

“HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER”

By Conrad Barrett

The commandment, “Honor thy father and mother” expresses the will of God for children and how they should treat both father and mother. It is God’s written intention that such behavior be observed and practiced as a way of life.

Our current culture, however, is producing a revolution in the way many people think and approach family life and there are many victims in this revolution – some are children and some are parents. In some instances children cannot honor their parents because they don’t know who their parents are. Some have been abandoned or have been passed on to others for rearing. Still, many others are sexually abused or abused in various other ways. Some are tortured physically and some are killed by their parents or some other evil-minded adults. This behavior does not change nor negate the scriptures. There is certain form of behavior which God expects and demands from us all.

This is a sad time for lots of children; but many more are blessed. Some have the advantage of caring and loving parents, or grandparents or some other kind, responsible people. Parents, too, can become abandoned by their children and this is especially true when parents become older and less independent.

Most children want a role model or someone to look to for guidance and security. Their hearts cry out for leadership and love more than anything else. Feelings of belonging and being a part is a deep desire in most children’s hearts. They seem to want it more than anything else; but sadly, in many cases they search in vain. This is a tragedy in the human family and one which should be corrected.

As children grow older they constantly reach out to others and some reach too far in the wrong direction. Sometimes they connect with the wrong people and instead of becoming what they should be; they become followers. At times they allow unscrupulous, would-be leaders to take them in directions they really don’t want to go. Rebellion is a common reaction when kids become victimized by unloving parents or drugs and alcohol. Sometimes withdrawal becomes the pattern and grips the emotions of their hearts and some become trapped for life. Some do not survive. It’s another tragedy.

All of us, whether children or parents, must take some responsibility for how we live our lives. We must account for our actions, not just to others, but to ourselves as well. We are the ones we must live with all day long as well as when we turn out the lights at night. It may be the voice of conscience that speaks to us or it could be the voice of memory. We all seem to hear the same voice. No doubt the voice of our Creator comes calling, too. As it was in the case of Adam, He asks us all “Where art thou?” It’s a deep thought to ponder. God knew exactly where Adam was and His question was not one of geography. Instead, it was a question of spirituality. Let’s listen. He may be speaking now.

No child can achieve a more rewarding experience than when he or she gives honor to a parent from the heart. Parents love to be honored by their children and this is especially true in all stages of parental life. Children can bless and honor their parents by simply spending time with them and by showing a sincere interest in them. Motives which hinge on selfishness and greed should never be a part of any relationship between the parent and offspring. Parents should look at children in the child’s best interests and as special, and should let them enjoy a life of being themselves while under their responsible

guidance. Children are different, but, they are God's gift to parents and they all have their own unique personalities. Parents, too, should be God's gift to children and nothing should separate that relationship. It should be one of privilege and opportunity and never be one of division and strife.

When drug or alcohol dependency develops in either a parent or a child's life and natural personalities are altered, sometimes distances are created that are difficult to bridge. Sometimes there are no shortcuts to the healing process. Time is a healer in some instances but some breaks are difficult to heal. It should be understood that no amount of strong drink can drown the voice of a conscience out of touch with God and family and no amount of drugs nor alcohol can silence that soft spoken call of our Creator. He loves us enough to keep calling and He does it as often as He must. He wants our attention and love. We are not here on earth by accident, but are created for a purpose. All have a purpose and all can be held in the arms of our loving heavenly Father who wants only the best for His children. There are no substitutes which can repair a broken fellowship with our Creator but at this moment we can take positive steps toward Him. He will receive us and will forgive our wrong and restore us to Him if we will ask Him.

Children can honor parents by showing them love. Words are beautiful but showing true love is better. Most parents love the attention of their children and bask in their presence. The value of such relationships is never realized more than when one or more is gone forever. It's then too late to speak of the "what ifs". Today is our "now" and the wise will seize the moment.

Honor in its truest form is communicated best when parents are shown love and respect by children who love them for who they are and not because of what they have or what they may inherit. Honor and love have no monetary value attached because they are priceless. Honor is far greater than rubies, and silver or gold and are among the best of riches. It is a true voice from a true heart which honestly says, "I love you".

Some children are emotionally poor for life because of uncaring and unloving parents. This is especially true since they have no say about being brought into the world and many times have no voice about what happens to them during their childhood years. They had nothing to say about what kind of parents they would have. In life their voices of dissidence don't seem to say "I don't have enough food or shelter", but "do I belong in this family where my life and talents have been placed?" In many cases little hearts have cause to worry because the thirst for alcohol or the hunger for drugs have raped the monetary and emotional system of the family. Sometimes this dilemma is caused by the father, sometimes by the mother, and sometimes by both. Children, many times, do not know how to cope. Some do not know whom to call "mom" or "dad" because partners in the role of father or mother are changed so frequently.

"Honor thy Father and thy Mother" is a commandment of the Lord and is the one which connotes promise of a longer life to the child who keeps it. We must remember it is God's law and not just a suggestion. Parents who want honor from their children should be honorable in the way they live and in their actions toward all their children. No child should be discriminated against nor treated as though he or she is not wanted.

No child should ever be put to bed nor live in any house without the security and love of a parent. If circumstances prevent the presence of a parent then some other responsible and loving adult should always be present to assure the child of safety and

emotional support. Never should darkness drape the bed of any child whose heart is filled with fear and loneliness. This seems to happen often but should never be. We can do better.

Not only at bedtime do children need love and assurance, they need it throughout life. Instilling faith, hope and security will be a great benefit and something we can all do and such may silence the voice of discontent as life continues to unfold.

Parents should have sincere love and support from their children, and no parent should be dealt with by children who are driven by appetites of greed. To abandon one's parents for a quick inheritance is unconscionable. Parents should be loved and respected for who they are and not for what they have. Remember the law of sowing and reaping prevails here in this area of life as well as in many others. "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" is God's eternal word. It affects us all. There are two places to reap: One is in this world and the other is in the world to come. Be careful! We all must reap what we sow.

One of the greatest opportunities for a special shared blessing is when children love and help their parents especially when they are old. It is closely related to parental love for children. Such kindness carries with it Divine approval. Don't forget the commandment which promises life for those who honor their parents. Of the ten great commandments, number five is the only one which carries with it a specific promise. It relates directly to children who honor father and mother and for such honor a longer life is promised.

Just being in the presence of parents should be reward enough for any child. Monetary things have only temporary value but being able to talk with parents is a special privilege. Once parents are gone, that privilege is gone forever.

There are times when parents and children are separated by emotional chasms. Those divisions are, many times, caused by parents who look upon their children as liabilities instead of blessings. To abandon a child for selfish reasons is wrong. If parents have children, they should support them with love and parental affection. The Bible is a great book and provides the reader with proper instructions about parenting. Both father and mother have specific roles and have the Bible to guide them in such roles. Children, too, are instructed about their roles of what children should be like and how they should treat father and mother. Parents should read the Bible and should offer a well coordinated effort in behalf of their children as they bring them into the world and guide them. It is important that no child be left behind spiritually, emotionally, nor otherwise.

Christian Chapel Church
4043 Chandler Road
Muskogee, Oklahoma 74403
(918) 687-1606