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Title: How To Be The Child Of A Happy Mother (10 Commandments Series)

Text: Exodus 20:12

We've been in a series entitled the "Ten Commandments." We have shared from the first two. The first four commandments have to do with our relationship to God. We will exclude those for today. The last six have to do with our relationship to mankind or others.

Question for you: If it became YOUR lot to preach a Mother's Day sermon from one of the 10 Commandments, which commandment would YOU choose for today? How many said "the 5th commandment?" Exodus 20:12 (NIV) – *"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."* For my curiosity sake, which commandment might you STEER CLEAR OF on Mother's Day? *"Thou shalt not kill?"* About 500 children are killed by their parents per year. Most of those mothers have a serious mental illness. Not a whole lot of difference between the number killed by their father or mother. *"Thou shalt not commit adultery?"* 1 Corinthians 5:1 (NKJV) – *"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles – that a man has his father's wife!"* Scripture records that that is not even named among the heathen.

Mother Statistics: There are about 2 billion mothers in the world (85.4 million in the US). 4.3 babies are born each second. 7740 during a 30-minute sermon. That makes for over 10,000 babies during a 39-minute sermon. I'll try not to go over 39 minutes as I certainly don't want to be responsible for the over-population of the world. The highest fertility rates exist in Niger with an average of 7.75 children born per woman. Lowest fertility rates are found in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan & Singapore with 1.2 children born per woman. The fertility rate for US women is said to be 2 per woman. Every year more than half a million women around the world die as a result of pregnancy complications and childbirth – 99% of which occur in developing countries. That's about 1 death per minute. One in four of women who die in childbirth simply bleed to death. That can often be prevented by a medication that costs less than 99 cents. One report that I read said that a stay-at-home mom would be paid \$138,646 in the business world. I could go on with statistics, but I won't.

Let's turn to Exodus 20:12 (Since that's the one you picked, and I might add – I'm glad you did.) *"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."* I want to speak today on this subject: "How To Be The Child Of A Happy Mother." Dwight L. Moody – the Billy Graham of his day – after a lifetime of observation and a lifetime of service to the Lord Jesus, made this statement. Everyone born of a mother – everyone who was ever a child – should listen to this statement. He said, "I have lived over sixty years, and I have learned one thing, if I have learned nothing else: No man or woman who dishonors his father or mother ever prospers." That comes from one of the greatest Christian leaders who has ever lived. Now, this command that we just read, which says we're to honor our father and our mother, comes from the Ten Commandments. As we've said the past couple of weeks – the Ten Commandments are divided into two categories, or two sections. The first four deal with our RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, and we call those the VERTICAL commands. The next six deal with our RELATIONSHIP TO MANKIND, and we call those the HORIZONTAL commands. FIRST, we have to be right with God; and then, we can be right with man. If we're not right with man, then we're not right with God either. So, all of the commands are summed up in: *"Love God with all of your heart"* (Deuteronomy 6:5) and *"Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Leviticus 19:18). Now, you knew that already. But now, the question comes, as God STARTS the SECOND section in these commands – and He BEGINS with this statement – that we are to honor our father and our mother. WHY do you think God starts the second section of these commands with THIS particular command? Well, it is a pivotal command. Now your memories may not go back this far, but I'm going to trust you to give me the right answer. Who were the first persons you ever met? HINT: Who was present AT YOUR BIRTH? Our parents, for the most part, are among the FIRST people we meet. If we cannot learn to love and respect our parents, then it's highly likely that we'll have trouble learning to love and respect ANYONE. What God is saying is this: The religion that doesn't begin at home simply does not begin, because what happens at home is the basis of everything else. If the HOME decays, then the CHURCH decays. If the church decays, then society and the state decay. So we begin AT HOME.

