

## Lesson 5

# RESPECT YOUR PARENTS



The Pharisees and the scholars of law were trying to find fault with Jesus and were searching for an occasion to do so. Once they came to Jesus with the complaint that His disciples did not wash their hands before meals. They accused that the disciples violated the tradition. Jesus responded thus: "God has commanded to respect father and mother. But why do you say my duty is over after giving Qorban, the offerings to God. Jesus asked them to correct the habit of violating God's commandments in the name of tradition" (Mk. 7:1-13).

## **The Fourth Commandment in the Old Testament**

The fourth commandment which God gave through Moses is: "Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, (Ex. 20:12). We find an explanation for this in the book of 'Ecclesiasticus of the Old Testament. "For the Lord honors a father above his children, and he confirms a mother's right over her children. Those who honor their father atone for sins, and those who respect their mother are like those who lay up treasure. Those who honor their father will have joy in their own children, and when they pray they will be heard. Those who respect their father will have long life, and those who honor their mother obey the Lord;" (Eccl. 3:2-6).

We see in many places in the Old Testament, the blessings that we receive if we respect our parents. Similarly there are warnings if we violate this commandment (Prov. 30:17). “Whoever forsakes a father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers a mother is cursed by the Lord” (Sira. 3:16). At the same time, the Lord has promised that if we keep the commandment in the right way, we will have long life (Deut. 5:16).

## **The Fourth commandment in the New Testament**

The basic element of a community is family. Good families create good communities and a happy world. **Ideal families are those where parents and children love and co-operate with one another.** If we keep the fourth commandment, we will have good families. We find the models and instructions for this in the New Testament.

Jesus was born as a member of a family. He lived in Nazareth, obedient to Mary and Joseph (Lk. 2:51). Jesus gave us a model by being obedient to His parents. Parents are representatives of our Heavenly Father. When we love and respect them, we love and respect God Himself. **The holy family at Nazareth teaches us how a Christian family should be. There, parents have responsibilities to children and children have responsibilities to parents. The New Testament teaches this very clearly.**

## **Duties of Children**

**Parents are next to God in their responsibilities for the life and growth of their children and their protection. Hence children are obliged to love and respect them. It is also a law of nature.** Hence St. Paul says: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” (Eph 6:1) We respect parents by obeying them. It is not only when we are children but also when we are grown up, and throughout our lives, we must respect our parents. It is necessary for the peace and prosperity of the families. **But parents should not give immoral instructions or advice which does not agree with God's commands. Children are not bound to obey them.**

“With all your heart honour your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that it was of your Parents you were born” (Eccl. 7:27-28). This reminds the children of their duty towards their parents. We must love them, realizing that the main force behind our life is the sacrifice and commitment of our parents. We must be always grateful to them and must show it through our words and deeds. When parents become old and sick, we must nurse them and console them with care. We must provide physical and spiritual help for them. We should drive away their loneliness and pain by tender, loving nursing and care. These are the important duties of children to parents.

It is a great evil on the part of the sons and daughters to leave the old parents as orphans without looking after them. Laughing at them, mocking them, using abusive language and hurting them physically are serious sins against this commandment.

## **Duties of Parents**

“Father, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4). Children are God's gifts. Hence bring them up as dear to God. Parents must provide opportunities and conveniences/ facilities/ occasions necessary for the spiritual, physical, mental and social growth of their children.

Children understand the meaning and depth of God's love through parents. Hence they must express love towards their children. Parents also have the responsibility to let them grow in good discipline. Another important factor is the good example of parents. Parents must take special care to give good example to the growing children.

## **Respect the Authorities and Elders**

Not only parents but also teachers and persons with authority come under this commandment. Students should respect and obey them. Students must understand the importance of the relationship between teachers and students and act accordingly. We have the duty to respect the people in authority because their authority is God-given. (Rom. 13:1)

We must respect our elders. We should have the humility to be respectful to anyone who is older than us. We must also take care to show respect and reverence to our neighbours and relatives.

We live on this earth and our goal is heaven. In our journey towards heaven, the fourth commandment guides our way and enables us to live here peacefully and joyfully. "Hear, my child, your father's instruction and do not reject your mother's teaching. They will be a crown of grace for your head, a circlet for your neck.(Prov. 1:8). Let us keep in mind this Word of God and live accordingly.

### **Let us Pray**

O my loving Jesus, bless me to grow and become mature  
like You who was obedient to your parents  
in the holy family at Nazareth.

### **Read the Word of God and Narrate**

Eph. 6:1-4

## **Word of God for our Guidance**

“Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” (Ex. 20:12).

## **Let us Do**

Write down five occasions where you can help your parents.

## **My Resolution**

I will respect my parents and elders.

## **Find out the Answer**

1. Write a sentence from the Old Testament which gives us a teaching on the fourth commandment?
2. How did Jesus live in the holy family?
3. What are the duties of children to parents?
4. We must respect our elders and authorities; why?
5. What are the duties of Parents towards children?