

Intro. The last few weeks, I’ve been dealing with the family. But in doing so, I’ve not spoken to everybody at one time. When I covered marriage, I didn’t address the single people among us (and when I address singles, it doesn’t speak to the married). When I dealt with parenting, it doesn’t say much to those without children. Today, however, is a topic which covers everyone and, yet, when you go to all the great family ministries and resources out there, it gets the less press by far—there isn’t much available on “Honoring Parents,” the subject we look at in our “Recalibrate” series—making adjustments in our lives to affect our families (even if you were adopted & don’t know who your biological parents are, you should honor those parent-figures in your life). While we’ll continue to look at select Proverbs, beginning with Proverbs 10, I’ll also reference other texts, since so little is said about this subject today, so you can see more of the whole counsel of God on this matter.

Theme: Honoring Parents

Background: In Proverbs Solomon is passing on wisdom to his son about every area of life. Inherent in his instructions about listening to father & mother is honoring them as your parents.

➤ There are 2 main areas I want to address for you to “Recalibrate” in “Honoring Parents.”

I. Children in the Home, Obey Your Parents (1:8-9; 2:1-6; 4:1-2; 5:1-2; 7:1-3; 13:1; cf. Ephesians 6:1-3)

- Obviously, parents have the responsibility to teach children to obey, but once they learn what obedience is, children bear that responsibility

A. God has installed them as your authority (1:8-9; Ephesians 6:1)

Illus: The very first Bible verse we had our children memorize is Ephesians 6:1—“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right”—I was preaching a set of revival services in the panhandle several years ago & Hannah was about 2 ½ at the time & I had been asked to preach on family devotions & teaching your kids. Rather than tell them what we were teaching Hannah, I had Hannah come up on the stage & recite a few verses & this is one she said

- You are to listen’s to your parents’ advice & not forsake their teaching (1:8-9)—for the children in the home, this includes obedience, because God has placed them in your life as an authority figure
- Authority becomes important in life, as parents are a child’s first authority, but then they learn about teachers, law enforcement officers, judges, bosses & the like. The most important authority is the Lord & God may use parents to underscore this reality

B. God may use them to point you to eternity (1:7; 2 Timothy 3:14-15)

- The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (1:7) & the fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short (10:27)—part of prolonging life is not just on this earth but in heaven
- Paul spoke of Timothy’s grandmother Lois & mother Eunice teaching him the Scriptures, which are able to make one wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15)

C. So obey your parents (Ephesians 6:1)

1. With the right actions—when parents give you a responsibility & a command, they expect you to do it

2. With the right attitude—parents also expect you to do what they’ve told you to do with the right attitude, because it moves beyond external obedience to honor

- In the same way, we should have the right attitude in serving others, because we serve the Lord first (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:5)

II. Children on Your Own, Honor Your Parents (3:1-2; 6:20-23; cf. Exodus 20:12; Matthew 15:1-9; 1 Timothy 5:3-8)

- The 5th Commandment Yahweh gave Moses on Mt. Sinai was for us to “honor your father & mother” (Exodus 20:12)—repeated in Deuteronomy 5:16 & Ephesians 6:2

- In Jesus' day, some of the religious leaders were trying to be extra spiritual & give the money they would have used to care for aging parents & give it to God instead—Jesus called them for their hypocrisy in not honoring their parents & honoring a tradition instead (Matthew 15:1-9)
- In a similar vein, Paul reminded Timothy to have the church take care of true widows—those who didn't have family to care for them. Family members are to care for an aging mother, aunt, grandmother & if they fail to do so, they are worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:8)

A. The Christian faith they handed down to you (10:1; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15)

- A “wise” son is one who learns the “fear of the Lord” (1:7) & makes his father glad
- Paul knew Timothy's grandmother Lois & mother Eunice had faithfully instructed him in the Scriptures & the message of salvation (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15)
- Too many children grow up, become adults & walk away from the Christian faith they had been taught—if you are one of those, ask God for forgiveness & turn back to Him

B. The legacy they left for you (10:4-5)

- In addition to the Christian faith, think of those things which they stood for & taught you—a hard work ethic, being a good neighbor, being involved in politics, serving in the church (we are losing the church statesmen today where men & women saw service in the church as something honorable & did it in service to the Lord rather than take a comfortable seat & let everyone else serve them), taking care of what you have & the list goes on

Illus: I'm curious, how many of you have lost at least one of your parents? How many of you still have at least one of your parents? Don't take your time with them for granted. Learn as much as you can from them. Learn from their mistakes. They are here today & gone tomorrow & you won't get them back, but if they are a follower of Jesus & you are a follower of Jesus, then you can see them again.

C. The stewardship with which they entrusted you (Matthew 15:1-9; 1 Timothy 5:3-8)

- Many times when someone's parents pass away, they leave something for their children—vehicles, house, some money, the one-week timeshare in Palatka, FL—use what they leave you in a way which would honor their memory
- On the flip side of that, I try to caution Christians not to leave everything to their children, but give at least 10% to your church & possibly other ministry causes. This is all the more important if they aren't believers & have a tendency to spend it on drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc.—you don't want to feed their addictions

Conc. Once there was a little old man. His eyes blinked & his hands trembled; when he ate he clattered the silverware distressingly, missed his mouth with the spoon as often as not & dribbled a bit of his food on the tablecloth. Now he lived with his married son, having nowhere else to live, and his son's wife didn't like the arrangement. “I can't have this,” she said. “It interferes with my right to happiness.” So she & her husband took the old man gently but firmly by the arm & led him to the corner of the kitchen. There they set him on a stool and gave him his food in an earthenware bowl. From then on he always ate in the corner, blinking at the table with wistful eyes. One day his hands trembled rather more than usual & the earthenware bowl fell & broke. “If you are a pig,” said the daughter-in-law, “you must eat out of a trough!” So they made him a little wooden trough & he got his meals in that. This couple had a four-year-old son of whom they were very fond. One evening the young man noticed his boy playing intently with some bits of wood & asked what he was doing. “I'm making a trough,” he said, smiling up for approval, “to feed you & Mamma out of when I get big.” The man & his wife looked at each other for a while & didn't say anything. Then they cried a little. They then went to the corner & took the old man by the arm & led him back to the table. They sat him in a comfortable chair & gave him his food on a plate, & from then on nobody ever scolded when he clattered or spilled or broke things (*Grimm's Fairy Tales*, The Old Man & His Grandson, #78). God commands us to honor our parents, but a greater command than that is to honor God by believing His message & turning from your sin & trusting Him. That commitment would honor a godly father & mother & bring glory to God.