

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. The home front is crumbling. As Curtis Jones said, "There is a crisis in America as crucial as civil-rights; dangerous as bureaucracy, insidious as communism, unpredictable as politics, and uncontrollable as inflation. It is the erosion of the home." [p. 102]
- B. Character comes from a commitment on the inside to honor God and to live honorably with those he's placed-around us. God wants us to honor our own parents. [p. 103,104]
- C. The family is the setting God has designed for children to learn the core values of life that develop character. As Jonathan Edwards explained, "Every Christian home ought to be, as it were, a little church," consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by His rules." That's why God's ethic says the birthplace for developing character, the training ground for learning God's values, is the home. And the starting point in the home is learning to honor parents. [p. 104]
- D. In Ex. 20:12 God says, "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. ." A nation is without character when it fails to give honor to whom honor is due. And the fifth principle in God's Code of Ethics for recharactering His people; God thinks honor is due our parents. (p. 104).

## I. PRINCIPLES OF HONOR.

### A. An Entitled Right.

1. We tend to honor people who we think earn it--athletes, politicians, successful people. God says we are to honor our parents not because of what they've done, but for who they are. [p. 104].
2. The instruction does not say to honor parents' mistakes. It does not say to honor their sins. But it does say to honor their position as authorities in the home. [p. 104,105]
3. Jesus Himself lived in this way. The very Son of God "went down to Nazareth with [His parents] and was obedient to them" (Lk 2:51). The Son of God honored the position that God had given to His earthly parents. [p. 105]
4. In fact, the Bible says that parents are placed over children by God's design. Romans 1:30 and 2Tim. 3:2 both contain long lists of terrible sins that are an affront to God, and in the midst of both these lists of . horrible sins, there is the phrase "disrespectful to their parents." [p. 105]

### B. A Social Matter.

1. Deuteronomy 21 makes it clear that in Bible times people regarded 2/ K! Z! disrespectful and rebellious children as a problem for the whole society, a problem the whole society must address (Deut. 21:18-21). [p. 105,106]
2. If a child does not learn to respect his own home, he's unlikely to respect somebody else's life, wife, property, or reputation.

## III. PRACTICE OF HONOR.

### A. Respect Their Role.

1. God is telling us in the fifth principle that if there is no respect at home, there will be none anywhere. Barbara Bush once said, "Success does not depend on what happens at the White House, but what happens at your house." [p. 106]
2. The Hebrew word for "honor" carries the thought of "weightiness." In other words, the Hebrews felt that to honor people is to respect them as people carry a great deal of weight in your life. In a child's case, it means to respect a parent's God-ordained function and the authority that accompanies it. See Psa. 78: 5-7. [p. 106]

3. A parent's honor is based on his office as a spokesman for God, the teller of God's story and the teacher of God's law. The parent's role should be to initiate faith in the home, and that roles should be respected. [p. 107]

**B. Value Their Advice.**

1. One way in which we honor our parents is by valuing their advice. See Prov. 13:1. [p. 107]
2. God is very clear and complete in His plans for children. For instance, He instructs, "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord" (Col. 3:20). And the LB paraphrases Eph. 6:1, "Children, obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has placed them in authority over you." [p. 107]
3. As people of character, we are called to give honor to our parents by trusting their wisdom and their experience--by valuing their advice. [p. 108]

**C. Meet Their Needs.**

1. A third way in which we are to honor our parents is by meeting their needs. See Prov. 19:26 and 1Tim. 5:4. [p. 108]
2. This does not mean that it is wrong to participate in social programs provided by the government, but it does mean that God always intended for the family to be the chief agency by which the needs of individuals are met. See Jn. 19:26,27. [p. 108]
3. One of the things that God's principle is warning us to guard against is the tendency in our -world to call nonproductive people insignificant. God, however, says don't judge the worth of a human being by how much he or she can produce. When our parents need our help, we honor God by meeting their needs. [p. 109]

**D. Affirm Their Efforts.**

Certainly, the Bible does not say that parents are perfect. And our honoring of parents is not based on how much we approve of the job they did with us. God is saying that we should make our parents feel treasured because of what they tried or are trying to do. See Prov. 23:22. [p. 109]

**E. Forgive Their Failings.**

1. Some of you grew up in homes where terrible evils and horrible sins were committed against you by the people to whom God entrusted your safekeeping. God is not saying here, "Just get over it. Ignore the pain, and deny that it ever happened." [p. 110]
2. Let me encourage you to pray. Pray that you will not allow bitterness to control your life, that you can forgive those who hurt you, and that you won't continue the cycle of pain by inflicting on your children what was visited on you. See Psa. 27:10. [p. 111]

