

“A Life of the Supernatural Love” (Exodus 20:12)

We are in the series of “The Call to Undivided Intimacy.” We are studying the Ten Commandments. Today, we will look at the fifth commandment.

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

There are so many broken families, so many abusive homes in our modern society. There we can see there are many dysfunctional parents.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, approximately 3 million cases of child abuse and neglect involving almost 5.5 million children are reported each year.¹

If my parents were terrible to me, can I ignore them now? Can I retaliate against them for their mistakes? And if it makes me feel good, can I also treat my kids the way my parents treated me?

What is the meaning of this commandment?

The purpose of this commandment is to release us from the negative chain, and make us a fountain of God’s love and righteousness. It gives us a life of the supernatural love.

Honor your parents because this is a covenant relationship that lasts forever. Honor them to learn how to be an honorable parent, or to be an honourable person for the following generation. The most important and most difficult one: honor your parents to learn how to forgive people, and how to be graceful to yourself.

This is a call to undivided intimacy.

We were saved through the cross of Jesus. We were reconciled with God. Our relationship with God was restored. We are invited into a deeper, loving relationship with God. And daily we experience His love anew. And we will continue to be transformed. “Experiencing the Life, Changing Lives.” This is who we are, what NLIF is about. This is the bottom line whatever we do as a church.

This loving relationship with God is reflected in all our other relationships. But when there is something that hinders our relationship with others, our relationship with God cannot be reflected in that relationship.

For example, if the mirror is crooked, no matter what it reflects, everything looks crooked through it. But, if we have only looked at crooked things, then we can’t tell if they are crooked. If we don’t realize they are crooked, we don’t try to fix them.

The Word of God, the truth has no crookedness, distortion or dimness. By looking at it, we notice the crookedness, distortion and dimness in us. When we

¹ <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/What-to-Know-about-Child-Abuse.aspx>

bring them up before God, we will be healed, delivered, recovered and restored by the power of God.

This loving relationship with God will be reflected in all kinds of other relationships in our everyday lives, in your homes, in your work places, with friends, neighbors, or whoever. That is the goal or vision in this season. It's the call to undivided intimacy. Through the Ten Commandments, we are learning how to live the life of undivided intimacy. And reflection points are provided. They are the guide line for your spiritual journey.

Today we will study the fifth commandment. The theme is "A Life of the Supernatural Love."

1. Parents must be Honored

"To honor our parents is to give due weight to their position, to hold them in high esteem, to value them."²

If you want to know what you give weight to, think about what you give your time, energy, and attention to. How much attention do you give to your work? Your finances? Your health? Your kids? Friends? Leisure? Next holiday plan? Clothes? Favorite sports team? And how much attention do you give to your parents?

Regardless of what they have done, they must be honored because they are your parents, because of their important role as your parents. Parents must understand this first.

A father is a hero to his children. A mother is a beauty queen to them. It doesn't matter what they do, or what kind of results they have produced. Fathers, this is for you. You are a super hero to your children, because you are their father. Mothers, this is for you. It doesn't matter what others say about you, or what magazines say about women. For your children, you are the most beautiful, wonderful lady in the world, and you are the source of security and joy for them, because you are their mother.

Parents, you are in a position to be honored, and you are doing an honorable job. How much are you aware of that? Do you relate to your children in a way suitable to your honored position?

If parents do parenting unwillingly, children don't consider being a parent is to be honored. If parents are always swayed by the opinions of their children and if children always get their way with their parents, then children will think they should be honored by their parents and not the other way around.

² Mark Mitchell, "Ten: How the Commandments Set Us Free," Kindle, 2016. Location 581

2. The Role of Parents

Why do parents must be honored? Why is parenting an honourable job? Because children learn the meaning of life and death by observing their parents. In Japanese, the word “teacher” is written as the one who were born earlier. Parents were born earlier than their children. Parents are teachers who teach how to live well and how to die well.

When they were given this Ten commandments, they were on their way to Canaan, the promise land in the wilderness. People of Israel originally lived in a place called Canaan. There was a severe famine, they looked for food and moved to Egypt. Later they became slaves in Egypt and spent 400 years there. They cried out God to free them from the state of slavery. God made Moses their leader and led them out of Egypt.

In the process of Israel’s being set free from the slavery of Egypt, parents played a very important role.

