

Exodus 20:12 – The fifth commandment

We are continuing to look into God's mirror! A man may think he is clean, and handsome. But when he finds a true mirror, it shows him he is dirty and ugly. Every person thinks they are good enough to be saved. But God's law is his mirror: he shows us his true holiness, and the dark blackness and evil of our sin. He shows us that we need a Saviour, and that without Christ we are lost forever.

1. Families are God's plan

Who invented families? God did! He made Adam, and then made Eve and brought them together. He gave them children together. We all come into the world because of a father and a mother who came together. God has given many commands and teachings about families. He made them to be places of love and safety. He made them to bring children into the world and raise and train them. Children should learn the gospel in families. There is nothing else that can replace it. The government or a school or a village can help, but cannot take its place. The Bible teaches much about families and we must listen.

2. Honour is God's command

The command is to honour our parents. This means to give respect and to treat with dignity, placing them above us. This is taught throughout the Bible. Proverbs teaches much, and even Jesus obeyed his earthly parents (Luke 2:51). For children in the home, honour means obedience (Ephesians 6:1-3) – obedience which is prompt and with a good attitude. Once someone has made their own home, their parents cannot require obedience. It is not right when a father commands his son to leave his own home and come and work the father's shamba, making the son's home suffer. But respect must continue, and we must take care of our parents when they grow old and weak (1 Timothy 5:8). God gives us the promise that this leads to long life. Those who learn to live in God's world in God's way will avoid many of the problems that lead to the early deaths of the wicked. God is free to do otherwise, but this is the normal way.

3. Obedience is the Christian way

The command is for more than just families. The family is the first authority we meet in the world. But God wishes us to be obedient everywhere. We learn first at home, but then carry on. Rebellion is a mark of the devil. Adam disobeyed, and lost his place in paradise. Christians, saved people, should be obedient, making peace, recognising and following authority. Chaos is from Satan!

4. Jesus is the only Saviour

The truth is that we have all been disobedient. Like Adam, we have all broken God's commands. There is only one obedient man. Jesus always obeyed his earthly parents (Luke 2:51), and his heavenly Father (John 8:29). There was no rebellion in him; but he died on the cross like a rebel, punished as a rebel. God raised him, and promises to forgive everyone who honours him by repenting of sin and trusting in him. If we give him this honour, we enter his family, forever!