Honor Father and Mother

In this study of the fifth commandment that God gave to Moses for the children of Israel to follow, there will be two parts. The first part is about the commandment. The second part studies a series of verses from the book of Proverbs to describe the reasons why honoring and obeying Father and Mother is important. The book of Proverbs contains many such sections of verses but only one group will be explained here.

Part One

The fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments is quoted from the book of Exodus. The focus is on defining the meaning of honoring.

“Regard (treat with honor, due obedience, and courtesy) your father and mother that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God gives you.” Exodus 20:12

The scripture verse describes regarding a father and mother as treating with honor, due obedience and courtesy. Then a person will have long life on the land that he owns.

Honor is defined in the dictionary as public esteem, recognition and privilege. A father or mother is to be treated with public esteem to honor them. They are to be recognized for what they do. Fathers and mothers are to have privileges.

The results of dishonoring by cursing a father or mother are given in the next scripture verse.

“Whoever curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.” Exodus 21:17

To curse a father or mother is to petition God to inflict harm on them. For each curse given to a father or mother some sort of death occurs to their child whether it is a loss of relationship, of spirituality, or of actual sickness or disease.

Jesus referred to the commandment in the gospel of Mark when he was talking with the scribes and Pharisees concerning obedience to the commandments of God rather than their traditions.

“For Moses said, Honor (revere with tenderness of feeling and deference) your father and your mother, and, He who curses or reviles or speaks evil of or abuses or treats improperly his father or mother, let him surely die.” Mark 7:10
This scripture verse defines honor as revering with a tender feeling and with deference. Revering according to the dictionary has an element of worship and adoration in it. When appropriate a person should defer to the opinion of their father or mother and let them speak.

Then the verse puts together a string of ways of dishonoring a father or mother. It mentions cursing, reviling, speaking evil of, abusing and treating improperly. This child of the father and mother is to be let die, in a relationship manner or in a spiritual manner or through sickness or disease.

In Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus another definition of honor is given.

“Honor (esteem and value as precious) your father and your mother – this is the first commandment with a promise – That all may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.” Ephesians 6:2,3

To honor a father and mother a person esteems and values them as precious. Paul describes this commandment as the first with a promise of well being and long life.

Part Two

The book of Proverbs is the sayings of King Solomon who had requested of God, wisdom for dealing with people. In this group of verses from Proverbs King Solomon is talking to his son giving him the reasons for honoring his father.

“Hear, My sons, the instruction of a father, and pay attention in order to gain and to know intelligent discernment, comprehension, and interpretation [of spiritual matters].” Proverbs 4:1

A son is to hear his father out, to really listen to his instructions and pay attention. If a son does this then he will gain spiritual discernment and comprehend spiritual matters. He will be able to interpret what is spiritually given.

“For I give you good doctrine [what is to be received]; do not forsake my teaching.” Proverbs 4:2

A father gives the son good doctrine concerning godliness. The father urges the son not to forsake or stop obeying his teaching.

“When I [Solomon] was a son with my father [David], tender and the only son in the sight of my mother [Bathsheba],” Proverbs 4:3

Solomon’s father was King David and his mother Bathsheba, a very beautiful woman. Solomon remembers what was like to be a son, tender and only to his mother.

“He taught me and said to me, Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live.” Proverbs 4:4
Solomon realized that he was passing on wisdom that his father had given to him, how to keep his father’s words in his heart. If a son keeps his father’s commandments in this way he will be able to live, spiritually alive to God.

“Get skillful and godly Wisdom, get understanding (discernment, comprehension and interpretation); do not forget and do not turn back from the words of my mouth.” Proverbs 4:5

A father’s best advice is for the son to become skilled and use godly wisdom, or wisdom concerning the ways and purposes of God. A father wants his son to gain understanding which is defined as discernment, comprehension and interpretation of matters.

The father advises his son to be careful not to forget or to turn back from these his words.

“The beginning of Wisdom is: get Wisdom (skillful and godly Wisdom)! [For skillful and godly Wisdom is the principal thing.] And with all you have gotten, get understanding (discernment, comprehension, and interpretation).” Proverbs 4:7

To begin getting wisdom which is so important a son must just purpose to do it considering it the principal thing. And with wisdom to get understanding using discernment, comprehending and interpreting spiritual matters.

“Prize Wisdom highly and exalt her, and she will exalt and promote you; she will bring you to honor when you embrace her.” Proverbs 4:8

Once wisdom is highly prized and exalted, a son will be exalted, promoted, and honored. A father wants wisdom fully embraced by a son.

“She shall give to your head a wreath of gracefulness; a crown of beauty and glory will she deliver to you.” Proverbs 4:9

The final results of honoring the father’s words to get wisdom are a wreath of gracefulness for a son’s head and a crown of beauty and glory.

SOLUTION TO BREAKING THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

To sum up what has been said in this study is to say to those who have not been honoring their father and mother, a son or daughter must just begin by wanting to honor them. Small decisions and actions of honor will begin to yield the results mentioned of life and understanding of spiritual matters.