Parents slaughtered a lamb and sacrifice it to the Lord. If those parents hadn’t obeyed God’s Word and hadn’t put the blood of the sacrifice on the doorframes of their houses, and hadn’t keep them in those houses, all first-born sons would have been killed. They are alive today because their parents obeyed God.

It was not just when they left Egypt, but they were to continue to do this. When they see this, children would wonder, “Why do we do this?”

Parents explain “This is Passover. God set us free by His power. Frankly speaking, we could be destroyed. But we still live because the blood of sacrifice was offered. We do this ceremony so that we won’t forget about it. You are alive today because your parents obeyed God. Parents slaughtered a lamb, put the blood on the doorframes, and kept you in the house.”

They continued to do this from generation to generation. And this would lead to the cross of Christ, which God would give us later.

Children cannot understand very well the situation they are in now, let alone about the past. But parents know about themselves before they were saved and after they were saved.

Children learn the meaning of life and death by observing their parents. They must be honored.

3. A Covenant Relationship

You can’t choose your parents. You can’t change who are your parents. And you can’t stop this relationship. It is a covenant relationship from God. When it is broken, or neglected, the person, the family and the society get damaged.

When God created human-beings, He designed family, and placed them there as the center.³

All commandments are summed up in these; to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself (Rom 13:9). And we start loving your neighbors in your family. A family is the foundation of all other human relations.⁴

In our family, we learn how to relate to other people. And it begins with our relationship with our parents. How to call each other, how to answer when we are called, how to speak, how to ask things, how to ask opinions, how to show our gratitude, how to apologize, how to express our feelings, how to understand others feelings. We will learn all these in our relationship with our parents.

“Bonhoeffer sees the modern world as a rejection of all submission to legitimate authority, an overthrow of the sovereignty of God, which alone places every other authority under its supervision.”⁵

A family is the foundation of the social structure. By respecting our parents, we learn to respect the authority. And, it will be a training to live under God’s authority. If we can’t respect our parents, it will be difficult for us to respect others wherever we are in the society. If it is difficult for us to respect our parents, we feel resistance to accepting authority. And there will be confusion in our society.

How do children learn to respect their parents and accept their authority? Observing how their parents relate each other.

“Honor your father and mother.” Your father and mother. Father and mother deserve the same honor.

One role of a father is to relate to his wife in a way that shows his children that their mother deserves their respect. In the same way, one role of a mother is to relate to her husband in a way that shows her children that their father deserves their respect.

“Don't make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4 NLT) This is not only for fathers but also for mothers.

Parent’s task is to govern and lead children with defending, and to rule and teach them with serving. If parents do not seek or provide the support and nourishment necessary for their children, they violate their job God entrusted. If they do, their children will honor them joyfully.

4. Children with Dysfunctional Parents

When we look at our society this isn’t true for everyone. And to be honest, it certainly wasn’t my story. Actually, this commandment is the most challenging one for me. Many people have had dysfunctional or even abusive parents.

³ Christina Hergenrader, “Love Rules: A Study of the Ten Commandments,” Kindle, 2016. Page 71

⁴ Michael Horton, “The Law of Perfect Freedom,” Moody Publishers (Kindle version), 2004. Location 2020

⁵ Michael Horton, 2227

The Bible mentions dysfunctional parents. One of them is Saul. Saul became jealous of his servant David, and he was afraid of him. He told his son Jonathan that he was going to kill David. Jonathan defended David and told Saul, his father, "Please don't sin against your servant David" (1 Sam 19:5).

Saul once reconsidered it, but again he tried to kill David. Jonathan tried to hide David from Saul. Saul burned with anger against his son Jonathan and said something to disgrace him, "You, son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Now send someone to bring David to me, for he must die!" Jonathan asked, "Why should he be put to death?" Then Saul threw his spear at Jonathan and tried to kill him. After that, Jonathan ran to David who was hiding in the field, and let him escape. (1 Sam 20:30-42)

Jonathan didn't listen to his father. It was not that he didn't honor his father. In fact, he honored his father by encouraging him to do the right thing.

To honor your parents doesn't mean to do whatever you are told to do by your parents.

We will first honor God. To submit to authority doesn't mean to put up with violence or abuse. It is to do what we can do so that God is honored as His righteousness is realized through His Love.

