

Unshakeable: Colossians 3:18-4:1 Harmony in the Household: Honoring your Parents, 5/14/17

In Prayer:

Linda Politza....Recognize for some among us- Mother's Day brings sad memories, painful, lonely, awaken a deep longing. Some haven't had a godly mother at home or struggle with guilt over missed opportunities or regretful decisions. There are millions of single women, and many will stay single. There are women who are single mothers, carrying the load without a father figure in the home. Jesus Christ has a grace for that. There are women who are married and cannot, or, with their husbands, choose not, to have children. Jesus has a grace for that.

Happy Mothers Day! We want to honor and appreciate all the mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, stepmothers, foster moms and 2nd moms, surrogate moms, here with us. (Pause to recognize them)

In our study in Colossians we have come to chapter 3:18-4:1. Paul gives brief instructions on what it meant as a Christ follower in the 1st century household to live in harmony within the familial roles of husband and wife, parents and children and masters and servants. Those in authority must not abuse that, but rather love and serve and likewise we if we have authority in our lives we should honor in honor of the Lord.

In light of Mother's Day I thought it would be fitting to talk about honor as we honor our mothers...and not just mothers but fathers as well. So we will focus on v.20

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Paul does give a straightforward simple command but we want to broaden this and ask, what does the Bible say as a whole about our relationship with our parents, regardless of age and stage of life? Well what we see right off that bat is that God is passionate about HONORING our parents. Exodus 20:12, 10 Commandments given to Moses, the 5th commandment: *Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*

Honoring our parents was associated with God's favor and blessing. This is repeated by Paul in the NT-

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Need to ask, what does it mean to honor our parents?

Dennis Rainey says, *"Honor is an attitude accompanied by actions that say to your parents, 'You are worthy. You have value. You are the person God sovereignly placed in my life.'"*

On the contrary, dishonoring our parents means that our attitude and actions treat our parents as if they had little to no value in our lives, that their words and rules mean nothing to you. And this is associated in Scripture with very negative consequences. I'll just show you one of many Proverbs that warn against this **30:17** *The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.* –Put that in your mother's day card.

So this is a big deal to God and so it must be a big deal to us. Look at 3 things.

- 1) Why honoring our parents is so important
- 2) How we honor our parents in 3 stages of our relationship
- 3) How to honor our parents when it's difficult

Because the temptation for some of us is to cross our arms right off the bat and say, "Yes, but you don't know my parents. You don't know how hard I had it or what they did to me." I understand that in some cases showing honor may be difficult or very nearly impossible... We will deal with that, we will see that honor takes different forms and adapts to different situations. But we must deal with the principle before we deal with the challenges.

Why is honoring our parents so important?

-Because God's Design For Society Demands it- Paul in Ephesians 6:1 says simply do this because "It is right." God has designed authority structures for the benefit of society. The basic unit of society is the family. Everything else in a society builds off of this...it all starts here. Everything we learn about authority starts in the home. Children who respect and obey their parents will more likely build a society that is ordered, harmonious, and able to thrive. A generation of undisciplined, disobedient children will produce a society that is chaotic and destructive. It's respect for parents that is the basis for every other kind of respect and every other kind of authority in human civilization. And so parents, guess what? You have a responsibility not just to your children but the rest of society to raise them to respect and honor you! And you can teach them by how you honor YOUR parents.

-Because it is an act of Worship to Christ. Col. 3:20 "This pleases the Lord."

In other words, horizontal honor of our parents is a means by which we express our vertical worship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

-Practical Reason. Let me do a quick survey please stand up if a mother went through labor for you to be here. You were a real pain to someone. Even if that is all, which is likely wasn't that's enough reason to honor your mom.

How we honor our parents in 3 stages of relationship

There are at least three stages as our relationships change with our parents that God calls us to honor our parents and we want to talk about how we do that uniquely in these stages.

Childhood- Primary way we honor them is through obedience as Paul commands clearly in v.20. This is in both attitude and action. When we tell our boys, "OK it's time to get off the tablet and come sit at the dinner table." I can't if they may slump into the dinner table if in their hearts they are still standing. Not just our actions, because God is all about the heart and the Bible tells us that our hearts are born rebellious. It is why we don't need to teach toddlers to say "No!" they get that. We have to train children to be obedient because rebellion comes naturally. Kids a gentle yes mommy goes a long way... sometimes parents feel all they are doing is correcting or corralling their kids... it doesn't take much to really make mom feel appreciated- so kids maybe draw a picture to show you love them... **(Insert picture)**

Now sometimes our kids won't understand why we have certain rules. Maybe your toddler doesn't understand why drinking the bleach or touching the stove is a bad idea. Maybe your 8 year old doesn't understand why they can't play Minecraft for 4 hours, or why your pre-teen can't lock herself in her room with her phone texting her friends all weekend. But kids and teens-God has given us parents for our good, our protection so ultimately obedience to our parents is intended for our joy and blessing. Only exception is if they tell you to do something against the Bible or something that would hurt you or others. Teens when your parents set a curfew you have to trust that they are doing it for your ultimate protection and eventual joy even if you disagree and think nothing bad will happen to you at 2am in the morning.

