

Ephesians 6:2-3

Keys to a Happy Home - Tasks for Teens

Transitions are tough. I remember moving as a 15 year old. We moved from West Virginia to Florida. I had to make new friends, go to a new school and live in a new house. Transitions are tough.

Life transitions are even tougher. We come into the world as infants. The world's great; somebody meets our every need. But then we transition into toddlerhood. Things get more difficult; we fall, we get fussed at; we get hurt. But we learn and transition into childhood where we continue to grow and learn.

Nowhere does the transition get as tough, I believe, as during the teen years. This is especially seen in how we relate to our parents because it is such an in-between time. Fading is the simple "children, obey your parents," yet it still applies as long as you are at home. Dawning should be the awareness of the concept of honoring our parents. And making that transition is tough.

But make it we must if we are to have happy homes. In this message I want to examine what I consider to be one of the primary tasks of teens - learning to honor their parents. Notice several things, then, about this.

Honor is commanded by God. The scripture simply says "honor your father and mother." There are other reasons we should honor our parents (which we will see momentarily), but even if there were not we still should because God commands it. Which commandment in the 10 commandments is the one to honor our parents? Many teenagers are unaware of basic Bible knowledge. Many do not know how many commandments there are, much less which number this one is. Many teens can not name more than 1 or 2 apostles and even more think the epistles were the wives of the apostles!

This is the fifth commandment in the ten commandments. The ten commandments are composed of two sections. The first four are commandments dealing with how we relate to God. Notice:

1. You shall have no other God's before Me.
2. You shall make no idols.
3. Don't use God's name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

The next six, however deal with how we relate to other people. Notice that the very first one in this section is, "honor your father and mother."

5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. Do not kill.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not lie.
10. Do not covet.

Isn't it interesting that properly relating to others begins with properly relating to our parents? I do not know what you think of your parents but when I was a teen I remember thinking they were SO out of touch. They drove a strange car, liked strange music, ate strange

foods, and had strange ideas about what was fun. I seldom had my friends over because I sincerely thought they would quit liking me because of my weird parents. But you know what now? When I am home and my friends want to visit I always say come over to Mom's house. The car is the same; the musical tastes have not changed; she eats the same foods; and she has the same ideas about fun. What has changed? I have! And you know what else has changed? My concept of honoring my parents. I used to think honor meant do not get in trouble - and I did not. I used to think it meant do your best and make your parents proud - and I did. But the word honor as the Bible use it means to give value to. Folks you can do all the right things outwardly, but inwardly think your parents are worthless. Yet the Bible calls us to honor them - to count them as valuable.

When does that stop? NEVER! Consider Joseph. He was in Egypt and his family came down. The time came for his father, Jacob, to die. Notice the account in Genesis 47:28-31:

Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven. When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried." "I will do as you say," he said. "Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshipped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

Joseph could have said, "dad, you've only been here 17 years. Listen, I've been here a lot longer. We have better graves here, there's more food and it's a long trip. You'll be dead anyway, so what's it matter. Let us just bury you here!" NO - Joseph honored his father and took him back to Canaan to bury him.

You may think you know more than your parents. One thing I have discovered is that my parents were a lot smarter than I gave them credit for. Yours are too. If you are going to have a happy home, your part is to make that transition to extending honor. It is commanded by God

Notice also that **honor is commended by God**. Honor your father and mother is, as we said earlier, commandment number five. It is recorded in both Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16. Jesus referred to this commandment twice in his teachings. Throughout scripture we see numerous examples of parents being honored: the sons of Israel came to him for a blessing at the end of his life; David honored Mephibosheth for the sake of his father; et. al. In Ephesians 6, Paul says this is the "first commandment with a promise." Not only is it the first, but it is the only one of the ten that has a promise attached to it. Paul is not really talking about numerical order here. Rather, he is talking about of prime importance. Paul often uses the word first in this way. Consider:

1 Corinthians 11:18 - *In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it.*

1 Corinthians 15:3 - *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,*

In essence, Paul says honoring your parents is such an important thing that I commend it to you. God thinks it is important for us to honor our parents – that is why He commends it to us.

Let me share the MAJOR reason why it is a good thing for you to honor your parents. The day will come when you will be a parent. There is a basic law that exists in this life - the

law of sowing and reaping. No thinking person would ever sow corn and expect to reap tomatoes. Yet many plant strife, dissension, dishonor and expect to reap happiness, joy, and honor later. Perhaps we do not associate reaping with sowing due to the time interval but that does not change the fact that the law exists. What you sow now you WILL one day reap. Make sure you are sowing the seeds of honor and respect.