5. Call to the Supernatural

There is no one who is perfect. There are no parents who are perfect. To a greater or lesser extent, they have shortcomings. They make mistakes. There may be things they know are right to do, but they can't do because of their weaknesses and limitation.

Certainly children will be affected by all of this. So do children have no choice but to blame their parents for who they are now, and to continue to live with sorrow and resentment?

If your parents were abusive, neglectful, hateful, angry, or played favorites, this is not how God wanted them to parent you. It is natural for you to hate them. It is natural that you can't respect them, you don't want to honor them. It's absolutely natural. But God is calling you and me to the supernatural, to forgiveness and honor.⁶

It is the process through life. God will pour his love on you, give you patience, heal you, deliver you, restore you and bring you up.

This is the important truth I'm learning. I am not responsible for what my parents have done. You are not responsible for what your parents have done. I am not responsible to change my parents. You are not responsible to change yours. That is God who will change them. And God also wants to change me. He also

⁶ Christina Hergenrader, 79

wants to change you. He doesn't want to leave you and me with a heap of ugly feelings such as resentment, hatred, judgmental feelings inside of us.

This is the light that liberates me from my past, and make me go forward toward the future God has prepared for me. God is calling you and me to the supernatural, to forgiveness and honor.

Do you want to keep blaming your parents for their inadequacy? Or do you acknowledge from this situation that you need salvation and you need God? God is calling you to the supernatural. Come to Him and live in His grace, receive healing and have the new life He offers you.

Honor and life together, both start with forgiveness. On this earth, with this body, we are learning that families are complicated and painful, and wonderful and beautiful. And forgiveness is the key for a family to be a family, a family to function as a family.⁷

“The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.” (Isaiah 51:3)

The love of God will be poured out gently into your heart which is like a desert. His love will penetrate slowly but surely, and soften your heart and in due time it will bear the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Maybe just one or two at the beginning. It may be very small. It may not have any taste or color, but it will grow gradually and it will eventually bear abundant fruit.

Jesus says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; (John 15:5)” “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. (John 15:9)”

Jesus loves you and me, as the Father loves him. You will experience perfect love of a father and a mother in your relationship with Jesus. There is no one who is perfect. As you are not perfect, your parents are also not perfect. But when we come to Jesus, we will receive perfect love of parents.

The infinite love of God will cover you. His love will cover the wounded heart and heal it. His love will moisten the dry heart. God's love, the Father's love, Jesus' love will overflow within you. It will grow and bear fruit in you.

It's the call to the supernatural.

6. A Life of the Supernatural Love

⁷ Christina Hergenrader, 67

To live in God's love and His grace. That is supernatural. To be forgiven, accepted and loved by God. That is supernatural. When we remain in the supernatural, the supernatural happens to us. The fruit of the Spirit is supernatural. God is inviting us, you and me to the supernatural. God is walking alongside of us on our journey of supernatural, forgiveness and honor.

For many people to forgive their parents and honor them is supernatural. And to live as a parent who is worthy to be honored by their children is even more supernatural.

Parents will see their own inadequacy when they see their children. They see their shortcomings and bad habits reflected in what their children do. And they may be overwhelmed by pressure, guilt, and regret.

It is God's call to be a parent. A sacred honored call. You can't fulfill this call by your human strength. You can't be truly a parent until you start to live in God's supernatural, that is grace. You must learn to be graceful to yourself. Unless you are graceful to yourself, you can't be graceful to others. You may give unnecessary pressure to your children. You may be annoyed by what your children do. You feel as if you were looking at your own inadequacy and shortcomings. As you see these you blame yourself.

We, all of us need to learn to live in God's grace. We know it very well in our head. But how difficult it is to actually live in His grace! It's a life of the supernatural love.

The most honorable job parents can do is to show the invisible God through their lives, being an example how Jesus transforms people and demonstrating the Truth by the work of the Holy Spirit. Then children will experience these in their home. They will of course honor their parents. And they themselves will grow to be people honored by the next generation.

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." (Exodus 20:12)

It's the call to undivided intimacy.

For Lifenet groups and personal reflection

1. Most of family histories include disappointment. Name a couple of ways this has been true for your family. Where do you see sin's hold on generations in your own family?
2. What is your prayer for your relationship with your parents, children if you have? What faith do you have regarding what God will do?
3. Talk about the valuable lessons you've learned in your family.

4. What have you learned about death through the ways of your parents' living?