

“Honor Your Father and Your Mother”



SABBATH—JULY 3

READ FOR THIS WEEK’S STUDY: 1 Peter 5:5; Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3; Genesis 22:1-14; Luke 2:41-52.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Honor your father and mother.’ That is the first commandment that has a promise. ‘Then things will go well with you. You will live a long time on the earth’ ” (Ephesians 6:2, 3, NlrV).

THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH IS A BASIC BELIEF IN THE BIBLE. It is part of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11). The Ten Commandments summarize the basic principles¹ of God’s love for humanity.² But to “ ‘honor your father and your mother’ ” (Exodus 20:12, NIV) is also one of the basic principles for a healthy society. Keeping the Sabbath and honoring our parents are put together in Leviticus 19:3. “ ‘All of you must have respect for your mother and father. You must always keep my Sabbath days. I am the Lord your God’ ” (NlrV).

This week, we will take a look at how children should relate not only to their parents, but to all people who are older.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK’S LESSON: What does the Bible say about how we should relate to older people? How do we honor our parents? Can obedience to our parents ever disagree with our responsibilities to God? What examples does the Bible give for parent-and-children relationships?³

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 10.

¹principles—basic rules that are the basis for more specific rules.

²humanity—all the people of the world.

³relationships—the connections we have with other people in everything we do.

SUNDAY—JULY 4

**RESPECT FOR “GRAY HAIR”
(1 Peter 5:5).**

Over the past 50 years, in a large part of the world, a youth culture⁴ has developed. This youth culture teaches that the secret of successful living is to remain young and beautiful. Seeing that first wrinkle may mean bad news to a person who believes in the youth culture. But this youth culture goes further than our looks. Children and young people have become important to people who sell clothes, sports shoes, and other things. Children and young people are targets of restaurants and businesses that specialize in good times. Parents feel guilty if their children cannot get the latest style of clothes.

In many modern homes in many parts of the world, the younger members of the family set up the rules of the home.

What basic rule does the apostle⁵ Peter point to as a principle in any relationship between older people and younger people? 1 Peter 5:5. How do we see this same principle in Leviticus 19:32? How can we use this principle in our dealings with older people?

Showing respect does not mean accepting everything without comment or

complaint. We must not obey people older than us if what they tell us to do goes against God’s law.

But at the same time, this principle does point to the basic idea that age and experience are important. We need to show respect to people who are older than we are even if we are adults. We can honor and respect people who are older than we are, even if we do not agree with what they say or believe.

Why does it make good sense to honor and respect people who are older than we are?



Young people can learn a lot from older people.

MONDAY—JULY 5

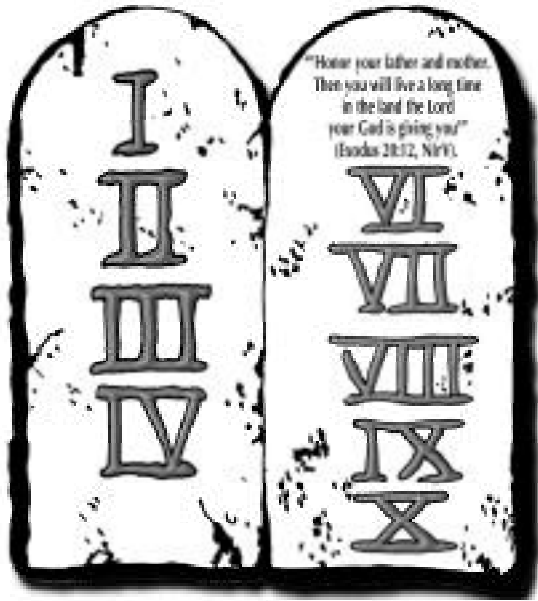
**HONORING OUR PARENTS
(Exodus 20:12).**

How we relate to our parents is important. One of the Ten Commandments points to the child-and-parent relationship.

⁴youth culture—the belief that we must remain young in order to be popular and successful in the world.

⁵apostle—Jesus’ disciples were called “apostles” after Jesus returned to heaven.

Read Exodus 20:12. Then answer the following questions:



1. What does it mean to *honor* our parents?

2. Is *honoring* the same as being obedient? If not, how are *honoring* our parents and *obeying* our parents different?

3. Is it possible to *honor* our parents when we do not agree with how they live? How can children honor their parents when their parents abuse them?

“Our responsibility to our parents never stops. Our love for our parents and our parents’ love for us is not measured by years or distance. We can never neglect our responsibility to our

parents.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 360.

How does Proverbs 19:26 help us understand how we should relate to our parents? How do we rob our parents and chase them away?

In many societies, aging parents have to depend on the support of their children. Often elderly parents live in the home of one of their adult children and are part of their larger family. In other countries, this is no longer true. People pay taxes and contribute to social-security systems. Then the government takes care of them when they no longer have a regular income from work or can no longer live independently. Whatever the social system we live in, children must continue to care for their parents in some way. It is disgusting to see children neglect their aging parents because the children are too busy to spend time with their parents.

