

# ESTEEM OTHERS, 1PET.2:13-25

God's Ten Step Program #5

- **Intro:** Growing up in the military I saw the wielding of authority first hand. The gate guards at a Navy or Marine base meet every vehicle entering. If you have an appropriate sticker on the bumper, they wave you on in. If your sticker shows you are an officer, they salute the car, (... by the way, even if a greasy-haired teenager is driving his dad's car. I always enjoyed that part.) It was respect for authority, for rank. (I was merely a beneficiary.)
- On the military base everyone knows whose in charge. If someone of a higher rank instructs you, you obey. I never once saw a commanding officer reasoning with an enlisted man:
  - "Please try and get this job done because it would be really neat if you would and I have many things to take care of, so Lt. needs you to be on your best behavior..."
  - That's not the way it works in the military. You don't negotiate with the higher rank. That's why it floors me sometimes in the grocery aisle when I see a mom actually negotiating with a child 3-4 years of age: "I said no candy this time... Stop kicking mommy... That's not nice and disturbs people's emotional balance. No...No. Put down that glass vase. Ok, what if I give you one piece? Will you be quiet so mommy can pay the nice lady? Please stop yelling at your sister, yelling creates social disruption and mental fatigue..."
  - I image that someone might wonder inside, "Should I just spank that kid for her, or should I spank the mom?" When I was a youth and asked for candy, my mom's reply was, "I'll let you know when you want something. Now drop and give me 20, toddler!" And when I stood back up my tie had better be

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clean and straight and my heels together or I'd be on KP for a week!

- In the military, life hangs in the balance of obedience to the chain of command. Four hundred infantry soldiers do not have 400 opinions about what to do especially when they are being fired upon. They have one: the commanding officer's. The leader's authority is honored, and that leads to power and tremendous ability beyond a single person.
- The Fifth Commandment is the same principle. The principle that respect for authority honors God and leads to better life together.
- **1. My self-preoccupation is the source of human sin.**
- The Fifth Commandment reminds me that I am not autonomous. Autonomous: having self-government, acting independently or having the freedom to do so.
- This is especially hard for American's to swallow. We have let the quest for freedom lead us into the error of relativism (nothing is absolutely true for everyone, it's all relative to the situation) and this distorted version of equality lead us into mutual disrespect. (If I'm a woman I must have all the responsibilities and privileges of a man. Women must have equal opportunity to die on the front lines as a man. Men must have equal opportunity to not be a man if they want to be. No one is considered special to a role or a calling any longer, even such that today, elementary students are urged to wonder about the reality of their biological sex, a hardship they do not need to carry.) All this in the name of the autonomous self! I shall determine for me what I am, and what life is, and what truth is.
- A. Understand this: no person is autonomous! No one exists

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alone, completely free of connection, or responsibilities.

- You did not come into this world spawning magically from the air like you do on Black Ops or Call of Duty video game. Rather, two other humans, one a man, the other a woman, had to make you with parts of themselves. You are part of them whether you want to be or not. You do not get to chose your sex. You do not get to chose your parents. You do not get to chose your era, or your location of birth. And the Fifth commandment reminds us that we do not always have the privilege of choosing the authority structures over us.

• It is in fact the demand to be my own ultimate authority that keeps us from God. And sin is defined as rebellion to God's way in favor of our own. Lets look at the text:

- See verse 25? *You were like sheep that had gone astray.*

Know where that comes from? The Prophet Isaiah talking about the human flaw of sin.

- *"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6, NIV.*

• Did you notice that each going "his own way" is the definition of "iniquity" that got laid on Jesus? Sin boils down to going your own way as opposed looking for and obeying God's. For a Christian the first question is never "what do I want for me?" but "What does God want for me?"

• B. Honoring father and mother is recognizing there is an established WAY of God in the world and it is in my best interest to follow it. In other words, recognizing authority points to honor of God.

- Did you know that Jewish scholars divide the commands

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into two groups of five? Now most Christians tend to follow the division of four and six: four commands about relating to God, and six commands relating to people. But Jewish scholars tend to keep Honor Father and Mother in the duty-to-God grouping. It makes sense when you understand that honoring your parents is the fundamental first step in the honoring of God. It is the first link in the chain of command reaching all the way back to the throne room in heaven. Honor the people God puts over you. They are his chain of command even if you do not understand it.

