



FOLLOW-THROUGH

Small Group Discussion around the Sunday Message

The 4th Commandment - Parents: Honored and Honorable - October 9, 2005

Introduction: Recent murders in Hastings, MN saw a son, with the assistance of a friend, allegedly kill his parents. Both 17 year olds attended a Christian high school. How does a child - even a child in touch with Christian teaching - get to the point of hating his parents? Think and talk about how this tragedy (assuming the alleged murderers are guilty of the crime) might have been prevented.

1. Read Exodus 20:12.
 - "Honor" means to prize or to value highly. The root of the Hebrew word means "weighty" or "heavy," referring to a heavy precious metal like gold or silver, something to be valued. What forces in our culture today work against parents being prized and valued highly?
 - Can you ever remember a time when you did not prize your parent(s) highly? Describe the situation.
2. Read Proverbs 23:22.
 - This honoring of parents is mandated for kids who may be 5 or 65. What might cause an adult child to despise his or her aging parent?
3. Read Ephesians 6:1-4.
 - Paul describes the 4th Commandment as the "first commandment with promise." Why do you think honoring parents might lead to a fulfilling and long life? How does that work?
 - Look how seriously Israel's God-given laws took a child cursing his or her parents. Read Exodus 21:17. How do you feel about the severity of this civil law in ancient Israel?
 - For Israel's loss of her land, read Ezekiel writing during the Babylonian Captivity. To what does he credit her losing the land God had given her? See Ezekiel 22:6-7 with an eye on how parents were treated.
 - Look back at Ephesians 6:4. How do parents exasperate their children? How might you exasperate your child?
 - What's the opposite for exasperate?
 - What can parents actively do on a regular basis to bring their children up "in the training and instruction of the Lord?"
4. We honor parents in the following ways: a) by obeying them; b) by emulating them; and c) by blessing them.
 - Share a time when obedience was very difficult for you. How did you fare? Did you obey or not? If you did obey, why? If you didn't, why not?
 - In what ways are you like your parent(s)? What virtues in your parent(s) would you most like to carry on?
 - On blessing a parent, see Proverbs 31:28-29. If one or both of your parents are still living, how might you intentionally rise up to bless them? What could you do or say to be sure they know what a blessing they are in your lives?
5. Agree or disagree? Parents have to earn the honor their children give them by being honorable, that is, by honoring God.
 - In what way(s) can a parent honor God and so become honorable in their children's eyes?
 - How does God's parenting of us - especially in His Son Jesus Christ - carry truths for how we can be honorable parents? What kind of a "Dad" is God?
6. Close with prayers for one another's roles as children and/or parents.