

**EXODUS 20:12 ORDER ON EARTH!
(4th COMMANDMENT)**

V. 2 *I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

V. 3 *You shall have no other gods before Me.*

V. 7 *You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.*

V. 8 *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

V. 12 *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*

Is the LORD a God of chaos or order? He is a God of order. When He created the heavens and the earth, they were dark, formless and void—chaos. During each of the six days of creation more and more organization followed—light, atmosphere, green plants, sun-moon-stars, birds, fish, all animals. Also each reproduced *according to its kind*—not by chaotic mixtures. Then God created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from Adam's rib. "Be fruitful and multiply," God said. At the end of the sixth day, "*God saw everything that He had made and indeed it was very good (Genesis 1:31).*" It was God's natural order—whether for birds in the nest, cats in the barn, deer in the wild, or parents with their children—that fathers and mothers raise their young. Little ones do not raise themselves. They need parents to nurture and train them. For this to succeed, the young need to submit to their parents. This is especially true of man, the most complicated and sophisticated being on earth. Unlike the creatures, Adam and Eve had been created in the image of God. They were in communication with God. They were very close to Him. They were answerable and accountable to Him. God gave them authority to subdue the earth and have dominion over every creature. They especially needed to train their next generation. The children needed to submit to their parents—nothing unusual or unnatural about that—and serve the Lord.

But Adam and Eve's sin corrupted God's perfect world. Order was now replaced with disobedience and chaos. Cain murdered Abel. Noah and his family became the only godly people left on the whole world; all the rest were destroyed in the flood. After the Flood, Noah's son Ham mocked his father's nakedness. Years later Jacob (of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) lied to his father Isaac in order to get the blessing from his twin brother Esau. Jacob's own sons lied to him about the welfare of their brother Joseph. Chaos!

God originally wrote His code of right and wrong into the heart of each man. Conscience told right from wrong (Romans 2:14-15). Two thousand years after Creation, God put His commands into writing. He gave the Ten Commandments, the moral law, to Israel gathered at Mt Sinai after He had freed them from slavery and oppression in Egypt. God wanted order. His fourth command was ***Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.***

Children, this commandment is specifically for you. God has made you—you are NOT a mistake or an accident—even if the way in which you were born was not God-pleasing. God has put you here. God loves you. He sent His holy Son to free you from slavery to sin, death, and the devil. To keep His world orderly, your Maker and Savior says to children, "*Honor your father and your mother!*"

Do the adults this morning get a "pass" on this? No. Adults, you indeed are also someone's children. God wants you to honor your parents to their old age, and after they leave this world behind.

To "honor" means to hold in high regard, to esteem, to value, to look up to. The opposite is to despise, disregard, consider of little value, scorn, look down upon. The commandment says "honor" your parents—hold them high in your heart and life. The commandment does not say "obey." "Obeying" is one way of honoring, but a person can "obey" and still "not honor." Example: You can help in the kitchen or outside as told by your father or mother, but grumble and stew about it all the while. "Obeying," is not necessarily "honoring." To bad mouth your parents behind their back is to dishonor. To make fun of them is to dishonor them. To refer to them as "the old man" and "the old lady" is to dishonor them. The devil will push you further and further into hurtful, disrespectful words and actions. Chaos in the family.

If father and mother are not "perfect," does that give children reason to dishonor them? No. Were Mary and Joseph perfect? No. Do you suppose they ever misjudged and made a mistake in raising Jesus, or in trying to untangle affairs with half brothers and sisters? Likely. Yet what does the Bible say about the twelve year old Jesus,

when they returned from His first Passover trip (the one where they looked three days, only to find Him discussing the Old Testament with the teachers in the temple)? The Bible says, *He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them (Luke 2:51)*. The only time a child would have the right to disobey parents is if parents tell the child to do something clearly contrary to God. *We must obey God, rather than men (Acts 5:29)*.

What about adult children? To be “obedient” doesn’t apply in quite the same way; but “honoring” parents always does. The Bible says, *Listen to your father who begot you and do not despise your mother when she is old (Proverbs 23:22)*. Always look up to them. When Jesus was dying on the cross, He honored His mother and provided for her by entrusting her to His disciple John. Honor your parents! In cases where constant skilled care is needed which cannot be provided at home, admitting father or mother to a care center / nursing home is not wrong--a difficult step for sure. However, to admit father or mother to a nursing home, to get them out of the way and out of your hair and to ignore them is a different story. No “honor” there.

Children—children of all ages—how have you done? Understand, God does not take dishonoring parents and disobedience lightly. *The eye that mocks his father and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley will pluck it out, and the young eagles will eat it (Proverbs 30:17)*. *If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)*. How have you done—this week or the past forty years? I know the answer for myself. Humbly go to the LORD and seek His forgiveness for Jesus’ sake. Because of Christ’s sinless life and innocent death, the punishment for your sins has been suffered. Those sins are gone. You are forgiven. Cling to Jesus. Praise Him. By His help seek to do better.

Because a child needs to be taught and trained by parents, it goes without saying that the parents have a responsibility before God to teach and to train. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6)*. *He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly (Proverbs 13:24)* For father and mother raising a child demands working together and unity of purpose and manner. Discipline is not meted out to make you feel better, but to teach the child. The word “discipline” means to teach / to train, not to “afflict.” Your words must have some backbone behind them. The rules must be consistent (not--it’s wrong today, but ok tomorrow). Do not play favorites. Do not follow a double standard (it’s ok for me, but not ok for you). When you have misjudged or re-acted poorly, admit it, and if appropriate apologize to the child. It does not make you small.

How have you done as parents? “God, have mercy on me a sinner”—yes, I know. Go to Jesus each day for forgiveness. He forgives you. Pray for His wisdom to train the children, so that “order,” not “chaos,” dominates in your family and the world.

The most important aspect of training children is to lead them to know the Savior through the Scriptures. As Paul wrote to Timothy, *From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 3:15)*. As Paul wrote to the congregation in Ephesus, *Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4)*.

The Fourth Commandment concludes, *That your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you*. That your life may be blessed. The rebellious child will end up in jail, prison, or ultimately hell, even though he may live to be one hundred. That is not “long life on the earth.” “Life, real life, is lived in Jesus. *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man comes to the Father but by Me (John 14:6)*.

This commandment given for “order” and not “chaos” also includes given honor to teachers, bosses, leaders at church, pastors, government leaders, officers who help us uphold the law. The devil’s goal is not just to get children to disobey parents or adults to disobey authorities, but to get all to dishonor the Lord Himself. The devil wants chaos in God’s world. God does not. God wants you with Him in the peace, order, safety, and love of heaven through Christ’s payment for you on the cross. Ask Him each day to forgive you, and to help you to do better!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---