

## HONOR THY MOTHER

The first commandment with a promise is found in Exodus 20:12. **“Honor your father and mother: so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”** Another way of looking at it is that longevity may be conditional upon the degree of respect we show to our parents. It is not unusual for me to ask someone in their 90’s if they respected their folks when they were growing up. Thus far, the answers have always been a resounding “yes.”

So, there are some practical reasons for celebrating Mother’s Day. One is that if children listen to their mamas they’d likely make wiser choices\_ like looking both ways before crossing the road or not playing with matches or sharp objects. Listening to her appeals to eat more fruits and vegetables and to drink our milk would improve our health. Heeding her warnings to abstain from drugs and alcohol, even shying away from people who could be bad influences\_ as well as her urgings to keep sexually pure\_ could save us from a world of hurt if not from an early demise.

But, we need to understand that there is a deeper spiritual principle here. A professor I had in Bible college once told me that the Bible cannot mean now what it didn’t mean then. In other words, though we might make modern applications, we should never allow for current culture or trends to blur timeless principals. Failure to honor their mothers back then would cause them to miss out on God’s blessing for them in their homeland. Why? Because God would evict them if He couldn’t convict them.

When this 5<sup>th</sup> commandment was given, there was no such thing as *“Mothers Day.”* So, it can’t mean buy Mom flowers or take her out to eat one day a year. Don’t misunderstand me, there’s nothing wrong with honoring Moms today\_ in fact, there’s everything right with it\_ providing we don’t think by simple acts of kindness or gestures of love once a year we are fulfilling God’s instruction. Chances are, if that’s all we’re doing, God’s provision of blessing will pass us by. So rather than just ask *“Do you honor your Mom?”* – a better question would be *“How do you honor your Mom?”* Here’s what your Heavenly Father says we should do...

I think many children have reduced *“honoring their Mother”* to saying *“I love you, Mom.”* Or making her a gift or card on special occasions. Many have done the same thing when it comes to honoring God. But the Bible makes it clear that what is called for in both cases is obedience. Directly referring to the commandment, Ephesians 6:1-3 says: **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise – so it may go well with you and you may have a long life.”** We honor God when we listen to Him and do what He says. We honor Mom in the same way. So, if you have dishonored your mother by disregarding her in the pas\_ dissing her with a *“talk to the hand”* or a *“roll”* of the eyes, tell her you are sorry for not heeding her words and that you resolve to start listening right now.

Years ago I heard this quote from **Elaine Dalton**: *“The greatest thing a father can do for his daughter is to love her mother.”* Children need to know their dads love their moms; to see proper affection in the home, and to know the security of a committed parental unit. Of a virtuous Mother, Proverbs 31:28 says: **“Her children arise and call her BLESSED; Her husband also, and he praises her.”** I knew I was to honor my mother\_ but that doesn’t mean I always did it. And I hadn’t a clue about this idea of *“calling her blessed.”* Here’s a short list for you whether you still live with your mom or not. **Express your affection.** Tell her often. Moms never get tired of hearing it.

Facebook and text messages are fine, but most Moms I know still prefer getting a card in the mail. **Treat her with kindness.** Flowers and gifts are nice. Words of praise and appreciation are nicer still. Hugs and kisses are better still. **Serve her.** Do your chores\_ and offer to help her with other tasks. After I moved out of the family home, I'd ask Mom what she needed done around the house whenever I visited. My sister and older brother lived close by so they did a lot for her\_ and as long as dad was able there wasn't a lot she asked of me. But sometimes, I think she saved little things for me to do. It might have been moving a piece of furniture or changing a light fixture or getting something down from the attic. Just before I'd leave, I'd give her a hug and a kiss\_ but what I think she appreciated even more than that was I'd **pray for her.**

Considering that text in Proverbs, when my firstborn daughter was still an infant, my mom asked me what I was getting Nina for Mother's Day. I jokingly replied, "*Why would you ask? She's not my mother.*" Let's just say she was disappointed in her son. I never made that mistake again. It's not only appropriate, it's necessary to **bless all mothers** – especially the mother of my own Kids; to sing the praises of my wife for the mother she is\_ and the way she has mothered a multitude of other children who have no biological connection. Nina has served as a babysitter, a nanny, and an au' pair\_ even for many of Calvary's children. She's been a Sunday School and VBS teacher, a co-director of a pre-school in MI, and now a teaching assistant at Rockford Christian. None of these have been just "*jobs*" to her. They were callings upon her heart to love and nurture children. I "*call her blessed*"\_ but I believe with all my heart that those who have been under her care are the truly "*blessed*" ones\_ and I am the one who is "*blessed*" most of all.

So husbands, if the mother of your children is with you today, call her "*blessed*" right now. If she's not\_ declare her blessedness right now to anyone who can hear. And children, do the same for your mother. After all, there's no one quite like her. (Video)

Now, listen to this excerpt from Proverbs 23:22-25: "**... do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding. Let her who bore you rejoice.**" One of the primary ways we are to honor our mother is to take care of her in her advanced years. Before you jump too quickly to the concept of whether you should put her in a nursing home if she becomes to infirm for you to see to her needs, think about her present needs. Long before residential care might even be a consideration, the one who took you to the store and to the doctor might need you to be her chauffeur now. The one who did your laundry might need help with hers. In time, the one who one bathed you may need you to help her with daily hygiene. Whatever her needs\_ they should be met by her children and grandchildren. Paul tells Timothy that neglecting our elderly parents isn't even something that pagans would do! (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:4) Believers should respect their parents and grandparents always.

One last thing. If your Mother is or was a Christian who did her best to instill faith in your heart, don't neglect the seed she sowed. I am confident what would honor her most is for you to embrace Jesus as she did. And if your Mom is out of reach today because she moved away or passed away or ran away\_ **Isaiah 66:13** tells us that God says: "**As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you.**" Run into his arms and find rest....