

## “THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT”

Text: Exodus 20:12

Parents Day

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### INTRODUCTION:

1) Cultural misconception on Christianity: Historically, piety toward parents had been one of the cornerstones of the Chinese culture, regardless of how and if it has been applied properly in real life. Some non-believers had quoted random passages from the Bible to smear Christian faith that Christians are not doing right in showing piety to parents. Passages like Matthew 10:37, “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” Others will say because the Bible forbids worshiping idols, including worship ancestors, Christian faith doesn't revere nor honor parents after their death. Chinese parents who hold some idol worship tradition from Buddhism had fear that once their children become Christians, their souls would be left hung dried without the burning of incense and offering of food from their children to provide their after life. All these are nothing but total misconception of the biblical teaching on piety or honor towards parents.

2) Biblical teaching on honoring parents: Our God in the Bible has the best teaching to His children, Christians, on the importance of showing honor and love towards parents. In the text of today's message, God commanded all his people to honor their fathers and mothers, and God includes the rewards He promised to give them if they obey God's command. Yes, God can't and won't tolerate worship of idols in the first two commandments, Ex 20:3-5. Parents of Christians are human beings. They won't become gods after their death. They didn't have any power to bestow blessing or incur punishments on anyone or their own children. God wants to see children honor, respect, obey, support their parents in their life time, not after their death. To misinterpret the word of God isn't fair nor intelligent.

### HONORING PARENTS IN THE BIBLE:

1) God sees honoring parents very important: Bible scholars divide the Ten Commandments into two parts: The first four commandments deal with our relationship with God, while the last six deal with relationship with people. In this human relationship part, God puts the honoring of parents at the top of all other commandments. This can be interpreted as: Honoring parents is the foundation of all other aspects of human relationship. This coincides with the Chinese philosophy: “Piety is the cornerstone of all human behavior.” If you are humble enough to learn the Bible, you will see that Christian faith teaches

more than just honoring parents, the Bible has so much to teach about support and respect, obey and love toward parents. God sees this is so important, he includes in this commandment the promise of his blessing on those who obey this commandment: “So that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” (Ex 20:12b)

2) Jesus set example on honoring parents: Jesus is the Son of God, born of a human mother. When he was a child at 12, the Bible says, “Then he went down to Nazareth with them, and was obedient to them.” (Luke 2:51) Before he died on the cross, he cared for the well being of his mother, he uttered two of his last seven words about his mother, “When he saw his mother there and the disciple whom he loved standing near by, he said to his mother: “Mother, here is your son.” And to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” (John 19:26-27) Even at his death, Jesus cared about the needs of his mother at her old age, and commanded his disciple to take care of her. We see clearly that worship God and honor parents do go hand in hand in Christian teaching.

BASIS OF HONORING PARENTS: We honor our parents because...

1) We receive life from parents: “Listen to your father who gave you life. Do not despise your mother when she is old.” (Proverbs 23:22) Of course this is about our physical life. We receive our physical life from our parents from the day we were conceived. Anyone who have a sound mind will know that to have children, from day one, is never an easy job. Without parents, we won't be here.

2) We receive nurturing from parents: No one was born 21 years of age. We all were born as babies and all babies need lots of love, care, provision, and support and countless others to survive, to live and to grow. Just on monetary part, studies show that it will cost about \$250,000 to raise a child from the time of pregnancy to 18 years of age, and that doesn't include the costs of time, love, hard work and sacrifices. You know to say thank you to someone who gives you a bottle water when you are thirsty or help you up when you stumbled, how much more you need to express your thankfulness to your parents for what they have done for you even before you were born?

3) We receive training from parents: “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it.” (Prov. 22:6) This includes both instruction in doing right, and discipline when they do wrong. In Proverbs, many advises were written to encourage children to listen and obey teaching and training of their parents. “My son, keep your father's commands, and do not forsake your mother's teaching.” (Prov. 6:20) Training children is the most

honorable duty parents have from God. Seeing all the chaos in our society in the US and around the world. Many of them were being neglected or rebel against their parents so they turned rotten, like the young people looting stores and setting fire on cars and business in Baltimore in late April. Then that 31 years old Elton Simpson turned into a radical Islamic terrorist of ISIS without his parents knowing anything. Good kids don't grow up good without the efforts and love given by their parents in training them.

WAYS TO EXPRESS HONOR TO YOUR PARENTS: Too many to count, so, here are the three stages of life and what you can do.

1) Respect and obey when we are young: Jesus set a good example of obedience to his mother and Joseph, “And he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.” (Luke 2:51) King Solomon encouraged all children to listen and obey their fathers and mothers countless times in his writing of Proverbs. Paul says in Colossians 3:20, “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.” The most difficult part of parenting is the rebellious nature of children from very early of their lives. If you really want to honor your parents, please listen to them with respect and trust that they know more and better than you. Not all the training from parents are well received by children because children just don't know that much to choose good from bad or right from wrong. So, just listen and obey and you will be fine. This is also true to many Christians toward God. We also need to trust and obey God even in things we don't like or know.

2) Accept and appreciate when you grow older: In this rapidly growing society, young people grow much faster in things like technology and science while their parents are slower in knowing and adjusting. At this time, what parents think and say may not be what children will like to hear. That is what children need to do: Accept the fact that parents are from a different generation with a different value system, but they love you the same way and care about your well being with the same heart. They are here to provide you a different perspective of life you haven't learned and don't understand.

You also need to appreciate their way of life and all the good things they have done to bring you to this world and to help you grow to this stage of your life. Too often, children forget all the good things their parent had done for them, or take it for granted and never feel satisfied. Never despise your parents because of their lower education or job or income level. Remember this: With all their inadequacy, they supplied all your needs, support all your dreams and provide you a safe home where you can grow to this day. So,

always need to show your appreciation to your parents for all they have done and sacrificed for you. Do it with words and deeds to show it.

3) Reassure and repay when parents grow older: This is about what to do when your parents are growing older and are in need of your support. Life is like a cycle: We need care from parents when we were small, we grow older and stronger and are self-reliant when we are in adult years; then we grow weak when we grow older and need care from children. The Bible has clear teaching on the need of caring and supporting elderly parents. In 1 Timothy 5:8, “If anyone who does not provide for his relatives, especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Grown-up children can show your love and honor to parents by reassure them of your love and support for their needs. This includes needs of emotion, respect, family life and material support. These are divine opportunities children have to support their parents. Payback our debts is an act of honor. Paying back what we owe our parents is more than honor, it is noble.

4) Care the spiritual needs of parents: Many Chinese parents didn't have the opportunity to learn about Jesus and the gospel of salvation. But they are as precious to God as anyone else. It is both a duty and honor for Christian children to reach out to parents with the gospel message for their souls. Nothing children may do to parents is more important than leading them to Christ. Talk to them about your faith in Jesus, encourage them to join you to come to church, live your life with loving care like the Bible says so your parents will see your beautiful Christian character and be drawn to the cross.

#### THESE WE ALL CAN DO:

1) Do it while you are able: This is about your ability to honor, support, provide and care for your parents. Abilities are different from person to person and time to time. So, do all you can to show your parents how much you love and respect them when you are able. This is something that pleases God and he will reward you.

2) Do it while they are here: Honoring parents is an opportunity when they are still alive here. Parents won't be with us for too long. So, do all you can while they are here to see, enjoy and appreciate what you do to them. Honor them when they are alive is much better than holding elaborate funeral after they died. God is watching and he will reward what you do to them.