

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Adult Bible Studies
Week #18

Exodus 20:12

February 13/14, 2024

Exodus 20:12

1. The 5th Commandment/Word
2. Remember these things about the 10 Commandments
 - a. The Commandments do not come from “out of nowhere” as it were, but from within the context of a relationship based on God’s love for people and God’s being with the people, especially as embodied in God’s saving the people from slavery
 - b. God reveals here the fundamental aspects of:
 - i. A successful relationship with him
 - ii. Successful relationships with each other
3. Specific Notes about the Commandment
 - a. This is the first of six commandments that deal with relationships between human beings
 - i. But human-to-human relationships always have a divine-human aspect as well: God cares about how we treat each other
 - b. The parent/child relationship is the most basic of all human relationship
 - c. One never leaves the status of being a child
 - d. Once one is a parent, that status also never changes
 - e. Nurture, care, concern are all implied in the term “honor”
 - f. Father and Mother are mentioned on equal terms here: of note in a patriarchal society
 - g. No specific behavior is prescribed or prohibited here: all behavior in the parent/child matrix is therefore subject to evaluation in terms of “honoring”
 - i. To honor is to prize highly, to show respect, to glorify and exalt
 - ii. Honoring is about showing affection, appreciation
 - iii. The term is often used to describe the appropriate response of people to God
 - h. On the surface, this commandment is directed toward children
 - i. Clearly, on one level, it is: Children are meant to learn from and to obey parents
 - ii. All of the other commandments, though, speak to the high moral and ethical character required of all adults, which surely includes adults who are parents (and how they treat their children)
 - i. Perhaps the original background of this commandment had to do with prohibiting children from neglecting parents after the parents were no longer able to contribute to the family good but became a “liability” as it were to the economic good of the family
 - j. Going deeper, this applies to how adult children act toward their (now elderly) parents
 - k. The context of “honoring” also then can be expanded to indicate a positive attitude on the part of parents toward children
 - l. This commandment is often “expanded” in its scope to include a general sense by which families are to operate or function
 - m. This commandment includes a general promise: life will go better when each generation is caring for the generation above it
 - n. The promise is not a guarantee of one set of specific conditions, but rather a commentary on general principles of life
 - o. Christians must interpret this commandment from the perspective of what we learn from Jesus Christ, and here we do well to remember this wisdom from Ephesians 5:21: “Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Questions for Your Life Today

- A. What does the word “honor” mean to you? What specific actions would you employ in order to honor someone?
- B. How might parents need to act in order to “deserve” honor?
- C. How might this commandment be expanded in scope to include not just parents and children, but older generations and younger generations?
- D. How have you seen this commandment abused and misconstrued?
- E. Why or How does the general promise of “life will be longer and better” actually work out in real life?

Notes by The Rev. Dr. Jack Baca, Senior Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California

Resources:

- a. Interpretation Commentary on Exodus, Terence E. Fretheim, John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1991
- b. The Communicator’s Commentary Series, Old Testament, Exodus, Maxie D. Dunnam, Word, Inc., Waco, TX, 1987
- c. The Old Testament Library: Exodus, Brevard S. Childs, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1974