- (And strangely enough, nowhere does God tell us to honor them only when they are honorable! The only exception we find in Scripture is when the authority is demanding we do something that goes against God's revealed word.)

- People who don't honor their parents are people who don't honor the police. People who don't honor the law, don't respect lawmakers. People who want to be free of any lawmakers whatsoever, are people who want to be free of the concept of God as well. Make no mistake, the well-being of a nation begins in the home where a child is taught and led by a godly father and mother.

- Paul notes this in Eph.6 where he comments that this is the first command in the Ten with a promise attached to it, namely "that you will live long in the land."

- The fifth commandment reminds me that there are greater things even than the authority I'm under.

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- V13 *Submit yourself...for the Lords sake*
- Why? Verse 15 has the purpose statement (captured in the little word “for”). *For it is God's will that...* we silence foolishness by obeying authority. Our obedient citizenship commends our faith to the world around us.
- Want to see another purpose statement? Verse 19 “For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.” 1 Peter 2:19, NIV.
  - “Unjust suffering” is the “harsh” authority figure of v18. Why did the servant suffer it? Because he respects God, and therefor all authority, even flawed and hurtful authority. The God-follower seeks to overcome harshness and evil by doing good (Rom.12)  
The God-follower has the courage to submit! v13

• C. So here's the deal, folks. You honor your parents as a way of recognizing that God is at work in the world and he operated through people into your life. You are not a single, autonomous being. Whenever we insist on living as though ourselves are all that matters, life cheapens and goes downhill.

- Far out in the corn fields of Northwestern Iowa there is an intersection with stop signs. Curt saw no need for such silly signs, at least not at 2 o'clock in the morning when nobody is out anyway. No one would ever know if he disobeyed the law. Except someone was out at 2 o'clock. And after the dust settled Curt ended up in a Village Northwest, a home for the brain-injured.
- God says to honor parents, obey law, recognize authority because in a fallen, broken world, life happens better when

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we do. And so we find out again that God always has his reasons.

## • 2. How do I honor authority?

• First of all lets understand that “honoring” means to “give weight to”. The Hebrew term is *cabod*, meaning glory, or heaviness. It's like when we say, “Oh his opinion carries weight with me!” How do we give weight to authority?

• A. I don't honor authority selectively. I honor all authority. This is why the Heidelberg Catechism moves from loving father and mother to honoring all those in authority. It gets it from texts like ours:

• Ck v13, 14, 17

• Note again what reasons Peter does *not* give for honoring.

• Not, “if the authorities are nice and flawless.”

• Not “if you agree with the authorities.”

• Not “if Dad and Mom are *deserving* of respect.” (ouch!

There's a surprising one.) v18 *also to those that are harsh!*

• *So you have a boss who's grouchy, hard nosed, yells at employees, is a little on the shady side of honest. So you figure he doesn't deserve your polite cooperation. You no longer care about turning a 15 minute break into 30 minutes. This is dishonor. You say, “Well, he's dishonorable.” But God has not left you open to that.*

• A young girl was once attending the Youth Group at a nearby church and getting interested in God and becoming familiar with the very things we're talking about here today. When her mother found out she demanded her daughter stay away from that place, and stay home with her. This particular girl obeyed, asking her mom what she was supposed to be

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doing while staying home. "The dishes." was the answer. So she cheerfully did the dishes. Long story short, when mom saw this new attitude in her daughter, she changed her mind and allowed her to attend the youth group after all.

- What authority is over you? What would happen if you honored authority over you instead of disrespected it?
- But now that brings us to another biblical concept:

- B. I don't honor authority for the payoff. I honor in godly trust.
- To honor authority is an act of risk and trust. God does not promise that we will be liberated, that we will all have cottages by a lake, and low taxes if we respect those in authority over us.

