

Restoring Honor in a Broken World

10 Ways to a Better Life series

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. How y' all doing? Well, before I start our sermon, just want to share a couple of quick things. As you know, several times a year we collect food for specific purposes. And the last couple of weeks, we've been collecting food for the Downry First Christian Church for our Souper Bowl. And we were able to take the items over there yesterday. And Beth, the coordinator, extends a huge, huge, huge thank you. Everything is going to be handed out today to families and individuals who are in need. So thank you. One more opportunity for us to be able to SHINE for Jesus.

Those of you who maybe are not aware, what does SHINE mean here at the Downey Church? It is, how can we Share. How can we Help. How can we Inspire. How can we Nurture. Or how we can Engage, either individually or as a community. We're taking opportunity this month to SHINE for Jesus, and we'd love to hear stories of examples of maybe where you've had an opportunity to shine or maybe you were a recipient of being a blessing that somebody shined in your life. We'd love to hear these stories we're going to share. Hopefully, the end of the month. If you are uncomfortable getting up here on the platform, if you want to share, maybe write a snippet, I'd be happy to share that story for you. If you want, just reach out to me. Or you can email us at downeychurch@gmail.com. if you're on YouTube, let us know in the comments as well. Perhaps, maybe is there an opportunity where you were able to be a blessing or somebody was a blessing to you?

One other thing that I want to also share as well, we do have a quick little bit of housekeeping. One of our elders, Edwin Morales, is of course serving as an elder, but he's not on the church board. And so he's now, fortunately enough, able to attend board meetings. But just as a matter of due process, the nominating committee, also known as the board, has extended a motion to have him serve. So this comes as a motion. Is there a second to have Edwin join the church board? Is there a second? Okay. All those in favor, please say amen. Amen. Does anybody oppose? All right, with that after that as well. The

church board also recommended that all elders moving forward are to serve on the board. So that also comes as a motion. Is there a second to that? Okay, I heard a second. All those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Opposed, say nay. All right, Linda, did you get that Nay. Thank you, everyone.

I love mission. Amen. God is doing wonderful work in this church. I'm so happy to see God moving. There's more to come also. I know we're gonna mention it, but I just. I want to plead with you all. If you see pieces of paper in the back, those are opportunities where you would like to highlight where God has done something in your life. Maybe it was a teacher, a parent or somebody, there was a blessing. We want you to note that. Okay? We're trying to see the history. We're talking about strategic mission vision and planning. And we want to hear your story. So wherever it is fit on the time period of where that experience happened. We'd love to hear how God has blessed you and enriched you here at the church.

All right, let's pray. God, we thank you for the opportunity to gather together and to talk about your word. Lord, we're going to dive into the fifth commandment. Be with us now. In Jesus name. Amen.

All right, pull out your Bibles. I wanna go to Exodus, chapter 20. Okay. Exodus, chapter 20, verse 12. We're gonna talk about these verses. Hopefully, we can get to all of them today. I've got nine pages of notes today, single spaced. That's about an hour's worth. However, I'm not gonna punish you that long. Okay? All right. We'll try to get out on a reasonable time. Exodus 20, verse 12. Are you all ready? Okay. Verse 12, it says, *honor your father and mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*

Okay. Honor your father and your mother so the Lord so that the. So that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. We have to remember what's happening here. We remember several months after the Israelites have left Egypt. And God is prepared in chapter 19 in time, desiring to create a relationship. And here's how I want you to live. Here's a covenant that he's making with them. And here's something as well as you go forth, honor and respect your mom and your dad so that it may live long in the land the Lord God is giving you. Okay, Put a thumb here. I want to go over a couple books too, though. In Deuteronomy, okay? Deuteronomy, chapter 5. Now,

some time had passed and Moses has to remind everybody. So you have a second set of Commandments. Okay? Chapter 5 of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy, chapter 5, verse 16. Okay. All right, and so let's go. Verse 16, it says, *Honor your father and mother as the Lord your God has commanded you so that you may live long. And that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.*

It sounds very similar, right? But there's a key difference in Deuteronomy. And what is that? What is the difference? It is *that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you*. There is a blessing to this commandment. Okay. The fourth commandment is also a blessing, but the fifth commandment is a blessing that if you are faithful, good is going to come out of this.

