

## **BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study**

**Sermon:** “Honoring Family” (from the “Written in Stone” sermon series)

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:1-4

### **Key take-aways from the Scripture**

- In this section of the Book of Exodus, we are exploring the fifth of the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses for the people of Israel. The first four commandments dealt with “No other gods” (20:3) and “No idols” (20:4-6), “No misuse of God’s name” (20:7) and “observing the Sabbath” in verses (20:8-11).
- The fifth commandment moves us from a focus on our personal relationship with God to a focus on our social relationships with one another. This commandment starts us off with our relationship to our parents and family.
- Verse 12 tells us; “Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” This means respecting and honoring our parents, through obedience and submission to them.
- It is interesting to note that this commandment does not explicitly tell us that it is only meant for children. This command can also refer to our responsibility to honor our parents as we grow older, and even to care for them when our parents become elderly and unable to care for themselves.
- According to the NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, “The idea of supporting one’s aging parents accords well with the last half of verse 12. If a son, e.g., supports his parents as they grow older and thereby helps to extend their lifetimes, he can reasonably expect to receive similarly beneficent treatment in his twilight years.” The commentary further adds, “For the Israelites, honoring their parents in this way meant maintaining loyalty to the covenant that would result in their continued possession of the land.” We also see this metaphor of honoring your mother and father with that of the covenant between God and Israel in: Deuteronomy 32:16-21; Isaiah 1:2; and Malachi 1:6.
- A few places in Scripture also teach that dishonoring our parents, by cursing them and rejecting their authority over you, was a capital offense (see Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9; and Proverbs 20:20).

### Key take-aways from the Sermon

- In the Gospels, Jesus reduces these Ten Commandments into two (Matthew 22:34-40): (1) Love God with all your heart, soul and mind; and (2) Love your neighbor as yourself.
- Going back to the Ten Commandments, the highest priority in this second tablet (or set of rules) focuses on the most basic unit of civilization...*the family*.
- The word used to characterize family is *honor*!
- Consider the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, where the son dishonors his father by requesting his inheritance before his father passes. He is telling his father he is worth more to him dead than alive. He is dishonoring his father and ends up at rock bottom before returning home.
- It is also important to note that parents are not to provoke their children to anger.
- Domestic dishonor is not just a threat to the home but a danger to the community. The prophet Ezekiel warns us that dishonor is the origin of social disorder (See Ezekiel 22:6). Dishonor at home puts the whole nation at risk.
- The term *Generation Gap* is based on the idea that there is a divide in politics, tastes, social mores, music, etc. between the young and old.
- In the Book of Ezra 3:12, the older crowd wept at the sight of the new temple because the new temple was not the old temple! It wasn't what they were used to!
- There's always a tension between generations! Every generation needs regeneration! We can have disagreement with each other without disrespect.
- In the Fifth Commandment, it is the only one out of the ten that comes with a promise. This is what Paul teaches us in Ephesians 6:3 (honoring our parents), "so that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth." The stability of the social order depends upon respect of the generations.
- This command in the original context was addressed to adult children to care for their aging parents, because as we care for our parents our children watch us and repeat the behavior. It becomes cyclical!
- In the New Testament, Jesus redefines the concept of family in Mark 3:35. He expands the concept of family beyond biology to *all* "whoever does God's will..."
- The same word that characterizes our familial relationships at home must distinguish our fellowship in community. Romans 12:10 tells us to "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. *Honor* one another above yourselves."
- We are called to honor one another above ourselves. When we do, we honor God!

- **Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion**

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- What does it mean to honor your mother and father? How do we do this?
- How can parents instill respect and obedience into their children?
- Read Malachi 4:5-6. What do these verses teach us about God's expectations for us (also, note how these verses utilize parental imagery)?
- Why is the word honor used to characterize the idea of family?
- In what ways have you witnessed (or have heard stories about) the idea that dishonor at home is a danger for the entire community?
- Read Leviticus 19:32 and 1 Timothy 4:12. What can these verses teach us about respecting those of different generations?



## NOTES

[illegible]