God tells us that the basis of our relationship to everybody else and everything else on planet Earth – after we get right with God – is in our home, where we learn to honor our father and our mother. Now, it's not merely sentimental what we do when we have Mother's Day. It's biblical. As a matter of fact, it is COMMANDED that we honor our father and mother. Mother's Day is just a token of that honor. We're to be giving honor 365 days a year to BOTH our father and our

mother. I realize that today can be a challenge for many of us. For some, our wonderful mother is no longer with us. Diane is having a challenge – this being the first Mother’s Day ever for her without her mother. My dear mom went home to the Lord almost 9 years ago. It’s hard to believe. So, this is my first year without a grandmother, mother or mother-in-law. Let me share a poem Diane’s sister posted. *IF ROSES GREW IN HEAVEN*: “If Roses grew in Heaven, Lord, please pick a bunch for me. Place them in my Mother’s arms and tell her they’re from me. Tell her that I love and miss her, and when she turns to smile, place a kiss upon her cheek and hold her for a while. Because remembering her is easy, I do it every day, but there’s an ache within my heart that will never go away.” Life doesn’t stand still for us, so for those who still have their mother – use your time wisely. It won’t always be that way. There are some who have carried the desire to be a mother for a long time. Unfortunately, there are also those who didn’t have a particularly good mother. Some have been raised by someone besides their mother. As indicated in the earlier statistics, there are some who don’t even know their mother; perhaps your mother died in childbirth. I think we all would agree that some mothers are easier to honor than others. Wherein – it may be true that your mother wasn’t the best of mothers – perhaps you can, at least, honor her for bringing you into the world. If you have absolutely no reason to honor your mother, consider honoring a grandmother or mother-figure in your life. For mothers – live YOUR life in such a way that your children will rise and call you blessed.

Now, the word HONOR literally means, “to add weight to.” It’s been my observation that it’s a rare mother who wants weight added to her, so let’s explain it a little bit. It means to think of them with seriousness; to take our parents seriously, to revere them, and to respect them.

I want to share four ways that each of us can be the child of a happy mother. I could have titled this, “How To Make Your Mama Happy.” I’ve heard it said more than once – “If Mama ain’t happy, ain’t NOBODY happy!” May I say that, if you’re the child of a happy mother, then you’re likely going to be the HAPPY CHILD of a happy mother. So, BE GOOD TO YOURSELF, and honor your mother. I encourage you to apply these four ways to your own heart and life.

1. Honor Your Parents through the LIFE THAT YOU LIVE. My life and your life will EITHER honor OR dishonor our parents. We are to live a life of OBEDIENCE to our parents. When we are children, we are to obey our parents. Even when we’re old, we would do well to heed their advice. But, when we’re children, we are to obey our parents. Colossians 3:20 says: “*CHILDREN, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*” Do you want to please God? You CANNOT please God by DISPLEASEING your parents. Obey your parents in all things. There’s a BLESSING in obedience. Not only is there a blessing in obedience, but there’s great DANGER in DISOBEDIENCE. The Bible has much to say about this matter of obeying our parents. God gives a catalogue of sins – the most terrible, horrible, hurtful, heinous, hellish sins that you can think of – and in that list of sins, He mentions disobedience to parents. Romans 1:28-30: “*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS.*” You think about it. Did you hear the list of things that I just read? God put in that list - disobedience to parents – and He’s not finished. He describes these as being: “*Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death*” (Romans 1:31-32). God says, in the Old Testament, that if you were disobedient to your parents, you would be put to death! That’s how God felt about his sin – and still feels strongly about it. Though, today, He does not enact the death penalty, I guess because today, we’re living under a different economy. What I’m saying is this: Obedience brings a tremendous blessing. It is well pleasing to the Lord. Disobedience to parents is a terrible, horrible sin. Let me read some more Scripture to show you that when God wants to describe perilous times, when God wants to describe an age or a society that is unraveling and that is coming apart, God says that disobedience to parents is one of the marks of the last days of a generation. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NKJV) – “*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*” Right in the middle of that horrible listing of sins found during the last days, God mentions disobedience to parents. Let me give you another scripture. Ephesians 6:1-3: “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*” Now, God said, “Honor your father and mother SO THAT you’ll live a long life.” Hey, you want to shorten your life? DISHONOR your parents. Warning! Disobedience to your parents may be harmful to your health. That’s what God is saying: “Honor your father and mother; this is the first commandment with promise.” Now, you’ll say, “Pastor Jim, what if my parents are not right? What if my parents tell me to do something wrong?” Well,