Now, when we look about, when we think about honor, okay, in scripture, did anybody honor their parents? Well, you know, Shem and Japheth, believe it or not, they honored their father when unfortunately, their father had made some poor choices and they had to cover him up by looking away. Jacob followed his parents' direction by leaving rather than going to marry a Canaanite, to marry somebody who had the same beliefs. Joseph, you know how Joseph was sold out by his brothers and went to Egypt. And eventually he becomes essentially the number two, the prime minister. When his brothers come back, he could have sought revenge, could have enslaved them, but no, he showed grace, seeing God's plan that in the future God would be able to actually provide for his family. So he sends for his father, but brings them to Egypt and doesn't just place them anywhere, but a very solid, one of the best areas that they could have gone to. I think of Solomon, who honored his mother Bathsheba by rising to greet her and providing her an honored seat at his right hand. Ruth, Ruth also stayed with her mother-in-law. Her husband had died. She and her sister-in-law could have gone back to their own home. But Ruth was faithful and committed to being with Naomi. And as we know, is Ruth an important character in the life of Jesus, his lineage? Absolutely. Lastly, we know Jesus also was submissive to his parents. We see in Luke 2, verse 51. But even dying on the cross, what is Jesus also doing? He's honoring his mother by ensuring that she would be cared for even though he died. Honor.

Now the Hebrew word for honor, chebed, literally means to be weighted or to be heavy. And when you think of something heavy, I immediately think of a barbell. Okay, because it's a workout. But another thing that is heavy is also a boat anchor. Ever been on a boat? Ever been on a sea doo, A jet ski? No. When you're near shore, do you want to be anchored? Yes. Otherwise, where are you going to end up? On the beach. And unless you have a metal hull, metal bottom, your boat could get busted, especially over a reef or over the rocks.

John Corson tells a story of when he was a young man, a young boy, I believe he was. They were at Lake Mead and they were in a boat and. And they were near Hoover Dam. And for whatever reason, though, the boat was drifting towards the dam and they thought, well, we're still moving. Let's throw out the anchor. And I believe if I've got the story right, they threw it. And yet they realized that they forgot to attach the anchor to the boat. You ever have that happen to you? Not a fun feeling.

Have you ever been stranded without an anchor or no ability to move? I remember being a young man, I was very fortunate. My family was very fortunate to procure sea doos, jet skis. I remember being on Lake Paris. Just could not do anything. Eventually we started another time, our other actual boat. We couldn't figure out what was wrong with it. We had to have the sea doo tow the boat back to the harbor. It's a very scary feeling when you feel like you do not have any way of being able to move. You're stranded and you're looking around. What do we do?

Well, John tells the story that they started drifting to the dam. And you know, there was some fraught with danger if they don't do something. Anchors. What do anchors do? They anchor, so they do not move in spite of if winds come up. If a storm comes up, you can be rooted and the anchor will not allow the boat to move.

If you also go to Niagara Falls, if you go up where the Wellington river is, there's an overbridge, a bridge that walks, that has a sign on it that says, do you have an anchor? Right. And there's another part that says, do you actually know how to use it? Because if you don't, you are headed towards danger. Listen, if you don't want to be on that river without an anchor, you might not

want to be on the river at all. Water moves. Unless you're on a clear, glassy lake, water can move. Whether you're in the ocean or where you're in a river, you will move.

And I look at the fifth commandment, kind of as a bridge, an anchor, because you see the first four commandments talk about our relationship with God, our vertical relationship with God, how we should honor and respect and love the Lord our God with everything. Amen. Similarly, though, to honor and respect your mom and your dad, that it may go well with you. There's a promise attached to that. I think it's similar as well, because when we are born into our family, there is that sense of... and **God has reveals God's love and authority in our vertical and horizontal relationships**, we see that there's anchor. Similarly, when you're born into this world, you have parents that should be there to support, nurture, and care. And you're to obey and to listen, just as we obey and listen to God. Amen. And so we see that our vertical relationship is with God. Our horizontal relationship is with human, human humanity.

Now, **we can't live faithfully, though, however, without treating foundational relationships as disposable and insignificant.** What am I getting at here? Are all families perfect? No. And I'm guessing that as you're reading this, whether you're sitting here or you're watching us online, as I'm saying, honor your father and mother, some of you thought, oh, it's bright, warm, fuzzy feelings, right? Yay, I love my parents. Some of you maybe had a different reaction. Absolutely not. How can I honor my parents when they've done this abc or treated me abc, or maybe even abandoned me? Or maybe there's a third feeling of sadness or regret because my parents are no longer here or I don't have that opportunity to talk, to work things out. Relationships are foundational. They're not indisposable or disposable. They are indisposable. They do play a significant part of our lives because our families, our environment, shapes us. It makes us who we are.

