

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 3 Sep 2023

**Sermon Title** : Loving Our Parents

**Speaker** : Rev Eddie Ho

**Text** : Ephesians 6:1-3, Exodus 20:12

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In line with our church theme of Love People Genuinely, our new sermon series - "Loving our..." will look at what it means for us to love different groups of people. In our previous "Love is..." sermon series, we looked at 'Love' as a noun and God's definition of love according to 1 Corinthians 13. In this second sermon series on 'Love', we will look at "Loving our...", where the word 'Love' is used as a verb, putting love into action. To start this series, we will explore how we can love the first group of people - our parents.

### **1. General teaching on 'Loving our parents' (Ephesians 6:1-3)**

Paul urges us to obey our parents as God loves us and has given our parents who love us, the responsibility to bring us up.

- We obey God by obeying our parents.
- We love God by loving our parents.

### **2. Shocking truth about 'Loving our parents' – not a commandment of God (Exodus 20:12)**

Even though the title of the sermon today is "Loving our parents", the shocking truth is that no such commandment is found in the Bible. We find commandments to:

- Learn from our parents (Proverbs 3:1-2)
- Listen to our parents (Proverbs 1:8)
- Obey our parents (Ephesians 6:1)
- Honour our parents (Exodus 20:12)

We find commandments to love God (Deuteronomy 6:5), love our neighbours (Mark 12:30-31) and even love our enemies (Matthew 5:44) but no commandment to love our parents.

There is no commandment in the Bible that tells us to love our parents, only to 'Honour Your Father and Mother' because:

- God is gracious, understanding and compassionate
- God does not give unreasonable demands

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*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

- All His commands are doable

God in His wisdom and compassion has not given us the commandment to love our parents as not all parents in the world may be worth loving because not all parents take their God-given responsibility as parents seriously. Some may misguide, abuse, neglect to discipline, manipulate or even do unspeakable things to their children. How can one love such parents, especially if you are on the receiving end of such treatment from your parents?

While God expects all His commands to be obeyed, He does not give us unreasonable commands. He recognises that humans are imperfect and depraved, and parents do fail in their responsibilities. Hence while His commandments are for everyone, He does not insist that everyone loves their parents because our Heavenly Father is gracious, understanding and compassionate and He empathizes with those who are hurt and does not give us unreasonable demands or commandments that are impossible to follow. All of God's commands are doable, hence His commandment in Exodus 20:12 urges us to honour our parents instead.

## Honour and respect to be given to our parents

We all know and have heard of this saying "Respect is earned not given" and many of us will agree with this saying, as it sounds right and good. However, this statement is theologically unsound as the following verses will illustrate that according to scriptures, respect is to be given, rather than earned.

- "Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19:32, *NIV*)
- "Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust." (1 Peter 2:18, *ESV*)
- "Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood, fear God. Honor the emperor." (1 Peter 2:17)

When Peter wrote this letter, Nero was the Emperor of Rome. One year after this was written, Nero accused the Christians of causing a fire that destroyed 75% of Rome. He blamed the Christians and persecuted them by throwing them to wild beasts in the Colosseum to be killed and making them into human torch to light the night as he parties on. Nero was a crazy, unjust and cruel Emperor. Even though God knew about the inhumane nature of this emperor, He inspired Peter to write these verses to instruct the believers to honour him.

## Our parents are made in the image of God

How can we honour someone we do not respect or love, and how is it possible for us to honour our parents, if they are not honourable and are undeserving?

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# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

We often mix up respect with admiration. When we say we respect someone, we are often actually saying we admire certain qualities of an individual, be it their character, skills or abilities. However, respect and admiration are two different things. We may strongly disagree with an individual's views and have no admiration for the person but we can still show respect for the individual, due to the position or office that the individual represents.

- Every individual human being on this earth (whether believers or non-believers) is made in the image of God.
- Regardless of how corrupt or fallen each of us is, we are to respect each other, in spite of whether we admire or do not admire each other, because we are all made in the image of God. God wants us to view each other and see each other as the image of God.

Paul urges us to respect and honour each other, as we see each other in the image of God:

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ...Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people”. (Ephesians 6:5,7)

This is the way God wants each of us to live our lives. All of us are worthwhile to be redeemed by Christ because we are all made in the image of God. This is why Christ died for each of us. Everyone, be it unjust superiors or undeserving parents is worthy to be redeemed by God. Regardless of whether our parents are deserving or not, God wants us to honour them.

## **CONCLUSION**

Whatever the state of our relationship with our parents may be, all of us are born of parents who have given us life. Because ultimately all things come from God, we can choose to honour God by honouring our parents He has given us.

One way we can honour our parents today is by being kind. We can be kind to them by giving them our ears and taking time to listen to them. We can do this regardless of our age. Everyone wants to be heard and have someone to listen to them. By honouring our parents, we honour God and God will in turn honour us. We are all made in the image of God so let us honour God by honouring our parents however undeserving they are.

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# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

## **A. Review Sermon Application**

***Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.***

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read Ephesians 6:1-3 and Exodus 20:12 slowly.
  - a. How do these verses speak to you personally?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

- 3a. Is your treatment of your parents aligned with God's command to "Honour your father and mother"?
  - 3b. How has knowing the context of the verses in 1 Peter 2:17-18 impacted your understanding of God's commandment for everyone to "Honour your father and mother" whether they are deserving or not? (Exodus 20:12)
  - 3c. What do you understand by "We honour God by honouring our parents"?
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- 4a. What steps can you take to honour your parents in the week ahead?
  - 4b. What are some challenges you may face in doing so and how can you overcome them?
  - 4c. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 4a and 4b above in the following week(s), until your next meeting?

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## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

5. Share your personal experience on how you have honoured your father and/or mother.

OR

Give thanks to God that we can honour others because all of us are made in His image.

6. With a prayer partner, pray for the action steps/changes you have committed to in Question 4 above, surrendering your fears and challenges to God. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you as an individual, and a group, to keep each other accountable in this journey of honouring your parents. Seek the Lord's forgiveness if you have not honoured your parents whether they are still alive or not, because honouring your parents is honouring God and His commandment.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Your Grace Is Enough – Chris Tomlin [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvIB\\_veig5s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvIB_veig5s)
2. Tabernacle – Awaken Generation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hvJiLXNqUQ>
3. How Deep The Father's Love For Us – Stuart Townend <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0CDqG5STPM>

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