this scripture says: *“Children, obey your parents IN THE LORD”* (Ephesians 6:1). Obviously, if your PASTOR – if I – tells you to do something CONTRARY to the Word of God, then you ought NOT to do it. If the President of the United States tells you to do something that is contrary to the Word of God, then you ought NOT to do it. If your husband or wife tells you to do something that is in direct violation of the Word of God, then you ought NOT to do it. If children are commanded by their parents to kill, or to steal, or to prostitute themselves, then, of course, they’re NOT expected to do that. However, that’s not the problem that most children have today. Scripture indicates that we are to obey God rather than man. So, you have to interpret Scripture by Scripture. *“Children, obey your parents IN THE LORD.”* Let me add, little children are not old enough or wise enough to make choices, and to know what is right and wrong. Primarily, they have to depend upon their parents. When I was a little child, I’m sure I didn’t understand why my parents did certain things. A child typically doesn’t understand things from a parent’s perspective. So, God gives children parents, and the Bible says that we are to obey our parents. Now, that’s one way to be the child of a happy mother. We give honor to our parents through obedience, and then, by living an honorable life. You know, the Bible says that a child can bring his mother shame. Why is that? Because, we are extensions of our mothers. We are extensions of our parents. Their lives are in us. If I live an honorable life, then that HONORS my parents. When my parents were proud of me, it was a source of joy for me. So, one way you can honor your parents, is by the life that you live – a life of honor, a life of obedience to your parents.

2. Honor Your Parents through the LOAD THAT YOU LIFT. There is no one in my life who sacrificed more for me than my parents. Scripture says that we reap what we sow. That’s God’s design. If I sow an apple seed, if all goes well, I reap an apple tree that produces apples. If your parents have sown in your life, it’s only right that you sow in their lives. God gifted you with parents. You, in turn, should be a gift to your parents. You should HELP & CARE for your parents. By the way, children are to be taught honesty, industry, and integrity in the home. You sin against your parents, if you don’t help them in the home. And, parents, you sin against your children, if you do not teach them to work. I trust your mother doesn’t have to nag or scold you to do the dishes, or beg you to clean up your room. I’m told that there are some teenagers whose bedroom would win the “city dump look-alike contest.” That dishonors your parents. Children must be taught industry in the home. So, when you are young, you’re to help your parents, and when they are old, you are to care for them. Likely your parents, particularly your mom, provided much help and care for you. The care of the elderly is a rather serious problem in our day. The more pagan a society gets, the less that society cares for the aged and the infirm. In some pagan societies, when people get old in age, they’re pretty much turned out of the society. In some cultures, the elders are turned out of the village to wander in the jungles until they die. America is becoming more and more pagan. The Bible teaches that we cannot use our religion, our churchgoing, and our church giving as an excuse for not taking care of our parents. The Bible says this in Matthew 15:3-11 – Jesus is talking to the Pharisees and He says: *“Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, ‘Honour thy father and mother: and, he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.’ But ye say, ‘Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightiest be profited by me’”* – That is, “I took what I was going to give you, and I gave it to charity. It’s a gift. What I was going to give to you, I just felt led to give to somebody else. I did something nice and religious with it.” Now, Jesus said – *“Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, ‘This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’ And he called the multitude, and said unto them, ‘Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man’”* (Matthew 15:3-11). God says that any man, any woman, any boy, and any girl in this church today worshiping God who doesn’t take care of his parents, is a hypocrite. That is why God says. *“In vain do you worship me.”* You are wasting your time in this service. You say, “Well, I don’t have time for my parents, but boy, I sure am a big church worker.” That doesn’t impress God – not at all. You say, “Well, my parents are a bother. I have to push them around. I have to change their clothes. I have to feed them. They slobber.” Hey – just in case you forgot – they changed you, they bathed you, you slobbered on them, you spit up on them. Did you know that the Bible teaches that, if we don’t take care of our parents, we are WORSE than infidels? Let me give you a passage of Scripture here – 1 Timothy 5:4: *“But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite (take care of) their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.”* That is, first: Don’t go out here in the community, don’t go out here in the church; don’t go out here in society; don’t go out here to the welfare; and don’t go anywhere else. First, GO HOME! 1 Timothy 5:8 goes on to say: *“But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”* Many people use this passage, here in 1 Timothy 5:8 (NIV), to say that parents ought to take care of their children: *“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”* *“If any provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house”* – but that isn’t what he’s talking about. He’s talking about children