Now hopefully you are in a family where there is some dialogue, some reasoning for why the rules are what they are. That doesn't mean you should be able to ask why 10x over and over...

But you may say, my parents are ridiculous! Listen, I thought that too. When I was a teenager my brother and I were at the shore in OC and we were hanging out with these girls and we totally just blew past our curfew, I don't think on purpose we were just giddy. And all of a sudden from out of nowhere I see our family station wagon, which in itself was the most embarrassing car I can imagine and my Dad's head is sticking out the window and he's yelling- get in the car now! Mortified. And We probably got grounded or something. I thought my parents were ridiculous at times too. But I've come to appreciate them. But whether you have parents that are too tight and have tons of rules, or parents that are too light and don't have enough. Your duty and worship before the Lord is to obey- even overbearing, insecure or overly worried parents! For our good and blessing.

Early Independence

This is the time when your parents begin giving you more freedom to make your own choices and live with the consequences good or bad. This happens at a different time for each family depending on the cultural customs, situation and the maturity level...so that might be 17-18, it might be 24...or 38. In this stage honoring your parents means showing them **respect**.

Respect their discipline- Hebrews 12:9 says that we respect our parents for disciplining us for our own good. Begin to see the value in it.

Respect their advice- Proverbs 6:20 *My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching.*

9 out of 10 times your parents are probably right about the advice they are giving you. They have lived longer, know your tendencies and can see your blind spots. Now you may disagree with them, or you may not take their advice about a purchase or a job or a dating relationship- but you ought to respect them and think very seriously about why you wouldn't follow their advice. When my mom told me that I need to find a woman that is grounded and can keep me tethered she was right!

Adult-Aging Parents- Appreciate them and Provide for them

Appreciate- Proverbs 23:25 *May your father and mother rejoice; may she who gave you birth be joyful!* In this phase we should make it a joy on our parents.

Appreciate them- parenting is difficult, demanding, exhausting...life would have been easier if they didn't have you. I created a lot of stress for my parents. Thank them for putting up with you. Food, sleep, safety, laundry piles, your drama, the things you may have said to them, your self-centeredness. Sacrifice- it's expensive. To raise a child to 18 costs 249k on average. Doesn't include when they come back home.

Stay in touch with your parents- call them, listen to them, spend the day with them. Honor their need to see themselves in you. Parents long to see how they have impacted their children, how their children are a reflection of their strengths, their values. You don't realize how important it is to give them credit where you can. You don't realize how critical it is just to say, "Thank you for taking me to church and instilling faith in me at a young age.", 'You know mom, everything I learned about standing up for myself or believing in myself I learned from you, or about cooking...' These are simple measures but ones that bring great joy and honor to our parents.

Provide for Them

Scripture calls Christians to care for our aging parents.

In 1 Timothy 5 we find Paul telling Timothy how to honor widows within the church. As he provides instruction, he gives two important principles: Children are to make some return to their parents (v.4) and Christians who will not provide for family members are behaving worse than unbelievers (v.8).

Jesus only said 7 things on the cross, one of them was for John to take care of his mother.

We honor our parents by giving them the assurance that we will not forsake them in their old age. Just as they cared for us, we will care for them. This is our responsibility as Christians and it ought to be our joy.

African and Asian cultures are a standing rebuke to the West in this matter. At a time when millions of elderly adults are living alone, consigned to nursing homes and hospitals, cared for by professionals rather than family members, Christians have the opportunity to display special honor. Pastor Kent Hughes says that even if parents have no financial needs, “there is still a Christian obligation for hands-on, loving care. Nurses may be employed, but there must be more—the care cannot be done by proxy. Emotional neglect and abandonment is not an option.”

How to honor our parents when it's difficult

Parents who hurt you deeply. they sinned against us, unwise decisions and you have little to no relationship with them, or they have already passed. Maybe one step of honor means committing to not dishonor them by refusing to speak evil of them.

You can honor them by releasing them from their sins against you. Don't deny it, repress it, excuse it. You have to face it because you will take it out on those around you, it eats you up. And I won't say much more on that because you heard a great sermon on what that looks like from Matthew's message on forgiveness last week.

May we honor our parents, and especially honor our moms on this special day as we honor Christ. Pray