



Deut. 5:16

That it May Be Well With You

16 ' Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

This commandment marks the transition from the first table of the law, our duties to God, to the second table, which contains our duties to our fellow man, we are moving here now from the morals laws that govern our vertical relationship to God to the laws that govern our horizontal relationship to our fellow men and society in general.

Although the commandment speaks of your father and your mother, this is not a commandment addressed primarily to children. It addresses adults. Alan Harman states that this points *“to the fact that something more than just one’s parents was in view. The latter part of the verse confirms this. Long life in the sword land would depend upon obedience to God’s commands and recognition of his duly appointed representatives who would exercise his rule in the various facets of human life.”*

Paul in writing to the churches in Ephesus essentially reiterated the importance of this commandment, and then used it as a basis for the importance of Christians honoring and maintaining all of the authority structures that God had instituted and regulated. *Child to Parent, Parent to Child, Servant to Master, Master to Servant. To these we can add the other authority structures the scriptures bring out elsewhere Subject to Magistrate and Magistrate to Subject. Elder to Congregant, Congregant to Elder, Officer to Soldier, Soldier to Officer and so on.*

The fact is that this commandment is intended to regulate all of these relationships of authority and rule, because God is ultimately behind all duly instituted authority. Paul in Romans 13:1 starts off by reminding us: *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”*

Paul in his words to the Ephesians regarding this commandment highlights the promise and implied curse attached the commandment. He wrote in Eph.6:1-3

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

If we follow this commandment it will go well for us, but if we do not, the promise that God gives is that things will not go well for us. If the governed are obedient and submissive to lawful authority, t will go well with us. If the rulers are submissive to the commandments of God and are careful to exercise their rule according to his instructions it will go well. Simple, right? Yeah, if we lived in a society made up of unfallen angels, instead of fallen sinful men.

Even before they entered into the land that God was giving them the people of Israel, were given to a pattern of rebellion against God and his lawfully instituted authorities. As a result, they were constantly calling down curses upon themselves. And yet it never seemed to dawn on them, that the answer to their problems might just be their own submission. Their rebellion continued on even after they entered into the promised land. The awful recounting of the cycles of rebellion against the Lord in Judges ends on this note summing up the spirit of the time: ***“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”*** The ironic thing was that it was their rebellion, which presumably they thought would bring about their freedom was actually instrumental in bringing them into slavery and bondage. Literal slavery as the Lord brought them under the control of the surrounding nations, and spiritual slavery as they rebelled against the Lord and embraced the worthless and abominable practices of the surrounding nations. The Lord redeemed them and delivered them from slavery in Egypt. They by their rebellion against Him and His servants the prophets, eventually delivered themselves into slavery and captivity in Assyria and Babylon.

Well what about us in our own age? We in the west have made autonomy and rebellion our way of life, does it surprise us therefore that it is not “going well for us?”

The family is the most basic unit in society, and yet we are doing all we can to destroy it. I could go over anecdotes list statistics that make that apparent, but let me just give you one *systemic* example. We spoke last week of the baneful influence of the lifting of the Blue Laws, we will not obey the Lord’s Command to keep one day in Seven Holy, and this too has become a cause of destroying the family.

There is a close link between the fourth and the fifth commandments, God himself closely ties them together in Lev. 19:3 ' Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.

The lifting of blue laws, in their own way, seems to de-emphasize religion, as well as close family, community, and neighborhood ties,” says David Laband, an economics and policy professor at Auburn University in Auburn, Ala. “It is part of a broader social and cultural trend toward isolation.”[3]

“The Sabbath was a time for religion, for family, to renew kinship bonds,” says Dr. Snyder. “But religion isn’t static in this country. Sunday, Christmas, Easter - these aren’t necessarily the days of celebration for everybody anymore. [The repeals] show how dynamic society is, and how much things change.”[4]

Applications:

1) Duties of children to parents: If I can plead with you. Children Honor your parents, and the authorities that God set over you. Early in my life I made constant rebellion my way of life. Every school-day was spent standing in the hallway or at the principals office. Every afternoon was spent in the detention hall I remember once that the very fact that I came home from school on time was enough to tell my mother that I had skipped detention. I was grounded so often in became my normal state. How did it go with me? Parents told their children they could not play with me. The mothers banded together to make sure I was kicked out of the cub scouts, I spent much of my childhood lonely and angry and the cause was my own rebellion and refusal to submit. There are negative consequences

of that to this day. I can barely do math on my fingers, because I hated it, and rebelled against its instruction. It is only as the Lord has subdued to His will that my life has improved, and I have learned what it is to be truly happy.

I can this day testify to the truth of William S. Plumer wrote: ***“During a life neither short nor uneventful* he has mingled much with mankind. In that time he has seen many children forego their own gratification and apparent interest for the sake of parents, not always amiable, sometimes intemperate. Yet he has in no case seen such children losers in the end. A blessing has followed them.”***

Sadly I know that only those of you who have been touched by the Holy Spirit so that you desire to obey Christ’s commandments will have any desire to obey that commandment, but I am going to remind you now of the parable of the prodigal so that you remember it later. It is only by abandoning his rebellion and returning to the house of His father, that the prodigal found happiness. But more of that in a moment

2) *Duties of parents to children:* The commandment not only governs the child’s duties to their parents but also their parents duties to them. Parents if you would have it go well with your children, if you would have them live long. What will make that possible is not a large Eph. 6:4 – “ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Religious and moral training of children.

Teach the truths God has taught you. Teach the whole word of God. The law is holy, just, and good. The promises are many, sweet, and faithful. The doctrines are true, sublime, and purifying. The threatenings are wise, righteous, and terrible. The examples are striking, various, and instructive. The encouragements are great, necessary, and seasonable. The invitations are kind, sincere, and persuasive. Omit nothing, abate nothing, add nothing. God's word is perfect. He, who made the Bible, made the mind of your child, and knew perfectly what would be best for it.”

Deut. 6:6 " And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

3) *Final Application:* Rebel against Christ and become Slaves to Sin, or obey and by submitting to his authority become free indeed?

Psalm 2:1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."