providing for their parents. You must read it in context. The Bible says that if a child does not take care of his parents, then he is worse than an infidel (unbeliever).

3. Honor Your Parents through the LESSONS YOU LEARN. Now, HOW can I honor my mom? How can I honor my dad? Number one: by the LIFE YOU LIVE. Number two: by the LOAD YOU LIFT. Number three: by the LESSONS THAT YOU LEARN. Proverbs 1:8-9: *“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.”* He’s not talking about chains of bondage; he’s talking about chains of ornament – like a gold chain, like an ornament. Now, you know, the older we become, the smarter our parents become. Someone wrote: When we’re 16, we think they’re really out of it. At 19, we feel that we’ve surpassed them so far that they’ll never catch up to us. At 22, they’re just out of sight somewhere back there. I mean, we still know everything. But, at 40, we think they’re just about perfect. This is one of my favorite Mother’s Day writings, and I want to share it with you. The title of this little article is called “The Meanest Mother”: “I had the meanest mother in the whole world. While other kids ate candy for breakfast, I had to have cereal, eggs, or toast. When others had cokes and candy for lunch, I had to eat a sandwich. As you can guess, my supper was different than the other kids, also. But, at least, I wasn’t alone in my sufferings. My sister and two brothers had the same mean mother as I did. My mother insisted upon knowing where we were at all times; you’d think we were on a chain gang. She had to know who our friends were and where we were going. She insisted, if we said we’d be gone an hour, that we be gone one hour or less – not one hour and one minute. I am nearly ashamed to admit it, but she actually struck us. Not once, but each time that we had a mind of our own and did as we pleased. That poor belt was used more on our seats than it was to hold up Daddy’s pants. Can you imagine someone actually hitting a child just because he disobeyed? Now, you can begin to see how mean she really was. We had to wear clean clothes and take a bath. The other kids always wore their clothes for days. We reached the height of insults, because she made our clothes herself – just to save money. Why, oh why, did we have to have a mother who made us feel different from our friends? The worst is yet to come. We had to be in bed by nine each night and up at eight the next morning. We couldn’t sleep till noon like our friends. So, while they slept, my mother actually had the nerve to break the child labor law; she made us work. We had to wash dishes, make beds, learn to cook, and all sorts of cruel things. I believe that she lay awake at night, thinking up mean things to do to us. She always insisted upon us telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, even if it killed us – and it nearly did. By the time we were teenagers, she was much wiser, and our life became even more unbearable. None of this tooting the horn of a car for us to come running. She embarrassed us to no end by making our dates and friends come to the door to get us. If I spent the night with a girlfriend – can you imagine – she checked on me to see if I was really there. I never had the chance to elope to Mexico; that is, if I’d had a boyfriend to elope with. I forgot to mention that while my friends were dating at the mature ages of 12 and 13, my old-fashioned mother refused to let me date until the ages of 15 or 16 – 15, that is, if you dated only to go to a school function. And, that was maybe twice a year. Through the years, things didn’t improve a bit. We could not lie in bed “sick,” like our friends did, and miss school. If our friends had a toe-ache, a hangnail, or a serious ailment, they could stay home from school. Our marks in school had to be up to par. Our friends’ report cards had beautiful colors on them – black for passing, red for failing. My mother, being as different as she was, would settle for nothing less than ugly black marks. As the year rolled by, first one and then the other of us were put to shame. We were graduated from high school. With our mother behind us, talking, hitting, and demanding respect, none of us was allowed the pleasure of being a dropout. My mother was a complete failure as a mother. Out of four children, a couple of us attained some higher education. None of us have ever been arrested, divorced, or has beaten his mate. Each of my brothers served his time in the service of this country. And, whom do we have to blame for the terrible way we turned out? You’re right – our mean mother. Look at the things we missed. We never got to march in a protest parade, nor to take part in a riot, burn draft cards, nor a million-and-one other things that our friends did. She forced us to grow up into God-fearing, educated, honest adults. Using this as a background, I am trying to raise my three children. I stand a little taller, and I am filled with pride when my children call me “mean.” Because, you see, I thank God. He gave me the meanest mother in the whole world.” We need more mean mothers, Amen? We need mothers who mean business for God. Now, how can we honor our parents? Listen: by the life that I live, by the load that I lift, and by the lessons that I learn. You say, “Well, my parents are not as smart as I am.” Hey folks, that doesn’t have anything to do with it. ILLUSTRATION: Suppose that I’m going on a trip and driving. Let’s suppose that my parents have gone ahead of me, and I’m going to Florida. I’m in Virginia, and they’re in the Carolinas. They get on the phone, and we talk together; and, they tell me, “Now Jim, you want to be sure NOT to take 95, because they’re doing work on it and it’s backed way up. It took us about three hours; take the bypass.” And then they say, “Jim, listen – we stopped at the best motel. It was phenomenal, great restaurant and so forth” – and they tell me sights to see. That doesn’t mean they’re smarter than I am or I’m smarter than they are. It just means they’ve been a little further down the road, and they love me. They’ve seen things. There are