When I look at the story of respecting and honoring between children and parents, I went back and I looked at the last hundred years. And in the 1920s and 30s, respect equaled what? Obedience and restraint. Kids were expected to be seen, but what not heard. Okay. And if you chose to respond, we call that talk back. What happened? All kinds of ways to be reeducated, I'm sure,

right? If you talk back, it was considered not just rude, but maybe even a moral failure. Respect look like quiet posture, no eye rolling. Anybody guilty of that? My mom's probably watching this right now. And actually 100 years ago, even, dare I say, 30 years ago, were your parents the only one allowed to maybe inform or correct you? No. The neighborhood was, depending on where you come from, especially, you know, my background, my family. If somebody, an uncle or an aunt or even your neighbor, somebody that is an elder, you are to listen and respect them. I may or may not have said things when I was in kindergarten. And do you remember ever having your mouth washed out with soap? Okay. Your kids are like, what? Is that real? Yes. Dial soap. I won't name my teachers, but twice. And I don't remember what I said, but I apparently made them upset. My mom never said anything about us. So can you imagine that happening nowadays? They'd be fired. We look later towards the 1940s and 50s, you still respect looked like compliance and maybe family order. You had the post war family everything. Dad was supreme. Okay. Dad was the authority. Mom was a home manager. Roughly, roughly speaking. Okay. And discipline. You still have physical discipline in homes and schools. I remember in the fourth grade, one of my classmates, I won't name him, but I remember my teacher informing him thusly that she was not afraid to take him outside and to re-educate him with what we would consider illegal means to help.

In the 1960s and 70s though, we see that the script is flipped. Respect begins to split. Deference versus self expression. The youth culture, they started to question institutions, they started to question public figures, authority. Respect meant being fair, not just obeyed. Parenting move towards child centered approaches. More conversations, less pure command. And then we see in the 80s, respect equals rules and achievement plus we might talk it out sometimes. So you had blended expectations, a little bit of mix of everything. It wasn't one cohesive thing. Respect looked more like follow the rules, do well in school and please do not soil the family name.

To the 90s we look like. Respect meant negotiation but within boundaries. So parenting became the gold standard in quote, many mainstream discussions. Warmth, firm expectations, reasoning because "I said so" didn't work as well. Hmm. The 2000s, can we talk about this rule? Is maybe what a kid said, the script. Maybe a father would say, you can question, but you can't be cruel.

2000's respect equals emotional regulation and earned authority. Respect becomes less about formalities than about tone, about empathy, about self control, how you respond.

2010's respect equals boundaries plus consent, culture and constant connectivity. We see the rise of technology. You know, before again you could say, do you remember in the like even 30 years ago, somebody would say something and you took it as what? You took it as the truth. You look back now and you realize there is no truth to that. And you know what's different now is because it used to be an authoritarian or an older parent figure, whoever, they could say anything and you're supposed to believe it now with a phone. I weep for you parents because now your kids can fact check you. And so that sense of authority has weakened. I don't want to even say authority, but your role as a parent or even as a boss, you have to be faithful, you have to listen you have to care. You have to be empathetic. It's not because I said it. We're going to do it. You can lead that way. You can lead that way, but how effective are you going to be as a leader, as a parent, as a boss, as a role model in the community?

So respect has changed over time. When we talk about respect, though, too, what does it mean? How can we as parents now, for full disclosure, I think most of you know I'm not a dad. Okay? I'm not a dad. However, I am a son. Let's go to Ephesians, chapter 6. Ephesians, chapter 6. Paul has some words on what we're talking about today. Okay. Ephesians, chapter 6. And if you're wondering where Ephesians is, it's towards the end. You have Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You have Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, chapter 6, starting at verse 1. Right? Okay. So we're talking about honoring your parents. All right? We all there? Okay. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* It's weighted. Okay. Have obedience, put emphasis to it. *Honor your father and your mother, which is the first commandment, with a what? With the promise so that you may go well with you and that you may enjoy life on the earth.* Right. Okay. We could stop there. But then what does it say? Verse four, fathers. And I'm gonna include mothers here. Okay. *Fathers and moms, Don't exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

