

Family Life

2020-06-17 by Pastor Sharon Tidd

Reflect on God's command to children cited first in Exodus 20:12 (part of the Ten Commandments) and repeated multiple times throughout Scripture (Leviticus 19:3; Deuteronomy 5:16; Matthew 15:4; Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20). What does it mean to "honour" your father and mother? Does the meaning change at different stages in life (toddlerhood, childhood, teenage years, early adulthood, later adulthood)? If so, how? Does this call to "honour" continue after our parents pass away? Do 'honour' and 'respect' have different meanings? (These words are used somewhat inter-changeably in the verses noted above.) If so, what is the difference? Obedience is also called for in some of these verses. What does it mean to obey your parents across the different stages of your life? How is obeying them different from / similar to honouring and respecting them? What is promised to those who honour/respect/obey their parents? Why?

Reflect on your relationship with your parents today (even those who are deceased). In what ways are you fulfilling this call to honour/respect/obey them? In what ways / circumstances are you failing or falling short? Are there steps you can take to improve these relationships today?

Read and reflect on these verses: Proverbs 10:1; 23:22,24-25. What counsel do they give about the child-parent relationship? What do they suggest you are to aim for as a child? What are you to hope for as a parent? What do these say to you today as you think on your relationship with your parents and/or your child/ren?

Read and reflect on the following verses that speak specifically to a parent's relationship/responsibility to his/her children. Deuteronomy 6:6-7; 11:18-9; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 1:8-9; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21.

What parental responsibilities are cited? How are these responsibilities to be carried out? What springs from fulfilling these responsibilities well? What is lost when parents neglect these responsibilities or handle them poorly? How long do you think these responsibilities apply to parents? According to these verses, what is the child's responsibility in receiving from their parents? What is gained in receiving? What is lost when the child chooses not to receive? Are there specific lessons you need to take from these verses today?

Read and reflect on 2 Timothy 3:14-15. What spiritual lessons did you learn from your parents? What did you gain from those spiritual lessons? Are you still applying those lessons today? What spiritual lessons have you taught / are you teaching the children in your life? In what ways have you seen those lessons take root? Are you continuing to encourage your children (even adult children) to apply those lessons?

Read and reflect on the following wisdom verses/passages: Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17. What responsibility is highlighted? What does each passage affirm about the importance of faithfully fulfilling this responsibility? What is lost if this responsibility is neglected? In your own experience, have these verses proved true to you as a child / as a parent? Can you recall specific situations where great learning resulted from you receiving or giving discipline? What lessons can you take from these verses to apply to your parent/child relationship today?

Read and reflect on the Parable of the Lost Son as recorded in Luke 15:11-31. What lessons in parenting are offered through the example of the father in this parable? What lessons on honour/respect/obedience or lack of honour/respect/obedience are offered through the examples of the older and younger sons? Is there a specific lesson that you need to take from this parable today?

The Parable of the Lost Son is, of course, a picture of God the Father's love for us. What specific lessons does this story teach about God's fatherly love? In what ways have you personally experienced His fatherly love?

Read and reflect on these further verses that speak to God's fatherly love for you: Psalm 103:13-18; Isaiah 54:13; Hebrews 12:7-11. What do they teach about how God loves?

Read and reflect on 1 Timothy 5:4,8. What do these verses have to say to Christians about the care of elderly parents and other family members who are in need? Why was this teaching necessary at the time Paul wrote to Timothy? Do those same concerns apply in present-day circumstances? If not, why not? What are the basic philosophical principles behind this teaching? Do those principles apply today? Reflecting on our present-day context, how are believers to apply this teaching today (in their relationship with elderly parents or other family members who are struggling)? Why is this important?