detours, and beauties, and all sorts of things they want me to know about. And, I can honor them by the lessons that I learn – particularly the lessons I learn FROM THEM. The Bible says to learn from your parents is like an ornament of grace around your neck.

4. Honor Your Parents through the LOVE YOU LAVISH. Now, let me mention the last way that we can honor our mother – our parents. I've chosen the word *lavish* because I'm talking about that kind of love. We are to love them with a GREAT love – with a lavish love – because their lifeblood flows in us. Their very life is in us, and many a mother would give her life for her children. I believe that the closest thing on this earth to the love of God is the love godly parents have for their children. I believe that it's the closest and greatest illustration of the love of God. And so, WE are to RETURN that love. If your parents are still living and you haven't already done so, then let me encourage you to write that letter TODAY; pay that visit TODAY or as soon as possible; send that gift; do that chore; or give that kiss of affection TODAY. What you are going to do, DO IT! Don't wait. What I wouldn't do to honor my mom today. I trust this message honors her. Shakespeare said, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" "Oh," you say, "well, my parents aren't perfect." Of course they're not! Do you know anybody who is perfect? Only perfect children can demand perfect parents. It strikes me as rather amazing that God puts middle-aged adults and teenagers together. Kids are not the only ones going through stages, you know. Parents go through stages. But, WHATEVER age or stage you are – the Bible teaches that you are to respect your parents. Listen to these verses – Leviticus 19:3: "*Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.*" Leviticus 20:9: "*For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.*" If you were to shoot off your mouth at your parents back in Old Testament times, you might not see the sun come up the next day. Proverbs 30:17: "*The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.*" I'm going to guess that my daughter Jess got away with a few things growing up. She'll likely tell you NOT MANY things. But one thing I never got away with and one thing Jess wouldn't have gotten away with in our house – and you can ask her – she would not have gotten away with sassing her mama. There's something in me that'll rise up, because I know what her mother has gone through for Jessica.

CONCLUSION. Show love to your Mama and make haste to do it! Someone said, "Dead noses smell no roses." Don't be so foolish to wait until your mom has taken her last breath to honor her with roses. If your parents are still alive, then show that love and honor. That's the way, on this wonderful Mother's Day, that you're going to be able to honor your MOTHER and father. Those are four ways that you can be the child of a happy mother AND a happy father. So, be good to yourself, and honor your mother and father, so that it may be well with you.