

## RULES TO LIVE BY!

### 6. Respect Your Parents



#### Introduction

The first four commandments that God gave through Moses deal with man's relationship with God Himself. Can you remember what they are? The fifth commandment focuses on our relationship with our parents, and then the last five speak about our relationships with other people. Let's look now at the fifth commandment.

#### Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 5:16, Leviticus 19:3

- ❶ What words are used to describe what our attitude should be towards our parents?  
*(We are to honor and respect them.)*
- ❷ In what way are children to show their respect for their parents, and what is the responsibility of their father? Ephesians 6:1-4
- ◆ For those who are parents: What advice would you give to younger people who will be parents one day, from your own experience?
- ◆ For young people: What do you appreciate about your own father that has earned your respect? What would you have liked him to do differently!?

By the time of Jesus, the religious leaders had added many of their own traditions to the laws that God had given. Let's read Mark 7:9-13.

- ❸ What tradition had the Jewish leaders added to the fifth commandment, and why did Jesus say it was wrong?  
*(They had a tradition that said if someone vowed or promised some money to God then they did not need to use it to help their parents. In fact they were nullifying or cancelling God's law, and putting their own tradition in its place. Although they said they were giving the money to God, in fact they were using this as an excuse to avoid giving it to their parents. They had made their own tradition more important than God's law.)*
- ❹ What do you think Jesus' response shows about his attitude towards helping your parents, and how did Jesus demonstrate that he honored his earthly parents? See Luke 2:51-52, John 19:26-27  
*(Jesus shows us that it is important to honor our parents, and this includes financial help where necessary. As a child Jesus was obedient to His parents and probably supported his mother after the death of Joseph as he continued the family business as a carpenter. When Jesus was on the cross he demonstrated his deep love for His mother by asking John to care for her, knowing He would not longer be able to.)*

In every culture there are different traditions. Not all traditions are wrong, but if they go against God's word, or undermine what He says, then we cannot follow those traditions. When we choose to follow Jesus we belong to His Kingdom and we are not to be conformed to the ways of the world, or our culture.

⑤ In your own culture how should a young person or an adult honor his/her father and mother? What is expected of you? What traditions should you not follow, and what traditions are good? Discuss.

⑥ What promises does God give if we keep the fifth commandment? Ephesians 6:3

*(It will go well with us and we will enjoy long life on the earth.)*

### **Conclusion**

When God gave mankind the fifth commandment, He knew that parents were not perfect! They make mistakes. For those of us who are parents, we know we have made mistakes too! And for those of you who will be parents one day, be assured, you will no doubt make mistakes as well!

And yet God gives this command: "Honor, respect, your father and mother." Perhaps we need to reflect on our own life – have we truly done as God commands? Is there any attitude that needs to be changed? If there is, ask for God's forgiveness, and then His grace to enable you to honor your parents. They may have failed many times, but this never excuses us from being obedient to what God tells us to do. It will go well with us if we do! Amen.