What do we mean by that? There's a term of reciprocal, honoring the fifth commandment. Honor in the fifth commandment is relational, though, and reciprocal, not absolute. Abs. Can't talk today. Absolute obedience. **Honor in the fifth commandment is relational and reciprocal, not absolute obedience.** Relationships, are they always one way? No, it's two ways. And so as a child, yes. And I think that to, Moses was not talking about to the little kids, he was talking to the adults who still have their parents. How do you honor and love and respect your parents? But it goes both ways. Yes, as parents, you need to lead, you need to guide. You are an authority figure in their life. But as you. I'm sure those of you who are older and have grown kids, you realize your kids start to do what? They start to question you. And maybe they're eventually not going to always agree with you, but you have to listen. Respect and authority, it has to be modeled both ways. Kids, give deference, honor your parents, but parents as well. Don't push them to where they're gonna want to exasperate you.

You ever been told not to do something and you really want to do it, what do you want to do? You go ahead and do it sometimes to figure out the boundaries, Right. But if you don't have a relationship, if you just simply lead by title, how far are you going to go? And this isn't just a parent to kid relationship. This is just life and relationships in general. How far are you going to get? They'll comply. But do you want compliance or absolute 110% commitment. You want the full commitment, not compliance, because compliance will get the job done. But will it be great and awesome? No, it'll be half-hearted because you're being told to do something rather than something that you want to do.

You know, today is Valentine's Day. Do you do something because you have to as a husband or a wife or a significant other? Okay. Or do you because you love that person? It's the same thing in all relationships. If you care, people will know. When you lead with an iron, with a fist, you're not going to be able to grab onto anything.

So what does this look like? And then sometimes too, you know, it's hard because our relationships with our parents, it grows over time. Jesus honored his parents. And I think, though sometimes one of the hardest things, though, as you grow older is you realize that maybe the stories or the things that you

remember are not always what you remember them as. And sometimes we want to avoid the truth. Are our parents perfect? No. No. And as I've gotten older, fortunately enough, I give my parents more grace. You hear that, Mom? It's true, though. I have more compassion and understanding because my parents, you know, are parents always ready for their kids to come into the world? Not always. There are manuals out there, but there's nothing like actually being thrown into the fire and having to handle situations. I was never taught how to handle this. You're learning as you go sometimes. And parents will make mistakes and some can be minor and some can be egregious. And so I want to recognize both sides. I know some of you here maybe have no relationship and maybe that's intentional. My heart breaks for you. I wish you could have that relationship. But how do we then honor that relationship where it's so fractured?

Sometimes, unfortunately, it might actually mean setting boundaries. You can still love somebody, but maybe you need to set healthy boundaries. But telling the truth and admitting it is also one of the hardest things to admit what is reality versus what you want it to be. But the sooner that you get to reality and speak truth, the more you're going to be able to move ahead with clarity. Does that make sense? Because you also recognize too, when you speak and recognize the truth, it means there's consequences to that. You have to take action. Maybe that might mean looking at things from a different perspective. It may destroy the pie-in-the-sky illusion that's in your head.

And I encourage you, though, maybe there is hardship between you and your parents. And if it's possible, though, I want to encourage you, try to find and seek reconciliation. But if it's not possible, if it's not even safe to actually talk, I would pray that at least within your heart, take that next step to work towards forgiveness and in some way be able to honor.

How can we honor our parents? We can honor them by choosing how we speak about them. How do you speak of those? How do you speak of your parents? Do you speak with love and empathy, or is it an opportunity to bash them?

Speak well where you can, but be silent where you can't.

When somebody starts talking bad about somebody else, what goes through your mind? Do you want to hear the T? Yeah, we want to hear it. We want to hear it. But what are you doing? You're slandering somebody. Should we be doing that? Should we be gossiping? I learned from Bambi's, no Thumper's father. You don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all. Lead with integrity. Even if they deserve it, pray for them as an act of obedience. Even if you cannot get the reconciliation that you want, continue to pray for your family. Continue to pray for those who maybe have wronged you. Job prayed for those who wronged him, and was he healed? Job commanded prayer, even for difficult people, in Matthew 5:44.

