

Authority # 3

We ended the last article by asking, *"Does God hold accountable those in authority for the way they exercise their authority?"*

The answer is, of course He does! But that's not the point here. What is the point?

* The 5th commandment holds accountable those under authority for how they respond to that God-given authority as an expression of acceptance or rejection of God's own sovereign authority.

* The 5th commandment does not allow children to blame a rebellious spirit on bad parenting.

* The other side of the coin is that the 5th commandment is an equal opportunity commandment – you can receive the blessing of God for obeying this commandment regardless of what kind of parents you had.

- When we honor our parents, we make a behavioral statement that we are accepting the authority that God has set over us – which means that we are affirming the sovereignty and holiness of God.

-- When we dishonor our parents, we are rejecting the sovereignty and holiness of God.

-- Anything that brings about or shows disrespect or discontent with the parentage and lineage God has provided is a breaking of the 5th commandment and separates us from God's umbrella of protection.

-- Cursing your parents or showing disdain or disrespect for father or mother is a breaking of the 5th commandment.

-- Having feelings of judgment or critical dissatisfaction toward your family name – or toward anyone with your family name – gossiping within a family / failing to pray for family members / misusing authority given by a family / failing to do what you can to make your family godlier – all involve a breaking of the 5th commandment.

-- Hardness of heart and un-forgiveness toward parents or family members / lack of appreciation for family / causing trouble in the family / bringing shame upon the family name – all involve a breaking of the 5th commandment.

- Just as the 3rd Commandment holds us accountable for how we bear the name of God in our words and actions – so also the 5th commandment holds us accountable for how we bear our family name.

-- Just as we honor God our Father by living godly lives that bring honor to His name, so also we honor our father and mother by bringing honor to our family name.

-- And we do this – not just for our parents’ sake – but for the Lord’s sake
– and for our children’s sake.

- For example, our unrepentant rebellious attitude toward our parents will increase the chance that our children will dishonor their parents as we have dishonored ours.

-- Rebellion against parental authority tends to be passed down from generation to generation if there is no repentance and breaking of that stronghold.

- Likewise with bitterness and unresolved family conflicts.

-- For example, just as it is displeasing and dishonoring to God our Father when we as His children do not love one another and forgive one another and live in peace with one another – so also it is dishonoring to father and mother when brothers and sisters do not love and forgive and live in peace with one another.

* Not only is it extremely dishonoring to cut off communication with your father or mother – it is also dishonoring to your parents to cut off communication with a sibling -- Romans 12:10.

-- Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. 14

-- Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15

-- Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16

-- Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17

-- Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18

-- If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 21

-- Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- You honor your father and mother -- and your heavenly Father -- when you practice those principles in your family relationships.

- When we are children growing up in our parents’ home, we honor father and mother by obeying them --Eph. 6: 1-3: "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.*"

- As we become adults we honor them in other ways.

-- We don't necessarily need to follow all their ways and values and beliefs – and in some cases we certainly would not want to follow their example.

-- But there are a couple of ways we can honor them even when we are no longer obligated to obey them as when we were children.

(1) We can honor them by seeking their counsel and asking their advice.

-- As adults we are free to seek God's will and not always to obey our parents.

-- But there is great wisdom – and protection – in seeking our parents' input – especially on issues such as marriage.

-- God can even work through non-Christian parents to protect us from making tragic mistakes in marrying the wrong person – and certainly if you have godly parents, you would want their blessing and approval before marrying someone – or even before getting engaged.

-- Some of you know someone – or perhaps even yourself – who can give painful testimony to the high price paid for marrying someone contrary to your parents' wishes.

-- When we honor our father and mother by seeking their input on major life decisions – God can use that to give us valuable guidance and protection.

(2) You can honor your parents by caring for them when they are sick or disabled or older.

-- Some of you are wonderful examples of doing just that – you have exemplified patience and kindness and sacrificial love by honoring your father or mother or in-laws or step-parents or adoptive parents by serving them and caring for them in their time of need.

-- Perhaps you cared for them in their own home – or in your home – or in a nursing home.

-- But as they lost some of their independence, you were there to meet their needs.

-- That is pleasing to the Lord.

-- It is also a wonderful example for your children – because what goes around, comes around.

Story (found in book by Dr. Laura):

A man and his wife and their children lived with the man's elderly father in their home. The grandfather's health began to decline / hands began to shake / food spilled on floor. One day, after many days of such spills --

and broken dishes and bowls -- the man said to his elderly father: *"Dad, can't you control yourself? I can't take this any longer. You will have to eat by yourself in your room."*

The man gave his father an unbreakable wooden bowl and brought the food to the old man's room to eat by himself. The family meals became neater -- and quieter -- as the old man ate by himself in his room.

After some time passed, the father found one of his young sons making something out of wood. *"What are you making?"* He said, *"A wooden bowl. What will you use it for?"* *"It's for you, Dad."*

"Oh, well, maybe we can keep some fruit in it or something."

"Oh, it's not for now, Dad. I'm saving it for when you get older and your hands begin to shake. When it is too hard for you to eat with us, then I will give you this bowl so you can eat in your own room."

That night the father went into his father's room and apologized. And that night the old man returned to the family dining table.

- If you don't feel like honoring your father and mother for their sake – do it for God's sake -- do it for your children's sake – and for your own.