

## session 5 study guide

# honor and obey

### starter

FAMOUS SAYINGS: Fill in these famous and perhaps all-too-familiar parental sayings:

If I've told you once, I've told you \_\_\_\_\_

I don't know; go ask your \_\_\_\_\_

Did you flush the \_\_\_\_\_

Did you turn off the \_\_\_\_\_

Shut the door. Were you born in a \_\_\_\_\_

Don't talk with your mouth \_\_\_\_\_

Don't eat that now. It will spoil your \_\_\_\_\_

Did you brush your \_\_\_\_\_

It's cold. Don't forget to take a \_\_\_\_\_

Now write down three of the most-often-heard parental sayings around your house:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## message

Did you ever stop to think that God gave you your parents for a reason? He could have had you born into any family in the world, but he chose your mom and your dad. How does that make you feel? Happy? Thankful? Resentful? Angry? Indifferent?

For some people this may be hard to hear, but remember that God is the one writing the story of the universe. He is the one who has the total vision and the final plan. And He is very clear about what attitude children should have regarding their parents, whether they are believers or not.

Take the following story in Jeremiah 35:1-19. In this passage, the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah witnesses the Recabite sons' commitment to obedience. As you read, consider the following questions: (1) Who told Jeremiah to offer the Recabite brothers wine? (2) Why did He do this? (3) What was the result of the brothers' obedience?

*This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD during the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: "Go to the Recabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the house of the LORD and give them wine to drink."*

*So I went to get Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and all his sons—the whole family of the Recabites. I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah the man of God. It was next to the room of the officials, which was over that of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper. Then I set bowls full of wine and some cups before the men of the Recabite family and said to them, "Drink some wine."*

*But they replied, "We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jonadab son of Recab gave us this command: 'Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine. Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads.' We have obeyed everything our forefather Jonadab son of Recab commanded us. Neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters have ever drunk wine or built houses to live in or had vineyards, fields or crops. We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jonadab commanded us. But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded this land, we said, 'Come, we must go to Jerusalem to escape the Babylonian and Aramean armies.' So we have remained in Jerusalem."*

*Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go and tell the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem, 'Will you not learn a lesson and obey my words?' declares the LORD. 'Jonadab son of Recab ordered his sons not to drink wine and this command has been kept. To this day they do not drink wine, because they obey their forefather's command. But I have spoken to you again and again, yet you have not obeyed me. Again and again I sent all my servants the prophets to you. They said, "Each of you must turn from your wicked ways and reform your actions; do not follow other gods to serve them. Then you will live in the land I have given to you and your fathers." But you have not paid attention or listened to me. The descendants of*

*Jonadab son of Recab have carried out the command their forefather gave them, but these people have not obeyed me.'*

*"Therefore, this is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Listen! I am going to bring on Judah and on everyone living in Jerusalem every disaster I pronounced against them. I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer.' "*

*Then Jeremiah said to the family of the Recabites, "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'You have obeyed the command of your forefather Jonadab and have followed all his instructions and have done everything he ordered.' Therefore, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Jonadab son of Recab will never fail to have a man to serve me.' "*

### **dig**

1. Why would God tell Jeremiah to offer wine to the Recabite brothers?

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2. How did the brothers respond to the test of their obedience?

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3. According to the Recabite brothers, what rules did their father ask them to obey?

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4. Why did the Recabite brothers obey?

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5. Did the Recabite brothers understand the reasons behind their father's rules?

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6. How easy or difficult do you think it was for the Recabites to obey their father's rules?

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7. How does God use the story of the Recabites?

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8. In Deuteronomy 5:16, God states, "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you." Of all the Ten Commandments, this sixth command is the only one that has a conditional clause. According to the verse, what is the result of following this command?

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9. Read Ephesians 6:2-4. Paul writes, “‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise—‘that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.’ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” This passage reiterates the command set out in the previous verse, but adds instruction for parents. What does “exasperate” mean? Why are parents told not to do it?

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10. Proverbs 6:20-22 states, “My son, keep your father’s commands and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you.” How do you view the direction your parents give you? Do you view it the way this passage instructs?

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11. Proverbs 13:10,13 states, “Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. . . . He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded.” These verses have to do with how a person responds to direction and cor-

rection. What is the benefit that comes from heeding advice from your parents? What is the consequence of ignoring it?

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12. In Colossians 3:20, Paul writes, “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.” How does your obedience to your parents please the Lord?

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### **apply**

1. Are honoring and obeying the same thing? If not, how are they different?

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2. Why is it important to honor *and* obey your parents?

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3. Read through the following scenarios, and then choose the answer that best fits your position.