There once was a little old man whose eyes blinked and whose hands trembled when he ate. He clattered the silverware, missed his mouth with the spoon, and dribbled food on the tablecloth. He lived with his married son, as he had nowhere else to live. His son's wife did not like the arrangement. "I can't have this. It interferes with my right to happiness," she contended. So they led the old man to the corner of the kitchen and set him on a stool and gave him his food in an earthenware bowl. From then on he always ate in the corner, blinking at the table with wistful eyes. One day the bowl fell and broke. "If you are a pig," said the daughter-in-law, "you must eat out of a trough." They made him a little wooden trough and he got his meals in that. The couple had a four-year-old son of whom they were very fond. One evening the father noticed his son playing with some wood scraps. He asked him what he was doing and the son answered, "I'm making a trough," he said, smiling up for approval, "to feed you and Mamma out of when I get big." The man and wife looked at each other, then they cried, and then they went to the corner and took the old man by the arm and led him back to the table. They sat him in a comfortable chair and gave him his food on a plate, and from then on nobody ever scolded when he clattered or spilled or broke things.

Why honor your parents? It is a commandment of primary importance!

Notice also that **honor is compensated by God**. There are two phrases used here. First, that it may go well with you. How is your relationship with your parents? Is it going well with you? Let me be honest - I had a good relationship with mine, yet I still wish I would have understood these principles better! I had friends who trusted their parents. They were ALWAYS honest with them. That was foreign to me at that time. But you know what - it always seemed to go well with them. Isn't that what this says will happen, though?

It did not always go so well with me. As a teenager my passion was golf. I played 360 days per year. I lived to golf. But I had a bad temper and would often break my clubs. One time I had broken a club and taken it to leave to get repaired. This made me late picking my Mom up from work. I made up a good excuse for being late and thought I had gotten by with something. But then my mother asked me several days later about my club. How did she know, I wondered? As it turns out, the golf course had called and had finished repairing the club early. I had been caught! Even if I had not gotten caught, God would have still known. He will hold you to account too. You would think I learned my lesson. But, I broke another club and went through the same routine. This time I was sure to tell the repair place to be sure NOT to call my home. But fixing clubs is not done for free, and getting this one fixed took most of my money. It came time for a golf tournament, however, I could not ask my parents for the money to enter it because then I would have to account for my lack of money. It did not go well for me.

Certainly it was not honoring to sneak around and lie to my parents. In both cases it did not go well with me. But for those teens who learn and practice HONOR, the promise, the compensation is it will go well with you.

The next phrase is that you may live long on the earth. Modern man is fascinated with eternal youth. It was either Ponce DeLeon or DeSoto who came looking for the fountain of youth. Doctors seek to find cures to prolong life. People in their vanity have facelifts, tummy

tucks, etc. to look young. Dietitians tell us the secret to long life is in our diet. People even experiment with kribonics (freezing) in order to come back after a cure has been discovered.

If you want long life, you do not have to seek after all these fads. Just be obedient to God's Word! But what about those who do not get long life? Matthew Henry, in his commentary, says, "ordinarily obedience is thus rewarded, and, where it is not, it is made up with something better." The Greek word for long life is macrochronos. This word is made up of two parts - macro, which means big, large, or a lot of (contrast it with our word micro) and chronos, a word we get chronology from, which has to do with physical time. So the word macrochronos mean a lot of physical time. There are two ways to understand the word. First, we can think in terms of quantity (extra years because of honoring your parents). But probably more importantly we should think it terms of quality (better years as a reward for honor).

Solomon, in talking to his son, shared this same truth:

Proverbs 3:1-8

My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,
for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

Did you hear that Solomon not only described quantity but quality of life as well. Do you want a happy home? Learn to honor your parents - it not only brings peace and happiness now, but great rewards later, as well!

In 1978 Thomas Hansen of Boulder Colorado sued his parents for \$350,000 on grounds of malpractice of parenting. He charged that they botched his upbringing so badly, he would need years of costly psychiatric treatment. A few years back a Florida youth went to court seeking to divorce his parents. The suit gained national exposure. I cannot even remember the outcome but I do remember the audacity!

Obviously, these are NOT examples of honoring parents. I use them to ask, what kind of legacy will you leave? Honor your father and your mother - God commands it, commends it, and He will compensate it. Will you do it?