

Honor: A Way of Life – Deuteronomy 5:16

Introduction

Honor. It's a word we don't use much anymore. We often talk about respect, kindness, boundaries, or communication, but honor sometimes feels ancient, almost ceremonial. Yet when Moses stands before Israel on the edge of the Promised Land, preparing them to live as God's covenant people, he places honor right in the center of the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:16 says:

“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”

Today, on this day, we have paused to recognize and serve mothers, we are also reminded of this central command; not as a holiday tradition, but as a covenant calling. Honor is not a card we sign once a year. Honor is a way of life. And God is asking us to be people who are Called to Honor.

Honor Begins with Seeing People as God Sees Them

Moses was not giving Israel a flippant rule for functioning politely in society. Instead, under the advisement of God, he is instructing people about the significance of living a life that reflects the character of God. To honor someone is to “see” them the way God sees them. Every person is created in His image; each possessing dignity, each carrying worth, each carrying His characteristics with them.

Before any of us knew Scripture...Before we knew Jesus...Before we understood the gospel... Before we could speak or walk...God placed women in our lives. He uses mothers, grandmothers, aunts, spiritual moms, as His instruments for molding and shaping our lives.

For many, that process is beautiful. For some, it has been complicated. For others, it has even been painful. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding our relationships with our mothers, when we consider this verse; God's command remains: **Honor!**

Not because every parent is perfect, but because God is the perfector and is worthy of obedience. Not because every person's story is whole or complete, but because God is the Restorer and Redeemer of our soul.

You see, when we honor our moms, we are not only thanking them for what they've done. We are also recognizing who they are; image bearers of God, used by Him in ways seen and unseen.

Think of some of the women, some of the moms that Scripture honors:

- **Jochebed**, who hid Moses and trusted God with her child.
- **Hannah**, who prayed through tears and dedicated her son to the Lord.
- **Abigail**, whose wisdom saved her household.

- **Mary**, who surrendered to God's plan with the words, "*Let it be to me according to your word.*" (Luke 1:38)

Honor begins with seeing people the way God sees them. Honor begins by recognizing their role in God's plan.

Honor in a Broken World Requires Wisdom and Redemption

Moses knew something often forgotten in today's world. The command to honor parents was given to people who had imperfect parents. I'm sure some grew up with love and stability. But I'm also sure that just as many grew up with absence or pain. Maybe some of these young and new generations of Israelites were aching deeply from the wounds they carried? I'm sure some have lost mothers they loved dearly. Perhaps there was even some young women who longed to be mothers but had not yet received that gift. Again, regardless of the circumstances surrounding their maternal relationships, God's command was to **Honor!**

The truth is...honor does not deny reality. It does not pretend everything is always ok or that everything is healthy. Honor doesn't ignore safety. Honor leaves no room for abuse or for ignoring sin. No, honor, looks at our story, whatever it may be, and it allows God to work in every situation and with every circumstance.

For some, honor looks like forgiveness, which frees up bitterness, so it no longer controls the heart. For others, honor looks like establishing healthy boundaries that refuses to enable destructive patterns. For some, honor looks like gratitude, not necessarily towards the mom, but instead choosing to thank God for what He has given, even if it was imperfect. And for others, honor looks like prayer, where you ask God to heal what you cannot fix. And then for some, honor looks like grief, acknowledging the ache and pain of what could have been.

The truth is...the gospel does not erase who we are, nor does it erase our stories. Instead, the restorative and transformative work of the gospel sets out to redeem them. When Jesus enters the picture, He steps into the broken places and says, "I can work with this. I can heal this. I can restore this."

Honor in a broken world is not simple, but it is possible because God is a Redeemer.

Honor Is Expressed Through Practical Care and Faithful Living

Deuteronomy 5:16 ties honor to a promise: "*that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you...*" What do I always remind you about when we talk about a promise from God? He will fulfill it! He always upholds His end. In the meantime, He expects us to live our lives in such a way that honor is not an ancient and ceremonial word but is something that is lived. Honor is not something we can only feel. It's not a feeling. Instead, it is a lifestyle filled with practical moments of obedience.

So, knowing this, how do we honor God by honoring our moms in practical ways?

- **By expressing gratitude.** Don't assume they know, say it!
- **By listening with patience.** Some of us need to slow down enough to hear their hearts.
- **By offering help.** This is showing up when life becomes heavy. Even if you think they wouldn't show up for you.
- **By caring for them as they age.** This is an act of obedience because God wants us to remember the ones who He entrusted with our care.
- **By passing on faith.** Let me ask this. Are you living in such a way that their investment is bearing fruit?
- **By becoming people of character.** Nothing honors a godly mom more than a child who lives a godly life.

For those who had godly mothers, I pray you honor them by continuing their legacy. For those who did not, the command is still there. Honor God by becoming the one who breaks the cycle. Allow God to build you into the first and strongest link in a new chain of faith.

Moses wanted the new generations to understand that honor is a way of life because when it is present, it reflects the heart of God. He remembers His people. He cares for the vulnerable and He restores what sin has destroyed.

When we honor our moms, whether with joy, or with tenderness, or with the courage to seek healing, we obediently participate in the redeemer and restorative work of the Father.

Invitation

Whether you need salvation, renewal, or just some plan old courage – the risen Lord stands ready to meet you, forgive you, empower you, and make you whole. Will you come to Him? Will you return to Him? Will you trust Him and let today be the day you say yes to Him?

Closing Prayer

Father, we thank You for the women who shaped our lives—mothers, grandmothers, mentors, and spiritual mothers. We honor them today because You have used them to reveal Your love, Your wisdom, and Your faithfulness.

For those whose stories are joyful, we give You praise. For those whose stories are painful, we ask for healing. For those who grieve, bring comfort. For those who long, bring peace. For those who carry regret, bring forgiveness and hope.

Teach us to live lives of honor. To live lives that reflect Your heart, Your character, and Your redeeming grace. Make us people who see others as You see them, who forgive as You forgive, and who love as You have loved us.

We surrender ourselves to You today. In Jesus' name, Amen!