

“Fifth Commandment”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigsandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of June 28, 2025.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I continued with our series. The topic is the Ten Commandments. The presentation was titled “Fifth Commandment.”

At the beginning of the Bible study, I mentioned that the presentation was organized into four main sections, but I doubted that my allotted time would enable me to thoroughly cover the fourth point in the study. I mentioned that I would probably only refer to the fourth point and cover the material at my 2:00 p.m. presentation on Saturday, June 28.

(Even though I did not cover the material on Wednesday night, I decided to include it in this article.)

Foundational scripture

■ Exodus 20:2—“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

Then, the Lord proceeded to remind the children of Israel about the Ten Commandments.

Old Testament lesson = After God delivered them from Egypt, He reminded them of His expectations from them.

New Testament lesson = When God offers His bountiful grace to New Testament disciples, He still has expectations of them (Romans 6:1-2, Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 3:4-8).

Fifth Commandment

■ Exodus 20:12—“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”

Honoring parents with actions and words

■ Exodus 21:15—“He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”

■ Exodus 21:17—“And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”

■ Deuteronomy 27:16—“Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.”

What if your parents don't deserve honor?

In such a situation, we should honor our Heavenly Father by avoiding revenge upon our physical parents.

■ Ephesians 6:1—Children, obey your parents “in the Lord” for this is right.

What does the phrase “in the Lord” mean?

Let's see if Paul's writing in Colossians helps to clarify?

■ Colossians 3:20—Children, obey your parents “in all things,” for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Actually, the scripture in Colossians does not help to clarify, because it uses the English word *all*.

Should a child obey his parents in “all” things?

I hope that you don't think that a child should obey his parents into the following behavior—robbing a grocery store, taking illegal drugs, having inappropriate sexual behavior or worshiping the devil.

I realize that some Bible students recoil at the phrase “human reasoning”—but human reasoning (and common sense) should help a Bible student to avoid taking the word *all* literally.

So what does obeying “in the Lord” mean? Let's notice two examples of the apostles in the book of Acts.

■ Acts 4:19—Peter and John answered: “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.”

■ Acts 5:29—Peter and the other apostles answered: “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

God does not want children following their parents into sin (Ezekiel 18:4-20).

If your physical parents do not deserve honor, here is some great instruction to follow.

■ Romans 12:17—Repay no one evil for evil, but have regard for good things in the sight of all people.

■ Romans 12:18—If it is possible (as much depends on you), live peaceably with all people.

■ Romans 12:19—Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to your wrath—because vengeance is the Lord's.

■ Romans 12:20—Serve the “needs” of your enemy—without falling into their games, traps or control.

■ Romans 12:21—Overcome evil with good.

Help people find the Father and Son

I realize that a calling from God explains that God finds us.

But I am going to quote the apostle Paul and recommend that you encourage people to find our Heavenly Father as the father figure that none of us have experienced.

■ Acts 17:26-27—God made all things “so that they [people] should seek the Lord in the hope that they might [find] Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”

Even if you had good parents, seek a relationship with the Father and the Son.

And, if you had bad parents, you will be amazed about how a relationship with the Father and Son will change your life forever.

Let’s notice scriptures about the Father and the Son.

■ John 5:30—“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”

■ John 6:38—“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

■ John 10:27-28—“My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”

■ John 10:29—“My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.”

■ John 19:26-27—The Son of God demonstrated His love toward His mother.

■ 1 Corinthians 15:24-28—The Son of God will put an end to all rule, all authority and power, and then He will continue to be subject to the Father—so that God may be all in all.

Honor your parents with money

Although the following material was briefly mentioned in the Wednesday-night Bible study (due to time constraints), it is included in this article.

Does the apostle Paul write a contradictory message in 2 Corinthians 12:14 and 1 Timothy 5:4-8?

■ 2 Corinthians 12:14—Paul wrote: “The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.”

■ 1 Timothy 5:4—Paul wrote: “If any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents—for this is good and acceptable before God.”

■ 1 Timothy 5:8—Paul wrote: “If anyone does not provide for his own (and especially for those of his household), he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Personally, I believe that parents provide money early in life for the development and well-being of their children and then children should be prepared to help their parents in the later stages of their lives.

Churches should not beg for money

It is immoral for churches to beg for money that should be used for elderly parents.

It is immoral for churches to request their parishioners to strap themselves financially (to refinance their home, to borrow money, etc.) to send money to the church.

Read Mark 7:1-13.

■ Mark 7:1-5—Pharisees and scribes criticized the disciples of the Son of God for not following the “tradition of the elders.”

■ Mark 7:6-9—The Son of God said: “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do. All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.”

What example did the Son of God give about a tradition that rejected the commandment of God?

■ Mark 7:10—The Son of God quoted two comments by Moses: “Honor your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12) and “He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death” (Exodus 21:17).

And how did the Pharisees and scribes respond to the Son of God quoting those two scriptures?

Notice how God’s Word Translation quotes Mark 7:11-13.

■ Mark 7:11-13—“But you say, ‘If a person tells his father or mother that whatever he might have used to help them is corban (that is, an offering to God), he no longer has to do anything for his father or mother.’ Because of your traditions you have destroyed the authority of God’s Word. And you do many other things like that.”