

# LIFEGROUP LESSON



"Family Life 2013"  
(Part 4 of 4)

## Honouring Our Parents



### TIPS FOR DISCUSSION FACILITATOR

Ensure that the aim is first to understand the text and then to make it meaningful and relevant. The discussion questions provided are intended to bring out the relevance for today.

Begin with a prayer for the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Encourage everyone to participate in the discussion.

Begin the discussion by reading the sermon passage (where applicable), and discuss about its overall meaning by asking what could be the key focuses/emphases in that particular passage.

Spend appropriate amount of time on each question with as many members as possible making a contribution. At the end of each discussion the leader should summarise the main points that have arisen and direct the group towards making them applicable in their individual lives.

A balance must be kept between ascertaining what the Bible teaches and what are the opinions of participants. So the facilitator should make sure that there is an understanding of the passage before questions are raised.

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

How can we honour our parents?

1. Submit to Our Parents
2. Put On Humility
3. Trust God for Our Honour

### Importance of Honouring Our Parents

*Honour your father and your mother,  
as the Lord your God has commanded you,  
so that you may live long and that it may go well with you  
in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*

**Deuteronomy 5:16**

Honour is what holds and connects the important people in a family. Deuteronomy 5:16 is the fifth commandment of the ten moral laws that God gave to his people. Why is the fifth commandment so important?

- It is the first commandment with a promise.
- It is the first commandment governing our relationships with one another. The first four governs our relationship with God.
- It is the only commandment that has a promise of reward. Through it God wants us to be blessed ie. live long and live well.

Parents are imperfect, regardless of parents today, in the past and in the future. Honouring our parents is the right thing to do. As Christians we have to be the first to honour to spread the culture of honour at home.

### Discussion for Point 1: Submit to Our Parents.

- The preacher mentioned that "respect is earned but honour is given." Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. Do you think your parents have earned your respect? In spite of your response, are there specific areas your parents have done well which have earned your respect? As a LG community, give thanks to God for these areas that they have done well in their lives.
- What do you think it means to "submit" to your parents? Has it been easy for you to submit to your parents? Give reasons for your answer. Why do you think it is important for believers to learn to honour and to submit to our parents? What are some possible hindrances that can make it difficult for you to submit to your parents? How should you respond if your parents require you to do things that may dishonour God? In your LG, share with one another how we can still submit when it is not easy.

### Discussion for Point 2: Put On Humility.

- The preacher asserted that "the attitude of humility is the key in any human relationship." Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. Why do you think it is especially important for believers to put on humility in our relationship with our parents? What are some possible hindrances that may make it difficult for you to adopt a humble posture before your parents? The preacher suggested that one of the most practical things we can do to demonstrate our humility before our parents is to be intentional in connecting with them. In your LG, brainstorm how we can be more intentional (1) to understand their perspectives, and (2) to reconnect with them.

### Discussion for Point 3: Trust God for Our Honour.

- Share a recent incident in your life when you did something that you expected to receive acknowledgement or honour but did not eventually receive them. How did it feel not to receive the honour that you think you deserved? Why do you think it is important for believers to learn not to seek honour from those we are serving? What can happen if we seek after the honour of men when we serve or do what is right? What do you think this reveals about our confidence that God Himself will honour us for what we do? As a LG, pray for one another to be able to persevere in doing what is right in spite of not receiving the due recognition for them.

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

~ **Ephesians 6:1** ~

## Appendix A (For general reading and reflection)

### Honour My Parents?

*How can you obey the command to honour your mother and father—especially if they don't deserve it?*

By NavPress,

(Adapted from Discipleship Journal: <http://www.navpress.com/magazines/archives/article.aspx?id=13488>)

Football practice was over, and Denny was sore from head to toe. Slowly he climbed the graffiti-laden stairway of the aging apartment building.

Suddenly, his mother's chilling screams pierced the cold, still air. He had heard the sound many times before. Still, a sickening knot formed in Denny's stomach.

Denny had tried for years, without success, to quell his father's drunken fits of anger and abuse. Today would be different.

Something snapped inside him. With adrenaline pumping, Denny stormed through the apartment door and tore his dad away from his mother. Hardened by years of football training, he hammered his dad with two quick punches. Then, empowered by years of burning memories, he lifted his father from the floor and threw him through their second-story window.

Amazingly, his father sustained only minor injuries in the fall. But memories of what he'd done haunted Denny through two marriages and a string of friendships shattered by a fiery temper. Alcoholism, something he swore would never destroy his life as it had his father's, slowly ate away at him as well. Little did Denny realize that if he had any chance at all for a worthwhile life, it would come by learning to *honor* his dad.

Thankfully, most of us have never had to endure the kind of home life Denny had. And yet, whether we come from a helpful home or a hurtful home, one of the essential ingredients to a fulfilling life is learning how to honor our parents.

### THE HIGHEST FORM OF LOVE

The Greek scholar Homer once said, "The greater the cost of a gift, the more the honor." The same is often implied by biblical authors. In **Ps. 139:17** David says, "How precious [literally, "honorable"] to me are your thoughts, O God!" In essence he was saying, "What a treasure, or how priceless it is, to get to look in on God's thoughts!"

In **Revelation 5:12**, John describes a scene of praise in heaven, reporting the words of everyone around Christ's throne, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive . . . *honor*."

Thus, when Paul commands us to "Honor your father and mother" (**Eph. 6:2**), he's instructing us to attach great value to them and treat them like valuable treasures. The more honor we attach to someone, the easier it becomes to treat them with great respect and dignity.

