

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”  
Exodus 20:12

## GENERATIONS

ISN'T IT ODD HOW, throughout the course of a son or daughter's life, a parent passes in and out of a state of intellectual brilliance? When one is a baby, the parent is someone overpoweringly immense, omnipotent, all-wise, all-knowing, all-loving yet all-weary of two o'clock squalls. Not long after, the child learns that here is someone who can be manipulated by mere tantrums or googily eyes—a clear sign of lower intelligence.

During the younger teenage years, the child realizes that the parent is generally well meaning, but hopelessly inept and out of touch with the more important elements of living—such as current fashion, music, and vernacular. Yet during this same period the child taps into periodic moments of genius emanating from the parent when their counsel is reluctantly sought. This genius, the child understands, is simply the dwindling glimmer of brilliance before the parent slides hopelessly into irretrievable senility.

The later teenage years are the zenith of parental stupidity. At no time in a child's life is the parent more infuriatingly ignorant than at this time. Their brains turn to mashed potatoes, their good humor disappears, and the child wonders what he or she

has done to deserve such a leaden weight upon their otherwise buoyant life.

Miraculously, as soon as the child is old enough to be out on his own, the parent turns a corner and begins to wise up. Through the years of college and early adulthood the parent has grown slightly wiser, more sophisticated about the things of the world. The parent, while still, admittedly, mired in the traditions of the past, has refined his or her communicative skills, has become more tolerant and understanding. And except for, perhaps, a brief period during the early years of the child's own children, the parent continues on the upward path toward sage wisdom, and enlightenment.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

*Ephesians 6:1-3*

It is likewise odd, at least to our contemporary senses, that Scripture—both Old and New—does not in any way modify this command based on age or personality. It does not say “Obey your parents” only

while you are living in their house, or “Honor your father and your mother” so long as they agree with you.

As the child is God’s gift to the parent, so is the parent—with all the mistakes, second tries, stumbling leaps of faith, inadequate answers and prying interrogations—God’s gift to the child.



Beyond this simplistic truth, however, lies something of greater weight. In fact, the word translated “honor” literally means in the hebrew, “to be heavy,” and is often used to express the honor and glory due the Lord God.

You who fear the Lord, praise Him;  
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,  
And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants  
of Israel.

*Psalms 22:23*

Every believer has two fathers: the one responsible for his physical existence, and the one responsible for his spiritual existence. The first is partially responsible for a life that begins dying as soon as it is born, while

the second is wholly responsible for a life that lives forever.

Our earthly parents are a precious gift, but more so is the gift of our *heavenly* Father. He loves us more than human flesh is capable. He extends Himself to us further than the best parents ever can. And He gives of Himself to His children to a degree unimaginable to mere humans. We are to honor our parents, but we are to honor our heavenly parent even more.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

*Ephesians 2:4-8*

For this He is due our honor.

There reigns the Eternal Father, in His lone prerogatives,  
And, in the Father’s Mind, the Son, all self-existing, lives,  
With Him, their mutual Jubilee, that deepest depth of love,  
Lifegiving Life of two-fold source, the many gifted Dove!  
O Bountiful! O Beautiful! can Power or Wisdom add  
Fresh features to a life, so munificent and glad?  
Can even uncreated Love, ye angels! give a hue  
Which can ever make the Unchanging and Unchangeable look new?

*Frederick William Faber*