Earlier this week I was watching Everybody Loves Raymond and there's a story where Ray, his brother and their father are at some diner. I don't know what episode or what season, and I'd never seen this episode before, but they were sitting down and it was talking about spanking or hitting. I should actually say it wasn't just spanking. And the father basically admitted, I never wanted to spank you. Why? Because my father and his father. And it wasn't just spanking, like it was beating. And I had to think about it, like, but you never hit us. Yeah, but why? Well, somebody then said, you didn't want to be one of them, did you? And what was really being said was the father chose to break an abusive cycle. The father chose to break an abusive cycle. But was their father perfect? No.

You know, I have family members who have struggled and I'm very proud of the fact that despite all the possibilities of where they could have gone, drugs, alcohol, who knows, they've chosen to turn their life around. But they're not perfect. They're not perfect. And I think as kids we have to remember that. We have to look at the bigger context of where our parents come from. Even though they're not perfect, what could have really been if they had fully gone, if they'd fully gone down the wrong path. Sometimes we don't always see the sacrifices as well, that our parents make. We don't always see the sacrifices that our parents make. The only way that we can learn about that is if we have a relationship with them. And if you choose to be distant, you lose the ability to where we can find wholeness, peace and wisdom. **We can find wholeness, peace and wisdom when we honor our parents and our elders.**

When we talk about not just your parents. You know, I'm so very fortunate that I met a lot of people in my life who I call bonus parents. There's a wonderful woman by the name of Deborah, former member of mine, and one day, I don't remember, oh, I came in and my collar was messed up. She said, I can't let you look, go into your office like that on the pulpit or anything. So she fixed my collar and just tongue in cheek, I said, thanks, mom. And ever since then I have, every time I see her, I always call her mom. She's my bonus mom. Lisa and I are very, very close with that family. Her parents basically became bonus grandparents to us because when we got married, Jean was her mother's name, knitted together a blanket just for us. They were there at the shower, a church shower and everything. And they became bonus parents, grandparents to us. Not to take away the fact that we have our own parents, but I really truly believe in raising a church kid in a community. We call it intergenerational ministry.

And I want to highlight this. How many of you know all of our kids names here? How many of you know all of our kids names here? I know especially for you visitors. Like what? For those of you who've been here long enough though, how many of you know our kids' names? Why don't you? Because if we're truly going to move forward, our kids have to be a priority. Otherwise there are going to be no church. And I'm not Asking you to know what's their favorite baseball player or whatever, but know who they are. Because these kids look up to you. Whether you realize it or not, they respect you. And what a world of difference it would be if kids could know that. They could come here and know that they are valued, that they are loved, that they are wanted.

As kids, we don't just honor and respect our moms and dads, but we respect our elders. You look at the world, do people respect their elders? Growing up, I don't know if it was something that my mom instilled in me, but anytime I go out, I still use sir and ma'. Am. When I go out, if I don't know you, I will call you sir or I will call you ma', am, just even as a measure of thanks. Apparently I did that to somebody, though she didn't appreciate that. So maybe use Ms. Honor and Respect. Manners can go a long way. So when it says it will go long, when it will go well with you as well. If you follow these things, if you listen openly, obey and heed your parents and your elders, it will go well with you in the land that you are going to. If you heed and respect your elders, if you listen to them, they'll pass on lessons and wisdom that will give you the ability to

have peace, to have better understanding, and you will find wholeness because you will feel more prepared, challenged, prepped, ready to move forward and life. So honor your parents and your elders.

Reflection. I asked this earlier. **How do you speak about your parents and your elders, especially when they're not present?** Okay. How do you speak about your parents and your elders, especially when they are not present? Again, my heart goes out to you. If your parents have fallen asleep or they're not around, I would encourage you. Maybe you have a bonus parent that you can reach out to today.

How can you honor, I want you to honor your parents and elders by expressing gratitude to them and honor them with your word. If you have a great relationship, it's Valentine's Day. Wish your parents a happy Valentine's Day. Okay, kids, remember to tell your mom and dad you love them. Happy Valentine's Day. And if your parents are not around, find somebody that you love and respect. Wish them a happy Valentine's Day. You can still honor your parents with love, with your word. May God bless you and be with you,

Father in heaven. Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity and the promise that's found in the fifth commandment. Give us courage. Give us wisdom in all things. Help us to honor and respect and love our parents, whether they are present or not. Help us speak well of them. To not deny the truth, Lord, to admit reality, but to find purpose and wholeness moving forward. And where possible, Lord, I pray that our brothers and sisters, our church family, will take those opportunities to sit down and to reconcile. In Jesus name, amen.

Grace and peace.