

Deuteronomy 5:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Analysis

The fifth commandment 'Honour thy father and thy mother' establishes family order and generational responsibility. The Hebrew 'kaved' (honor) means to give weight, respect, and care. This is the first commandment 'with promise'—obedience brings long life and prosperity in the land (Ephesians 6:2-3). Honoring parents extends beyond childhood obedience to lifelong respect, care in old age, and perpetuating godly heritage. This command upholds family structure as foundational to societal order. Christ's perfect obedience to His parents (Luke 2:51) models this virtue.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cultures valued honor toward parents, but Israel's law uniquely grounded it in divine command. Severe penalties for striking or cursing parents (Exodus 21:15, 17) demonstrated this commandment's gravity. Honoring parents included providing material support in old age, respecting their authority, and preserving family reputation. Jesus condemned Pharisees who used religious loopholes (Corban) to avoid supporting elderly parents (Mark 7:9-13).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does honoring parents extend beyond childhood obedience to lifelong respect and care, particularly in their old age?
2. What does the promise of long life and prosperity teach about God's blessing upon societies that honor family structure?

Interlinear Text

כָּבֹד	אֶת	אָבִיךָ	וְאֶת	אִמְךָ	כָּאֲשֶׁר	צִוָּה
Honour	H853	thy father	H853	and thy mother	H834	hath commanded
H3513		H1		H517		H6680
יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	לְמַעַן	יִאָּרְכּוּ	יָמֶיךָ	וְלְמַעַן	
as the LORD	thy God	H4616	may be prolonged	thee that thy days	H4616	
H3068	H430		H748	H3117		
וְיָטֵב	לְךָ	עַל	הָאָדָמָה	אֲשֶׁר	יְהוָה	
and that it may go well	H0	H5921	with thee in the land	H834	as the LORD	
H3190			H127		H3068	
לְךָ	נָתַן	אֱלֹהֶיךָ				
H0	H5414	thy God				
		H430				

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:12 (References God): Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Colossians 3:20 (References Lord): Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Deuteronomy 27:16 (Parallel theme): Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Deuteronomy 4:40 (References God): Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

Leviticus 19:3 (References God): Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.

Mark 10:19 (Parallel theme): Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

Mark 7:10 (Parallel theme): For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

Matthew 19:19 (Parallel theme): Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Luke 18:20 (Parallel theme): Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.