- Jesus is of course the ultimate example.
  - *"Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart." Luke 2:51, NIV.*
  - *"And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross!" Philippians 2:8, What does the next verse say? "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,"*
  - He did right, there was no sin found in him, and the authorities executed him anyway.
    - *"This suffering is all part of what God has called you to. Christ, who suffered for you, is your example. Follow in his steps. He never sinned, and he never deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when he was insulted. When he suffered, he did not threaten to get even. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. He personally carried away our sins in his own body on the cross so we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. You have been healed by his wounds!" 1 Peter 2:21-24, NLT.*

- Peter is reminding Christians that we have the freedom to endure

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suffering because the cause of Christ wins! What was the result of our saviors obedience?

- I'm reminded of Obi Wan Kenobi in the earliest Star Wars episode *The Empire Strikes Back*, how he raised his light saber allowing Darth Vader to strike him down. And why? Because he knew the final outcome even if the viewer did not. Now, this is very counter cultural, is it not? That's not how we do things. Somebody does us wrong, we stick it to 'em. Somebody insults us, we wait for a chance to return the favor with extra toppings! Boss makes us mad, we do a sloppy job for her. Someone sues, we counter-sue. Somebody gets mad at us, we get mad back. Only problem? We're just filling the world with more and more darkness. Listen Christian. You can afford not to!
- Jesus' way is the absorbing of evil. It is the giving of good, regardless of the immediate payoff. It is the "leaving of our case in the hands of God." What does any of this show? In a word, the reality of love. Esteeming others out of consciousness of God, without regard for personal benefit, demonstrates love.
- **Conclusion:** Here's what I'd like to convince you of today: Our savior did it this way and it led to our eternal life! The early church did it this way and altered the Roman empire. We can afford to follow suit! And it honors our savior when we behave like him.
- [Read text again here.]
- Sure there are reasons we could *calculate* as to why we owe our parents respect even if they did a fairly lousy job of raising us. In most cases at the very least, they did birth us. They didn't leave us along a path when we got too heavy. They did feed us most days,

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and house us. For most of us we'd have to admit that without them we'd be dead.

- On the other hand, some parents abuse their kids, scar their bodies and their emotions. Keep them starving for love as well as food, the first of which is more the cause of rebellion than anything else a parent might do.
- We must ask ourselves why God made us and placed us on the earth in time. Our answer will determine our view of the Fifth Commandment.
  - If we believe we are here to do and to produce, we shall not think much of our elderly, or any leaders for that matter, because they eventually cease to contribute to developing the economy and become our burden.
  - If we answer that we are here to have a good time, we shall not think much of our parents or any authority that disagrees with our immediate desires.
  - If we believe we are here to do what only *human* creatures can do, namely love God and each other, then we shall see honor of our elders as step number one in effecting it.
- How can you honor your parents, your elders, and authorities? In an endless list of ways:
  - Listening to advice without showing you know better.
  - Respecting a teacher's discipline instead of fighting it. So teacher says, "Jonny has been acting up in class... Know what parents tend to say. "Not my Jonny. You have the wrong culprit." "No, Jonny's a good kid." "If he did do it he was probably put up to it." "You teachers are all the same; riding a

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kid for being a kid.” -non of these is respect for authority and when Jonny is grow, he'll be just like you.

- Other ways? Using polite language of respect.
- Not calling adults by same terms as we might a playground buddy.
- Caring for the aged when they can't care for us or themselves any longer. Including them in our lives.

• But whats the common denominator? Are these all expressions of love? Which suggests love is so much more than syrupy, happy feelings at a given moment, isn't it. In fact, nowhere in the Bible does it tell children to love their parents. It tells us to love God, to love our spouses, to love our children. To love our enemies. To love one another, which surely includes parents. But there is no command to love our parents. Interesting isn't it. I'm not sure what that means entirely but I challenge you to wonder on it.

• **Q. What is God's will for you in the fifth commandment?**

• A. That I honor, love, and be loyal

to my father and mother and all those in authority over me;  
that I submit myself with proper obedience  
to all their good teaching and discipline;<sup>1</sup>  
and also that I be patient with their failings—<sup>2</sup>  
for through them God chooses to rule us.<sup>3</sup>