Father and Mother has implications for the whole family. God has expectations set out for the parents, for the child, and the family as a whole. God is the end goal of all your family relationships. God desires to be honored by the parents, by the children, as a family together, and ultimately, God desires to be honored by all families of the earth.