Scenario 1: *Your mother has a tendency toward smothering and nagging. Her concerns are almost always good and right, yet sometimes she can drive you crazy. Her major issues center around homework and the telephone. She's made a rule that you can't talk on the telephone until all your homework is finished. One day, you are home alone doing your homework and the phone rings. It's your best friend, and you talk on the phone for most of the afternoon. Your mother never finds out.*

Which statement best fits your opinion?

- A. I was wrong.
- B. It's no big deal.
- C. I was wrong but it's no big deal.
- D. I should tell my Mom.
- E. This is such a little thing that it's no big deal, but I would need to obey for something important.

Scenario 2: *Your dad has told you never to touch the beer he keeps in the cupboard. One day while he is gone, your friends talk you into "borrowing" two cans of beer to just try the taste. You and your friends drink the beer. The next day your dad specifically asks you if you took any of the beer from the cupboard.*

What do you do?

- A. You admit the deed and suffer the consequences.
- B. You lie and tell him you have no idea what happened to his beer.



- C. You tell your dad that if he didn't want you to experiment with beer, he shouldn't have the beer around the house in the first place.
- D. You tell him that you are afraid your friends drank some beer, but you didn't touch the stuff.

Scenario 3: *Your parents are usually very honest people, but you know they cheat in their business. At the end of each night they close out the cash register early and basically keep two sets of financial books—one for the IRS and the other for them. This means they cheat on thousands of dollars of income taxes.*

What will you do?

- A. Confront them.
- B. Pray for them, but don't say anything.
- C. Don't worry about it—after all, lots of people cheat the IRS.
- D. Call the IRS and report them.
- E. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Scenario 4: *Now the situation changes a bit. In the summer, you work part-time at your parents' business. They ask you to close out the register early every night. They tell you, "It's okay. Everybody else keeps two sets of books."*

Now what do you do?

- A. Say that based on your principles, you can't do it.
- B. Honor and obey them.
- C. Call the police.
- D. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

- 4. Now read through these scenarios and determine what advice you would give to each individual.

Scenario 1: *Greg's parents center their lives around church activities. They teach Bible classes and serve on church leadership committees. Greg loves his folks, respects their faith and is a Christian himself, but he doesn't want to be as "fanatical" as they are. Some Sundays Greg wants to sleep in and miss church. Sometimes he would like to ditch the church youth group and not go to every activity. But his parents insist, "As long as you live in our house, you have to attend church." Greg isn't opposed to going to church, but he is getting very frustrated at the amount of time he has to spend being involved.*

Do you think Greg's parents have the right to force church attendance on him? Why or why not?

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What advice would you give to Greg? To his parents?

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As a Christian, should Greg be more excited about his church involvement? Why or why not?

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How could he become more enthusiastic about church?

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Scenario 2: *After attending a weekend church camp with her best friend, Serena dedicated her life to Jesus. But her parents are atheists and don't want Serena to have anything to do with the church. Her parents forbid her from attending Sunday morning worship or going to the Thursday night youth group with her best friend.*

How should Serena respond to her parents?

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Does Serena need to honor and obey her parents even if they aren't Christians? Why or why not?

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How can Serena honor God in this situation with regard to her parents?

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Serena really wants to go to youth group and tells you she's going to sneak out of her house in order to attend. What advice would you give Serena?

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**reflect**

1. Do you think that honoring and obeying your parents is important? Why or why not?

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2. What can you gain from honoring and obeying your parents? What can your parents gain?

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3. What's the most difficult part of honoring and obeying your parents? What rules do you struggle with the most?

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4. What do you think are the reasons behind the rules your parents set for you?

- ☐ They are trying to keep me safe.
- ☐ They are looking out for my best interest.
- ☐ They are trying to keep me from having any fun.
- ☐ They are just mean and like to make me suffer.
- ☐ They are trying to keep me from finding out about certain things in the world.
- ☐ They don't want me to grow up.
- ☐ I don't think they have any reasons behind their rules.
- ☐ They are trying to keep me from doing things that I might regret later.
- ☐ They are trying to raise me according to biblical standards.

- ☐ 

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- ☐ 

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5. Imagine it is the future. You are now married and have two teenage children. How would your children's disobedience make you feel?

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6. Why do you think God included honoring your parents as one of the Ten Commandments?

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7. Is it ever okay not to obey your parents? Why or why not?

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8. A friend has parents who are often drunk and verbally abuse him. He's miserable at home and tries to stay away as much as possible. What advice would you give him about how—or why—he should honor his parents?

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9. God commands us to honor our parents. But it can be easier to honor them when we are thankful. List three things your parents do for you or provide for you.

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2. 

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3. 

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List three things your parents have given up for you. (*Don't know? Ask!*)

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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List three ways your parents have helped you become who you are today.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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10. Does the word “honor” describe your relationship with your parents? What are ways that you can honor your parents with your actions, behaviors and words? Brainstorm several specific ways you can show honor to your parents this week.

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**meditation**



Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

EPHESIANS 6:1