**IV. A WORD TO PARENTS: BE HONORABLE.**

- A. One last word--a challenge, really--to us as people who want to be parents of character: Be honorable. We are to be teachers of what is right and true about life. If we take our role as God's authority in the home seriously, we have reason to hope that when our children leave home they, too, will choose to be people of character--to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with their God. [p. 111]
- B. See Deut. 6:6,7. Parents, be honorable by accepting God's ordained role for you as teacher and guide to your children. Model for your children God's uncompromised values and His unquestioned integrity and unconditional love. Teach them to trust Him completely. In other words, be honorable. [p. 112]

**V. A WORD TO ALL: VALUE FAMILY.**

- A. The heart of the fifth principle is this: People of character make family a priority. People of character make family a priority. Someday those children won't be in your home, and someday those parents

will be gone as well. Life is too short and the price is too high to put off the honoring for another day. Value your family and make them a priority [p. 112]

- B. Henry Drummond said, "Strength of character may be acquired at work, but beauty of character is learned at home... The family is the supreme conductor of Christianity." [p. 112]

## **LESSON EIGHT: RESPECT HUMAN LIFE.**

### **I. INTRODUCTION.**

- A. America is fast becoming a war zone. Our nightly news broadcasts and morning newspapers are filled with the grisly accounts of one murder alter another. [p. 116]
- B. But murder is not just a modern problem. In fact, the first person who ever died on this planet was murdered. The first funeral on earth was not for an aged father but for a young son. And, just as it did then, murder still breaks the Father's heart today. [p. 117]
- C. God puts-the shortest of the principles for living quite simply, "You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13). People of character respect human life. [p. 117]

### **II. BEHIND THE PRINCIPLE.**

Let me share with you two reasons that behind this principle:

- A. The first reason for the sixth principle is that murder steals God's sovereign right to control the world. See Heb. 9:27. [p. 117]
- B. A second reason for the sixth principle concerns the sacredness of people. See Gen. 9:5,6. From the very beginning, God declared that no one has the right to number another person's days. We have permission to take life from everything God created except people; God has invested a part of Himself in us, and killing a person is striking at God Himself [p. 118]

### **III. THE PRINCIPLE EXAMINED.**

- A. God bases His instruction, then, on the sovereignty of Himself and the sacredness of persons. But let's be more specific about what it is God is addressing here. In Hebrew, the word for "kill" means a malicious and unlawful killing, and I think the NIV has done well to translate it "murder." In the law of Moses, different types of killings are discussed. [p. 118]
  - 1. Premeditated murder (Num. 35:20,21). [p. 118]
  - 2. Accidental homicide.  
This was a second type of killing described in the law of Moses. Numbers 35 goes on to explain this situation. Such killing was not a violation of the sixth principle. [p. 119]
  - 3. Justifiable homicide.  
Justifiable homicide describes a case in which one person is attacking another, and the defender kills the attacker to save his own life. According to the Law, this type of murder does not fall under the sixth principle. See Ex. 22:2. [p. 119]
  - 4. Killing in war.  
This is another type of killing that God does not condemn under the sixth principle. However, God must call for the killing to be done. Such a decision is not man's to make. [p. 119]
  - 5. Capital punishment.  
Capital punishment is one more exception to the sixth principle. See Ex. 21:12. Both Jesus and Paul, when they were brought before the state, denied the charges brought against them, yet they acknowledged the right of the state to execute the death penalty. And Rom. 13:1-4 makes it clear that the authority of governments to punish wrongdoers comes from God. [p.119,120]

#### IV. AN ACT OR ATTITUDE?

- A. What then, does God forbid in this sixth principle for living? Obviously, it forbids murder. God does not condone the theft of a life. Murder is an act, but it's also an attitude. It's a deed, but it's also a motive. Notice Jesus interpretation of the sixth principle in Matthew 5:21-22. [p. 120,121]
- B. I don't have to physically end your life to harbor in my heart the attitudes that foster all of the killings that are going on in the world. You cannot be a person of character while harboring anger and hatred. See 1Jn. 3:11-15. [p. 121,122]
- C. If a Christian sees someone hungry, cold, poor, or homeless, he should help that person because the poor and disadvantaged people are stamped with God's image too. The principle is a call for you and me to support and to protect the right of every human being to live. [p. 122,123]
- D. We can murder by arranging a death, or we can murder by allowing a death--by being indifferent to our-fellow man. See 1Jn. 3:16-18. [p. 123,124]

#### V. BENEATH THE PRINCIPLE.

- A. People of character value nurturing and forgiveness.
  - 1. Do you know people who embody the real meaning of the sixth principle? I know quite a few. They inspire me, and sometimes their examples rebuke me as well. They are all the people 'of character whose live for God calls them to seek opportunities to nurture life. [p. 124]
  - 2. There are countless ways those of us who put God first can honor His instructions to respect human life! God is calling us to be people who choose to bless lives rather than steal them. [p. 125]
- B. People of character respect human life.

Modern man has put God to death, and now he can't stop the killing. Our attitude toward killing is determined by our fundamental belief about what human life is in terms of its ultimate relationship, and as our society's belief in God as Creator has declined, murder has become epidemic. Only when God counts for everything does man count for anything. [p. 125]