

The Fifth Command: Its requirements.

Honor of parents involves several steps. Probably the first is obedience, necessary as we grow for contrary attitudes make for rebellion and confusion. The parent desires obedience on the part of the child--for obvious reasons. But the best way to obtain this is to have been an obedient child. I am not saying this is all there is to it, but it is a large part of the quest. Quite properly it is too late for some of us to return and do things differently, but if we yet have living parents we may well review our attitudes and activities concerning them. Those who are younger should see that obedience practiced in life is the key to receiving obedience in later years.

But more than simple obedience is involved. Respect and consideration are large parts of the matter of honor. This respect is hinted at when Proverbs says: "My son, keep thy father's commandment and forsake not the law of thy mother...Bind them continually upon thine heart and tie them about thy neck." (Proverbs 6:20-21) The concept is one of attentiveness, trust, and consideration for the parental concerns. It means a kindly word, a considerate ear, a thoughtful attitude directed to parental concerns.

Higher than this, perhaps is the living of a life that is a credit to father and mother. Every parent rejoices in an obedient and creditable child. We can bring no honor higher than this to our parents: a life of integrity that accredits their interest in us.

In the Old Testament there is a striking example of parental honor when David, fleeing from Saul in 1 Samuel 22, first made a point of caring for his father and mother. Knowing the vindictive nature of Saul, soon to be vividly witnessed in the annihilation of Ahimelech's household at Nob, David sent his parents to the king of Moab for safety. David was the youngest