

68. The Fourth Commandment.

Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord. *Col. 3, 20.*

"We should fear and love God that we may not despise our parents and masters nor provoke them to anger." Children who disrespect their parents by disobeying them and doing other deeds of wickedness and thus provoke them to righteous anger and sorely grieve them surely are not lovely olive-branches, but sharp and pricking thorns about the family table. They dishonor God by despising their parents.

God says: "*Honor* thy father and thy mother." Our parents are nearest, and ought to be dearest, to us: our father, of whom we have been begotten; our mother, of whom we have been born. Next to God we owe to them our very being. Therefore "honor thy father and thy mother." This is a commandment of the most high God, and woe to him who disobeys it! When children have learned to honor their parents, they can no longer speak of them as "the old man" and "the old woman"; nor will they marry when they have grown to manhood and womanhood without the knowledge and consent of their parents.

Honor to our parents implies that we *serve* them, and that we do so not only when bidden, but whenever an opportunity offers to do something of which we know that it will please them. And we must support, nourish, and cherish them when they grow old and helpless in order to "requite" them as the Bible says, that is, to return in part the loving care which they bestowed upon us when we were young and helpless.

Due honor to our parents demands that we also *obey* them; for the Lord says: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." And again He says. "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." We should obey our parents in all things in which God has placed them over us and esteem them as a precious gift of God. Parents, to a certain extent, are the representatives of God over against their children. Obedient children are the pride of a home and give the hearts of their parents great pleasure.

Prayer.

Almighty God and Father, we confess that we have not honored Thee in Thy representatives, our parents, as we should have done, but have set aside Thy precept and therewith provoked Thy righteous anger. Grant that we may know our sin and repent of it and accept as the atonement for our disobedience the perfect obedience of Thy dear Son. Give to all parents a due sense of their responsibilities and enable them to exercise their office to Thine honor. Give to us hearts that fear and love Thee, that we may honor those whom Thou hast placed in authority over us and render to them obedience and service, love and esteem. Amen.

Give to thy parents honor due,
Be dutiful, and loving too,
And help them when their strength decays,
So shalt thou have length of days.

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