But what if our parents don't deserve to be honored? What if they've caused immeasurable hurt and opened wounds the years have not healed? We know that some mothers and fathers haven't earned the right to be honored. But we also know the highest form of love bestows honor on someone who doesn't deserve it. While for some it may be like leaning into a punch, *the only way to achieve real freedom from the effects of a dishonoring parent is to honor that person.*

## THE HIGH PRICE OF DISHONOR

As a child, Brad lived under the relentless iron hand of a domineering father; and even as an adult Brad resented it. Often a television show in which a villainous character appeared would inspire a hateful wisecrack about his father. Whenever he did something special for his children, he would preface it with, "You wouldn't find *my* dad doing this with *his* kids."

In some ways, it made Brad feel better to criticize his dad. But what he didn't realize was that *every time he dishonored his father, he was lowering his own sense of personal worth.*

All of us are very much like our parents by virtue of the God-given legacy they pass on to us. We share many of their emotional and physical characteristics. Therefore, when we lower our parents' value, we're actually dishonoring a part of ourselves.

For years, Brad didn't realize how he was harming himself. The more he dishonored his father, the lower his own self-worth sank. The lower his self-worth became, the harder he was to live with. And like others with low self-esteem, he directed his feelings of anger and inadequacy toward others. Not only did Brad pay for dishonoring his father, but his children suffered also because he treated them just as he'd been treated.

Not only does rejecting our parents rob us emotionally, but *there's a physical price to be paid as well.* When we harbor anger, resentment, bitterness, and hatred, our bodies release certain chemicals in response. In isolated situations, these chemicals are essential in order for us to respond correctly. For instance, if I saw someone kidnapping my wife and little girl in a grocery store parking lot, the ensuing anger would release chemicals in my system that would allow me to respond. But, when released over long periods of time, some scientists believe the presence of these chemicals can cause clinical depression, colitis, bleeding ulcers, anxiety attacks, lowered resistance to colds and flu, heart and respiratory problems, and in some cases, cancer.

Finally, when *we dishonor our parents, we rob ourselves of an intimate relationship with God.* It's no mistake that the command to honor our father and mother is one of God's "big ten." When we fail to follow His command, we not only rob ourselves emotionally and physically, but we run the risk of losing our intimacy with Him. Remember, Christ said, "You are my friends *if you do what I command.*" (**Jn. 15:14**, italics added). In order to live a life pleasing to God and freeing to ourselves and others, we *must* honor our parents. God's command has no exception clauses; it's not, "Honor your father and mother only if they were good to you."

## THE WAY TO HONOR

Honoring our parents means making a decision to treat them (or their memory) as valuable treasures, and granting them a position of respect in our lives. Since the command to honor our parents comes from God's Word, let us seek its counsel on how we should do that.

First, we honor our parents *when we listen carefully to their counsel.* (**Prov. 1:8, Prov. 2:1, Prov. 3:1**). We're not suggesting we obey our parents no matter what, but simply that honoring them means *listening carefully* to what they have to say. This involves being courteous, listening patiently, and giving weight to their insights. Sometimes they will be wrong; many times, they will be right. And when their advice is sound, we should praise them for their wisdom.

We *honor our parents when we praise them.* (**Prov. 20:20**). For many children who've been abused, this is difficult, because it involves face-to-face contact. We shouldn't manufacture praise, but we should commit ourselves to actively looking for praiseworthy qualities in our parents. For some, it may be something as simple as, "Dad, I've always appreciated the way you've taken care of the cars," while for others it may be, "Mom, you're the most gentle person I've ever known." Whatever the quality, no matter how small or how great, our parents deserve our praise.

Finally, *when honoring our parents, we must still maintain healthy boundaries*. Honoring our parents may mean sacrificing our pride, hurt, anger, and resentment, but it *never* means sacrificing safety, financial stability, or our own families. In other words, honoring an alcoholic father may mean speaking positive, gentle words of care and forgiveness, but it doesn't mean allowing him to drive your four-year-old around town. When valuing our parents, we must carefully consider the adverse effect our actions may have on others.

## FINDING FREEDOM IN HONOR

Miraculously, even Denny discovered the freedom to be found in honoring his dad. After six years Denny finally consented to attend church with an old high school team-mate and placed his faith in Jesus Christ. Soon he met and married a wonderful Christian widow.

Prompted by his wife and several Christian friends, Denny placed three phone calls to his dad over the course of seven years. Each call began with, "Dad, I love you," only to be abruptly cut off with a prompt "click" on the other end. Finally, on the fourth attempt, Denny was able to convince his father to listen. In the ensuing moments, he explained how much his life had changed, and how he could forgive and honor his dad now because of all he had been forgiven.

Several months passed. One day his mother called him at the office with the shocking news that his father was near death. Before he could leave for the airport, his mother called again to report that his dad had disappeared. His father had checked into an alcoholic rehabilitation clinic in order to be able to talk with Denny about spiritual things, sober, before he died.

Denny did see his father again, and had the incredible privilege of leading him to the Lord. Several months later, God called his dad home. Denny waits with great anticipation to see him again, eager to pick up where they left off.

Having found the freedom in giving the gift of honor, Denny now moves through life unencumbered by the chains of hate that once paralyzed him. By choosing to bestow honor, *even when it wasn't deserved*, he liberated himself and brought his dad to Christ. For Denny, and for many others, the gift of honor is the gift of life.