Why do you think honoring our parents is part of the Ten Commandments? What does the commandment about honoring our parents teach us about the importance of caring for anyone who needs help?

TUESDAY—JULY 6

**WHAT ABOUT OBEDIENCE
(Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20)?**

Many people have a problem with authority. Some people want too much

authority. Some people do not want any authority. People who use their authority in wrong ways are a problem to themselves and to other people. They ruin relationships as they bully their way through life. People who do not want any authority also cause problems. This is all true in the child-and-parent relationship. A parent’s love does not neglect discipline and obedience. And the love of children to their parents is shown through acceptance of parental authority.

What does Paul say about the relationship between children and parents in 2 Timothy 3:2?

Paul’s list of godlessness in “the last days” is scary. He names disobedience to parents as one of the terrible conditions of the time of the end. This shows a very serious breakdown that can destroy the family as the basic unit of society. And if the family is breaking down, there is little hope for society as a whole.

How does the Bible point to the importance of children obeying parents? Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20.

The Bible does not require blind obedience.⁶ Respect for parents’ wishes cannot be forced. Instead, parents must earn respect from their children. They may make demands. But these de-

mands must make sense and always be for the best interest of the child. Most important, the demands need to always follow other biblical principles.

At what age can parents expect respect, but not always obedience, from their children? How can we show our parents respect and honor while not obeying them?

WEDNESDAY—JULY 7

**PARENTS AND CHILDREN—PART 1
(Genesis 22:1-14).**

In many ways, the Bible is about families. In these families, some of the relationships between parents and children are healthy and some are not. But all of these relationships are in the Bible to teach us something. The culture in Bible times was very different from our culture today. But the basic principles are the same.

What can we learn from the following verses about how we should, or should not, relate to our parents?

Genesis 22:1-14 _____

Genesis 27 _____

⁶blind obedience—obeying someone whether it is right or wrong.

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Leviticus 20:9 _____

John 19:26, 27 _____

Deuteronomy 21:18-21 _____

2 Samuel 15:1-12 _____

Matthew 8:21, 22 _____

Luke 2:41-52 _____

THURSDAY—JULY 8**PARENTS AND CHILDREN—PART 2
(Ephesians 6:1, 2).**

Yesterday’s lesson gave us some powerful examples of parent-and-child relationships in the Bible. These examples show how children should relate to their parents. The hard question is: How do we use those examples today? For example, should we stone rebellious children who do not obey their parents (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)?

Keep in mind the time and culture in which these examples happened. What time-honored principles can we receive from these stories that help us understand how we are to relate to our parents?

Some of these stories show that there can be a struggle between obeying parents and obeying the Lord. Read Genesis 27:8. Or look at the situation in Matthew 8:21. What could be more basic and honorable than burying one’s own father?

What does Ephesians 6:1, 2 say that helps us better understand our responsibilities to our parents while keeping our walk with the Lord?



“Here is your mother.”

Paul tells children to obey their parents “in the Lord.” He gives the reason why they should obey their parents “in the Lord”: “for this is right.” And why is it right? Because it is a commandment of God.

A young woman had grown up in an abusive home. Her parents were drug addicts who beat her as a child until she became an emotional cripple. Later, she became a follower of Jesus. How is she supposed to honor her parents?



Is your heart as hard as steel?

FRIDAY—JULY 9

ADDITIONAL STUDY: “Isaac believed in God. He had learned to obey his father (Abraham) fully. And he loved and honored the God of his father. Isaac could have rebelled against his father if he had wanted to. But he affectionately hugged his father, and volunteered to lay upon the wood of the altar.” —Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, p. 82.

“A person said about her mother, ‘I always hated my mother, and my mother hated me.’ These words are recorded in the books of heaven. They will be opened and shown in the day of judgment. This is when everyone shall be rewarded according to his works.

“Some children think that they were not treated kindly in their childhood. But it will not help them to grow in grace

and in the knowledge of Jesus if they hold a spirit of revenge⁷ against their parents, especially when their parents are old and weak. The aged parents’ helplessness will plead for the children’s love. The needs of the aged father and mother will call forth the loving feelings of the children’s heart. And through the grace of Jesus, the parents will be treated with kind attention and respect by their children. Oh, let not our hearts be stubborn, cold, and hard as steel against our parents!”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 362.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Read again Exodus 20:12. Why does this commandment not say we should honor our parents only if they treat us well?

⁷revenge—doing something to someone who has hurt you.

2. What do you think it means to honor your parents “in the Lord”? How does honoring our parents “in the Lord” help us better understand Exodus 20:12?

SUMMARY: In modern society, the rights of children are very important. And rightly so. But we should not forget

the fact that older people are also important. Older people have the right to be respected by the youth. The commandment to “honor” our parents means both young parents and older parents. Our parents deserve our support, respect, and love. Families cannot work well if the children do not respect the parents.